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TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED,

AND

THE MINISTER'S STORY.

By **A. S. ROE,**

AUTHOR OF "I'VE BEEN THINKING," "A LONG LOOK AHEAD," ETC.

THE TWO COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.



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TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED.

CHAPTER I.

THOSE of my readers who were acquainted with the city of New-York some forty years since, will be able to call to mind the *Old Fly-Market*, together with the broken brick pavements, the small wooden buildings, and the etceteras which then distinguished that portion of the great city.

They will probably also remember a very little street running parallel with said Fly-Market, and within sight and scent thereof, down towards the river.

The necessity for this passage, so narrow that it would only allow a single cart to traverse it, and so near to wider thoroughfares running in the same direction, has ever been a doubtful matter; and the reasons for allowing it, are lost with the good folks who planned this once so important portion of the city, and who have long since passed away.

At one corner of this lane, there once stood a low, wooden building of a dark leaden color; it had four windows on — street, and two doors, all of them near the ground, the former covered with dust and cobwebs, which had been collecting there for more than twenty years, nothing but the rains of heaven having washed them for at least that period. Around the doors could always be seen two or three weather-beaten boxes, upon one of which reposed something in the shape of a paint keg; between the windows lay a row of tar barrels, some whole and some partly emptied, while contiguous to them and resting against the front of the building

was an enormous anchor, with one fluke partly buried in the ground, affording a convenient lounge, on which some half-score of negroes could, in a hot summer's afternoon, enjoy their fill of laughter and sunshine.

On entering the building, the eye immediately wandered over a confused mass of articles that lay hither and thither, coils of newly tarred rope, bunches of black shining chains, barrels somewhat resembling those at the door, kegs of various sizes, pulleys, large iron rings, spikes, tin canisters, and sea-lanterns; some of these were to be seen, and some a stranger might stumble over, for it was never very light. But they are not to be mentioned as samples of what lay back, stowed away in the recesses of this long building. All that a ship might need, from a ball of tow-yarn to a best bower-anchor, could there be had.

On the left hand of the entrance stood a partition, with two sliding lights and a glass-door opening into the sanctum of the wealthy ship chandlers, Mess. G. & A. Hunt.

These gentlemen were brothers; they had begun the world together poor, and had tugged their way through the briars and thorns of business well on towards the top of the hill, enjoying a fine run of trade, with a store full of goods and no notes out, and with no account in any bank.

The elder had married, early in life, a lady who knew well, and almost too well, how to save his earnings. Children were not added to their stock of earthly good things, so that their property accumulated to their hearts' content.

The younger brother, although much the most comely of the two, had contented himself as a bachelor, and, as an exception against the connubial state, was much the most liberal, the elder Mr. Hunt being looked upon, and I fear with some reason, as rather a close man. You would not have thought so, however, as you entered his office, and saw him sitting in his arm-chair before the little grate fire, his full, round face would turn up to you so pleasantly, and he would bid you such a hearty good morning, you might have taken him as a personification of benevolence. But let him know that you wanted a little aid, no matter how trifling, for poor Christians, or poor heathen, or any cause whatever, and a mighty change was at once visible. The spectacles would be taken down from the forehead, and put in their

proper place before the eyes, the smile would fly away like a flash, the poker would be used very briskly in stirring up the fire, and there would be suddenly so many orders issued to the clerk, and so many things to be put up, and such hints about people's being prudent, and about charity at home, that very likely you would wish that you had said nothing about the matter, and watch for an opening to make a decent retreat.

At the time when my story commences some little changes were in agitation, more especially to suit the wishes of the younger Mr. Hunt, who was somewhat anxious, now that they had acquired an independence, to be relieved from the drudgery of business. His desire was, that a young man who had been with them some years, a nephew, and bearing their name, should be taken in as a partner, and that a clerk of suitable abilities be procured to take the place of him who was to be elevated.

The elder Mr. Hunt disliked changes of any kind, and especially such as would involve expense, but being strongly attached to his brother, and finding that his heart was set upon the matter, he had finally yielded, and Rudolph Hunt, for that was the name of the young man, was duly published as a partner of the concern; he had also so far agreed to the second requisition, that an advertisement appeared in the New-York Gazette, informing the public, that the firm of G. & A. Hunt wanted a person competent to take charge of a set of books, and willing to engage in any department of their business.

Many applications immediately followed this announcement, for the great city was just then suffering under one of those terrible revulsions in trade which occasionally falls upon the business community and throws a gloom over every mercantile interest; when merchants stand listlessly at their doors, or lounge in their office chairs, thinking over bad speculations, bad debts, doubtful notes, and heavy payments ahead. Sad indeed, at such a time, is the fate of those who, dismissed because there is no work for them to do behind the counter or at the desk, are obliged to look for new situations in the only employment to which they have been trained, and by which they can earn their bread. No wonder then that a crowd of applicants should at once have been

aroused, when an opportunity was thus made known for an engagement with a firm long established and beyond the chances and changes of trade.

But there seemed to be some objection, especially in the mind of the elder partner, to all who had hitherto applied, until it appeared a very doubtful case whether any addition would, after all, be made to the numerical force of the establishment.

A few days, however, after the advertisement appeared, a young man called, whose gentlemanly address and apparent ability to fill the situation, so satisfied the younger brother and the junior partner, that, as the elder Mr. Hunt was absent, they had, upon their own responsibility, requested him to call again at 9 o'clock the next morning.

The next morning had arrived, and it wanted but a few minutes of the appointed hour. The two brothers were seated, each in an arm-chair, before the little grate fire.

There was a similarity in the features of the two, for both had full, round faces, and small, twinkling eyes, but to an acute observer, the expressions were very unlike. In the younger could clearly be seen the open, manly, generous spirit, combining with a shrewd and somewhat waggish propensity. In the other, care and close calculation were plainly legible.

"Well, brother, what shall we conclude about this young man? it is almost 9 o'clock," and the younger Mr. Hunt, as he said this, laid down the morning paper upon his knee, and looked inquiringly at his brother, with an arch smile trembling at the corners of his mouth.

"I don't know, I'm sure, what to do about it; there aint any of the young men now a days that seem to be good for any thing; they think more of their watch chains and fine coats than they do of work."

As Mr. Gerardus or, as he was sometimes called, Mr. Geordie Hunt said this, he pulled down his spectacles and took up the poker, striking with rather a jerky air some stray cinders that had fallen too far upon the hearth.

Knowing pretty well for whom this hint was intended, the younger Mr. Hunt turned a smiling eye over towards the desk where the junior partner was busy with his books; Rudolph did love watch chains and fine coats; he smiled

in answer to the look of his uncle, and kept on with his work.

"I'm afraid it is too true, what you say, brother; but we can't make them over. The world has changed some since our young days. Watches don't cost so much as they once did, nor coats either. But what we can't cure we must put up with."

"Yes, I suppose so,"—with a heavy sigh.

"We want a young man; you and I are getting along in life; we don't care to work as we once did, and nephew can't be out-door man and in-door clerk too—aint that clear, brother?"

"Why, I suppose it must be so; but I should judge from what you tell about the youngster, that he is a delicate kind of a person, not fit to work."

"Oh! by no means, brother; you mistake, you mistake; you don't understand. He is, to be sure, very gentlemanly in his manners. You don't object to that?"

"Oh! no, no, no."

"I said that he appeared like one that had been well brought up: brought up with care."

"Well, well, well; just as you and Rudolph say. If we must have him, we must; that's all."

"Not at all; no must about it, brother. I want you to be satisfied, especially as he is to be in your family. But here he comes."

The appearance of the young man did, indeed, warrant the idea which the elder Mr. Hunt had received, "that he was a delicate kind of a person," for his countenance was pale, except a slight flush, which suffused it on the moment of entering; and there was a softness to his complexion, bordering upon effeminacy, but which was happily relieved by his raven hair and keen black eye.

He was evidently under strong excitement; for when the elder Mr. Hunt questioned him, in his scrutinizing way, as to his knowledge of business, and his ability to keep accounts, and his willingness to do whatever he was called upon to do about the store, he answered promptly and to the point; but there was a tremor in his voice, and his countenance assumed a more pallid hue; it was evident that the situation was one of great moment to him.

Mr. Geordie Hunt was allowed to do all the questioning, and he clearly manifested more complacency towards the applicant than for any other that had appeared before him; he was either pleased with his answers, or affected by the expression of sadness which was a marked feature of his countenance.

"Well, so far, so good—and now to whom did you say that you referred?"

The young man hesitated; he did not appear to understand the question.

"My brother means—to whom do you refer as to your—as to your habits of business?—as to your character and so on?—with whom have you lived? Being strangers to one another, you know that some such thing is usual."

"Oh, certainly, sir, certainly—you are correct. But I shall have a difficulty here that I did not anticipate. I have been in my father's office for the last three years, or since he came from the South, and my father, even if you thought proper to receive his testimonial, is too unwell to give it."

Again the color mantled his cheek, and the tremor of his voice was more manifest.

A sudden change, too, had come over the mind of the elder Mr. Hunt, for he turned towards the fire and again, commenced operations with the poker.

The younger brother observing this, and well knowing what the sign meant, gave up at once all hope that any engagement would be entered into just then. He felt, however, very unwilling thus to part with the young man. He was more interested in him than at the first interview—there was a manliness and frankness in his whole demeanor, which, united with his modest and pleasant manners, won each moment upon the really tender feelings of the younger Mr. Hunt.

Rudolph was also an interested listener; and, when he saw the signs of non-committalism on the part of his senior uncle, beckoned the former to his desk.

"Right, right, well—well, perhaps we'd better—" And then, turning towards the young man—

"My nephew suggests that perhaps you had better leave your address, and we may send you word in a few days."

"Certainly, sir," and stepping to the desk, with great ra-

pidity and neatness, he wrote his own name and that of his father, with the number and street where he resided.

"Had you not better, Mr. Edwards," said Rudolph, as he looked at the paper which the young man handed to him, "put down the number of your father's office, or place of business?"

"My father, sir, has no office at present; he gave it up nearly two months since, and for that reason I am seeking a situation; he did business at No. — Pine Street."

CHAPTER II.

It was a stormy night in the city; fitful gusts of wind roared through the narrow streets, and the heavy rain poured down in torrents. The poor crouched together in their wretched tenements, huddled like sheep within their pens, and the rich laughed lightly in their lighted halls, or rolled in their sumptuous carriages to the ball-room, the theatre, or the splendid party.

Death waits not for storm or sunshine. Within a dwelling in one of the upper streets, respectable in appearance, and furnished with such conveniences as distinguish the habitations of those who rank among the higher classes of society, a man of middle age lay on his last bed, momentarily waiting the final summons. All that the most skilful medical attendance; all that love, warm as the glow that fires an angel's bosom, could do, had been done; by day and night for many long weeks, had ministering spirits, such as a devoted wife and loving children are, done all within their power to ward off the blow. But there he lay, his raven hair smoothed off from his noble brow, his dark eyes lighted with unnatural brightness, and contrasting strongly with the pallid hue which marked him as an expectant of the dread messenger.

Beside him stood a youth of eighteen, fresh with health, but with every feature softened into a look of tenderest love.

"Would, God, I could die for thee, oh! my father," was plainly written on his beautiful countenance; his hand was within that of the dying man, and the bright eye of the

father was fixed upon him, as though thoughts, too many and too overpowering, were agonizing to let their fulness out.

"My dear boy, it is almost over." The tones were soft and trembling, and, as they fell upon the ear of the youth, the tears dropped freely; but he answered not.

"It has been a weary course—a toil for nothing, James—but you know it all; I have tried hard to resist the torrent that has been pressing against me."

"Dear father, let these thoughts of the past go. You have done your best."

A hectic flush tinged the cheek of the sufferer, as though the soft tones of that boy had started the life blood anew.

"Yes, James, you are right, I have done with the past now. But the future!—not mine. I have no fears for myself; I am going to rest; but those dear ones—your mother—your sisters—and yourself. I leave you nothing—not even one friend to aid you."

The drops were gathering on his marble brow, and releasing his hand from his father's grasp, the youth gently wiped them away.

"Dear father, try to think that God will be with us, as he has ever been."

"Yes, yes, yes,—God—my Father—Oh, yes—I will trust."

The wind roared by, and the heavy rain poured its floods against the closed windows. Again the youth pressed his father's hand.

"But I can do no more. I leave you, my dear boy, my last, my best blessing. You have comforted my dark hours. You have denied yourself all youthful enjoyments for my sake—you have been a most devoted son. God bless you—God be your—"

The strong yearnings of the parent could not find vent in words. The effort already made, was too much for his exhausted frame, and his short and troubled breathing warned the youth that its work was nearly ended.

Around that bed, in mute and helpless agony, were soon clustered the dear ones of his heart. His eye rested a moment with eloquent intensity on each of his children, bidding the long farewell;—and then on her, who had been his first and only love, the partner of his life's journey and treasurer

of his warm affections, he fixed his last, long look, until its brightness faded away beneath the film of death.

It is broad daylight. The sun is shining brightly, and the busy throng jostle each other in the crowded street, as they are hurrying on their life's errand.

In the same chamber lies a corpse, prepared with becoming care for its long resting-place. Beside the pale tenement of clay stands the same youth. His hands are folded, and his eye fixed mournfully on those cold, stiff features. Past scenes in his young life are flitting through his mind in quick succession. He remembers that parent when the sun shone brightly o'er him; and he remembers, too, when dark clouds gathered thick, and poured their storms upon him; how his own young heart had agonized in sympathy for the sorrow which that parent had endured, until the whole power of his mind was enlisted in the single effort of soothing his disturbed feelings.

That troubled heart is now at rest. No words of consolation more it needs; no filial faithfulness; no eye of watchful love. The sacred bond is severed, and the impenetrable veil has dropped its heavy folds around that pale, cold sleeper.

But those tears, which fall so silently, tell no common tale. And yet within that crowded mart, how many sons are daily called to stand beside a father's corpse. Death walks his round among the rich and poor, and lays his icy hand alike on the weary sufferer, and the pampered devotee of pleasure.

Death heeds not ties of love, nor frantic widows' tears, nor the wail of helpless orphans; but round and round he treads his solemn way. No place, no time, no circumstance of being turns his step aside. The palace gate unlocks at his approach, and amid its splendid trappings on he strides and lays his victim on a gilded couch. And into the low, lonely hut of destitution, amid crumbling ruins, and where pale want sits brooding, he steals along, and the poor sufferer, on his bed of straw, quivers and is still.

It was no common tale, I said, which should reveal the secrets of that youthful heart. True filial love is a passion not so generally possessed as many think. In the hour of childhood, and before cold and foreign influences have affected the free and pure play of the heart, we all know with what as

insurance of protection, with what confidence in his wisdom, justice, power and love, the little one looks up to him whom he calls father. But as the wayward passions increase in strength, as they often meet the stern and just rebuke, feelings of restraint and fear arise and throw their icy chill upon that holy tie. And oft the world comes in, that heartless creation, which knows no sacredness in love, and sees no beauty in the homely bonds of life; that selfish, soulless, poisoning world, throws its deadening shadow on the fresh, young heart, and while the outward show is still observed, because dependence binds him within the circle of parental power, all that was beautiful in the heart's first yearnings, all that was heaven-born in its obedience and confidence, all that threw around the sacred person and sacred name of father a halo more than earthly, has departed.

But this youth had never known one cold or selfish thought in connection with that fond parent, over whose lifeless body his tears are falling; no reproaches agonize his heart as he gazes upon those marble features; his young life has been one devoted day of truest filial love, and now he weeps that he can do no more.

John T. Edwards succeeded his father in the possession of Pine-grove estate, in North Carolina. The property had been handed down from father to son for some generations, but each succeeding inheritor found a new accumulation of debt, with an additional number of acres to be classed as old field, and of little value. They had, however, clung to the spot, encumbered as it was, partly because the revenue from it was still great, and enabled the possessor to live in respectable style, and partly because of some feelings, which are common to all, and among the best we have—a fondness for the spot which has been the home of our ancestors, and which is entwined in our memories with our happy childhood years. There was, perhaps, not one of all who had called this Home, whose attachment to it was so strong, and whose appreciation of its natural beauties and its ancestral charms was more true and quickening; and yet there was not one less fitted to cope with the difficulties with which it was trammelled. For fifteen years he struggled with them, until disgusted with the protracted trial, he yielded to circumstances he could not control, sold the estate, and with the remnant

of his fortune, removed to the city of New-York, and commenced a mercantile life. But he was not fitted, either by nature or training, for the new station in which he had placed himself. He was not a money-making man. He could not so bind the fine feelings of his sensitive mind, as to get them interested in making a bargain. Neither could he sympathize with the multitude in their scramble for the treasures of earth; his mind shrunk away from the bustling throng and kept close communion with itself; dark thoughts often troubled it; dark clouds were continually about him; bright rays seldom cheered his path, and when they did, it was but an April sunshine with its following shadow.

Within the domestic circle his spirit delighted to repose; to his lovely wife, his charming daughters, and his devoted son, he was all that they could ask. Around them were entwined all the sympathies of his soul, and on their pure love he rested, and could he but have retired with them to some calm retreat, free from distracting care, life would have been to him a summer's journey.

But thus it could not be; he was in the deep waters, and must struggle on although in vain. It would be no pleasant task, either to my readers or myself, to picture out to them the dark scene of a declining fortune, or to open to their view the trying, soul-sickening experience of him who is called to witness the rapid strides of coming poverty. A few years he battled with the foe, his spirit broke beneath the stern encounter, and he sunk to his long rest.

James had been fully acquainted with all his father's trials, and his sympathies were strongly excited. He was his constant companion through all the hours of business, encouraging by his cheerful smile and pleasant words whenever a favorable aspect was presented, and through all adverse and untoward changes, still holding up before him that hope of better times, which his fond father would have believed in if he could.

No youthful recreation had any charm for him if he saw the shade of sorrow on his father's brow. Blest youth! what son that mourns a father dead, but envies those rich tears which bathe thine eyes and fall so silently before that sacred dust. It might not shame an angel's brow thus to let out the fulness of a heart like thine; and if the fond

spirit that lives no more within that tenement of clay looks, from his hidden resting-place upon his noble boy and reads his thoughts, it will almost make that better state more blissful to know the true, fond, living love that burns within thy bosom.

The funeral solemnities are over. There has been no lack of followers to the narrow house. The world has done its part in the funeral pageant. Many questions have been asked and answered as to the peculiarities of him whom they were following to the narrow house, and as to the circumstances in which he had left his family. Acquaintances have called and expressed their sympathy with the bereaved family; and then it was left alone. The world is called cold and unfeeling. Perhaps it is; at least it would not be surprising if, to those who call it hard names, it should present rather a severe aspect; but we ought to keep in mind that the world, as we call it, is made up of little circles, in which each atom lives, and moves, and concentrates its interest. That the world did not feel for this little family was simply because the world knew nothing of it, and therefore it was left alone.

A few days after the funeral solemnities, from a window of this same building a little red flag was displayed, and all the morning, persons of various descriptions were going in and out, and the sharp stroke of the auctioneer's little hammer and his lively voice could be heard, mingled at times with the merry laugh which his smart repartee had excited; and then carts were driving up to the door in quick succession, bearing off loads of household goods, dear to those who lately owned them, by all that was sacred in associations of parental and conjugal love, but only to be prized hereafter for the cheapness at which they had been purchased.

Throughout the day the scene continued, and the last load was not wheeled away until the shades of evening drew on. The little flag then disappeared. Strangers' feet ceased to pollute the spoiled home, and the little family close the door, and cluster around the fireside, where they had so often gathered.

It is a great mistake, which many are apt to indulge, that those who have enjoyed an elevated station in society, are disqualified to bear reverse of fortune; that those who

have walked proudly on the summit level, cannot descend the lowest depths of life and bear the ills of poverty without proportional distress. This is not so. The mind that has long cherished independent feelings—that has been refined by intercourse with polished circles—that has been accustomed to the homage of the many, and mingled with the nobler ones of earth as equals, still maintains its dignity and self-respect, when far, far down, it walks the humble, narrow path. The cottage, the menial employment, the pitying, sneering world cannot bend its towering crest, nor tear from it that proud support—its own self-respect.

Mrs. Edwards had been well aware that the circumstances of her husband were such as held out to her the certainty of a great and sad change; fain would she have urged him to descend at once, to relinquish the struggle with opposing fortune, and be poor that he might be happy. But she knew well how sensibly alive he was to any thing that concerned her standing in the world; he had taken her from its highest station, and there he wished to retain her; and when she knew the worst, when poverty, in all its cold and forbidding aspect, was full in view, she shrank not from its presence, but, with a calm and steady look, prepared to meet its stern realities.

She was still in the prime of life, and her beauty fresh upon her. The two lovely plants, her daughters, were but images of her former self. Mary, the eldest, was just fifteen; and Julia, nearly two years younger. Trained in an atmosphere of love, their beautiful features were but emblems of their warm and noble hearts.

"It has been a trying day to you, mother, but it is all over now."

"Yes, my son, but it was a necessary sacrifice. Your father cannot now be remembered by any one as his debtor."

"That is a happy thought, dear mother," said Mary, her bright eye kindling with emotion, as it looked full upon the sad, yet beautiful countenance of her parent; "if we have no friends, we can exult in the thought that we are no man's debtor."

"It has, indeed, been a trial, which once I could not have supposed it possible to bear. I mean what we have gone through this day. To hear strangers jesting over

sacred relics of our family, to see rude hands carrying off what, to us, is associated with our tenderest feelings. Oh! it has agitated me strangely. One thought alone has enabled me to bear it."

"You mean dear father's last wish?"

"Yes, Mary, the idea of leaving the world with a blot upon his name—you know that his views on that subject were peculiar, but they were noble and just. He considered a debt uncanceled a moral taint."

"I made him a solemn promise, mother, that every thing should be paid, to the last farthing."

"But, James, my dear son! how did you know that it could be accomplished?"

"Why, mother, I pledged my strength, my life, for that one object, and the support of my mother and sisters, and sooner shall my arm wither than that pledge be unredeemed. Your generosity in thus sacrificing all that was so valuable to you, as the property of your ancestors, has relieved me from one part of this promise, and I have nothing now to do but labor for your support."

"God be your helper, James, and may you reap a rich reward for your past faithfulness to your dear father. His last prayer will, I trust, prove a rich legacy to you. But I cannot think of allowing you to spend your energies, merely struggling to support us. You will find it hard enough, my dear boy, to make your own way, without means and without friends."

James arose without replying to what his mother had said, and walked the room, evidently under deep excitement; his lovely sisters watched him a moment, their bright eyes glistening with the tears that told how quickening was the sympathy that burned within.

"Brother, dear brother!" and each was clinging to an arm and looking into his anxious countenance with expressions of the warmest love. "Don't, dear brother; don't James——" and Mary wiped away in the gentlest manner the tear that was just starting from its hiding-place. "We shall be able to help more than you think for; we have already thought what we can do."

"My dear sisters, if you do not wish to distress me, you will cease at once;" and leading them to the seats they had

left, he placed himself beside her whose tones of love had ever been sweet music to his ear, and gently taking the hand with which she was concealing her strong emotions—

"Mother, I have one request to make of you: If you value my peace of mind, if you have any regard for my feelings as a son and a brother, you will never again, nor permit my sisters ever again, to speak in this way; never until it shall be proved that my efforts are hopeless. Let me fulfil what would have been my father's wish; at least let me try first."

There was a knock at the street door, and James arose immediately; it was a well-known single rap, and by the token a friend, although one in humble life.

There was a cordial grasping of hands, but neither spoke; silently the visitor followed James through the hall, to the room where the little family was seated.

"Oh, Mr. Upjohn!" and Mrs. Edwards arose quickly, and welcomed him with much feeling. He was not, indeed, an emissary from the gay and fashionable world; he was a plain-looking man, and plainly dressed; but had he been in princely garments, and his rank of high degree, he could not have been treated with more consideration. A seat was at once placed for him in their circle by the fire, but it was not until strongly urged by each member of the little family that he consented to take the place assigned him. He was one of those fine specimens of human nature that we sometimes meet with, where a rough exterior conceals a warm and generous heart. He had a ready hand to help a neighbor in an hour of trial. They had experienced his timely aid in many ways during the scene of sickness through which they had just passed; and through all the mournful close thereof had he done every thing to relieve their sad hearts from care and unpleasant duty. He seemed to be gifted with the tact of discerning just where he could be most useful. Thus has he bound himself to the hearts of this family by such ties as can never be destroyed, while they retain the remembrance of him for whom those deeds of love were enacted.

As yet, the visitor had not spoken; he seemed to feel that he was on sacred ground; that he was connected in

their minds with all that was tender and heart-rending in the scenes of the few past days.

"You are truly welcome, Mr. Upjohn; we feel rather sad this evening after the events of the day, and were just now talking about our plans for the future."

He turned towards Mrs. Edwards as she addressed him, and answered in trembling tones—

"It's hard, madam; it must be very hard. It makes *my* heart sick to see the great change. But to you, madam, who have always had a plenty to do with, it must be severe indeed. It makes my heart ache to think of it."

"God orders our changes, you know, Mr. Upjohn. We must therefore submit patiently to whatever his will appoints."

There was no reply to this remark, unless a slight clearing of the throat, and a change of position, and the smoothing down of his foretop, which already lay as though it had been arranged with more than common care, might be taken as such. Mr. Upjohn could not, with all his heart, assent to the proposition; but he did not like to object to it.

"I am very glad that you have called this evening, sir, for I have no one to advise with, and just now we are much in doubt what course to pursue. Perhaps, my son, you have mentioned to Mr. Upjohn some of your plans."

"I have, mother, but Mr. Upjohn thinks that you will not be pleased with the country."

"I will tell you, madam; my first thought was, when Master James mentioned the matter to me, as he had been telling some of his troubles and how things are not just as you wish them, my first thought was that you, madam, and these two young ladies would not be used to the ways of the country. The country is pleasanter, no doubt, than this great Babel of brick and mortar, and country folks are clever enough in their way; but a body must know how to take 'em,—and seeing that yourself and these young ladies have never been used to the rough and tumble of life, you might find it not so agreeable."

"But, Mr. Upjohn, it will not answer for us, now, to be particular as to where we live nor how we fare; we are poor now, sir, very poor. And all we seek is a shelter and—"

James looked at his mother with an expression of deep sorrow.

"I do not wish to pain your feelings, my dear son, and will not say what I was intending to. But poverty, James, is no disgrace, since we have reduced ourselves to feel its pinchings, that we might be honest."

"It is not that, mother; I care not for poverty; the shame attached to it does not trouble me. But when you talk of the pinchings of poverty. You shall not feel them, nor my sisters either. Let me only get you a home in some retired place; I know that I can do more than you imagine. If nothing more, I can work as a day-laborer. Only gratify me in this one wish; to take the care of you on myself. You shall not want, you need not fear it; you must not talk about it."

The energy with which he spoke, at once silenced the little company; his mother and sisters gazed at him with intense interest, but each with different feelings. The latter, with an expression of strong admiration beaming from their glistering eyes; the former with all the softness of a mother's love, and joy in witnessing this exhibition of his noble feelings, mingled with the painful thought that he knew but little of the stern realities of life's fearful struggle. Not willing to damp his filial ardor, she immediately changed the tenor of her remarks.

"Do you know of any place, Mr. Upjohn, not too far from the city, some retired village, that would be desirable as a residence for us?"

"I do know of a place, madam, that of all others, it seems to me, would be desirable for one in your situation. Not so much on account of the people; they are well enough, good sort of folks, and will no doubt treat you with much kindness. Country people are kind-hearted to strangers. I will say that of them; that is, if they don't hold their heads too high. But I was thinking that it would suit you, madam, and the young ladies, on account of the blessed minister they've got. There is many of that craft (asking your pardon, madam), that ain't no better than they ought to be; but Mr. Wharton is a prince among 'em; he's a true Christian, and a true gentleman, every inch of him, and his lady, if any thing, is a little better than he is. She is a jewel of a woman,

that Mrs. Wharton. They are none of your common, everyday folks. They seem to know what the world is made of, for they have seen a great deal of it, and while they would never stoop their heads for the proudest of the land, for they have been bred among the highest folks, yet the poor man is always welcome at their fireside. God bless them,—they are a noble pair."

"Is it far from the city?" asked Mrs. Edwards and her daughters almost in the same breath, for they had become much interested.

"Not very far, madam; a day's travel, not over thirty miles."

"The mother and sisters now turned an inquiring look at James, who was also listening to Mr. Upjohn with much interest. He immediately noted down such directions as were necessary to lead him to the spot, and then their kind-hearted visitor, after inquiring in what way he could be of any service to them now, and receiving again and again the outpouring of their grateful hearts for all that he had already done, and the assurance that they would call upon him when they needed, bade them a good night, and James accompanied him to the door.

"You won't forget to call when you come to town, Master James, and let me know how they all fare. I feel much concern for your blessed mother, and those dear girls."

And the old man let go the hand which James had given him at parting, and wiped away a tear, more precious in an angel's eye than the costliest jewel that ever decked a monarch's brow.

CHAPTER III.

It was a dark, chilly, November day; the clouds were flying fast across the murky sky, and strong gusts of wind at times swept along from the northeast, bending the tall poplars, and stretching out the more slender branches of the sturdy oak, and causing the forests to send forth a murmuring

sound, as though spirits of evil were disturbing their lonely retreats.

A youthful traveller, dressed in rather light attire, such as would be more suitable for the streets of a city than for exposure to such a tempest in the open country, was just emerging from a small wood through which the highway led; and, as he did so, a country village of no great size, but of rather a pleasant aspect, opened before him. The spire of a well-conditioned country church first appeared, shooting up in pure white, and towering above the maples and willows which gracefully concealed, for the most part, the building itself; and on either side of the street, at intervals, for some distance, could be seen respectable dwellings, many of which were superior to the average of country habitations.

The day was drawing to a close, and it was with no little self gratulation that the youth found himself so near the termination of his ride; he was on horseback, and, as large drops of rain began to accompany the gusts of wind, he spurred up his beast into a canter, casting his eye upon each tenement as he passed, in search of the tavern sign which he knew must be somewhere at hand.

Upon a large elm, whose giant branches hung far over the highway, creaking on its rusty hinges as it swayed backwards and forwards at the sport of the winds, he soon espied this token of shelter and welcome. His horse committed to the stable-boy, and himself warmed and refreshed at the crackling, open fire, he stepped to the bar, and inquired of the landlord, who was busily engaged stirring the toddy stick for some thirsty customers, "Whether he could direct him to the residence of the minister of the place, the Rev. Mr. Wharton?"

"The parsonage is next door, sir," pointing at the same time through an end window, "it is that stone building you see close by."

The young man bowed his thanks, and immediately walked to the window and surveyed the premises. He would scarcely have needed to make the inquiry, if he had not been so intent upon that one object as he rode through the village, the signboard. The building bore upon its aspect, in all its parts and accompaniments, such marks of sacred

ness and peace, that, had its name been engraven on its front, it could not, well, have been more readily distinguished.

It was a stone building, as the landlord had said, but stuccoed with a dark cement that gave it an appearance of great age, while the perfect order of the woodwork about it showed that it had been well guarded against the ravages of time by judicious attention. It was two storied, with a small back-building, and a wing on one side in front, which no one could mistake for any thing else than the kitchen of the establishment. The house was set back sufficiently from the street to secure it against the dust of the traveller and to afford a neat yard, in which shrubs were plentifully scattered, and two borders, lining the paved walk from the front door to the gate, gave tokens of summer flowers and sweet perfume. A partition fence, the same with that which fronted the highway, separated this inclosure from the kitchen yard, so that nothing unsightly met the eye in front of the main building. Large trees encircled it, and their deep shadows added much to the sombre aspect it presented, at the same time foretelling cool and refreshing shade from summer's mid-day sun.

The young man surveyed the premises awhile, and then leaving the tavern, walked directly to the parsonage.

A neatly dressed domestic opened the door at his summons, and ushered him at once into the sitting-room, and the presence of the reverend gentleman and his lady. The former immediately arose from his seat before the fire, and bowing very gracefully, added his pleasant smile to that of his partner, who had already greeted the stranger. The young man had been affected by the external appearance of the house, and was prepared to judge favorably of persons and things within doors: he was not disappointed.

If there is a station in society involving responsibilities the most delicate and interesting—responsibilities that embrace in their hold on human sympathy all interests, both for this world and the next, it is the station of one who has for many years been the pastor of a country parish; and if there is an object of true moral beauty, combining in itself the sublime and the pleasing, it is the daily course of such a faithful servant of the Most High, now dropping a word of counsel into the ear of some wayward youth, now soothing

the irritated feelings of some neighbor who has called to tell his tale of injuries, real or imaginary; now binding in bonds of holy union those who wish to cast their lot in life together: now at the sick-bed, bending with melting heart over one long known and loved, and feeding the flickering spirit with a few crumbs of angel's food; now wiping away the tears that cannot be repressed, because a widow and her little ones are depositing in the narrow house their love and their stay; and then, as the shadows of evening gather round, retiring to his little sanctuary, there to bear before his Father, his Master, his God, the cares, the pains, the sicknesses, the difficulties, the varied interests of those who had received his attention through the busy scenes of the day. Such scenes and duties, fully entered into, cannot fail to affect even the personal bearing of an individual, and to throw around many deficiencies in the outer man a sweet halo; much more, when a commanding form, a benevolent and manly countenance, peculiar neatness in dress, and accomplished manners, add their mite to the holy influence.

As Mr. Wharton bowed to the young stranger, he might have been well taken as the personification of his office; there was such a calm, easy, dignified manner, that was in perfect keeping with his appearance. His stature a little above the common height, well proportioned, almost robust, and yet without any approach to grossness; his face full, and scarcely furrowed by age; his forehead fair and smooth, and the thin powdered locks that but faintly covered his foretop, falling carelessly upon its edge. His features open and manly; and although of a serious cast, yet apparently ready for a smile. From the crown of his head to the buckle that glistened on his polished shoe, there was a perfect harmony in the whole.

If the young man was struck with the appearance of the reverend gentleman into whose presence he had been ushered, equally so was the latter, with the gentlemanly address and pleasant countenance of the youth; he was somewhat excited, and the color that mantled his cheeks just then, could hardly be said to be natural; his dark hair, almost a raven black, offered a strong contrast to the high, pale forehead from which it was thrown carelessly back, and his keen black eye had an expression of sadness, not usual at the light-hearted age of eighteen. The very easy and benevo-

lent manner in which he was received, at once removed the embarrassment manifest on his entrance.

"I address the Rev. Mr. Wharton, I presume, sir," Mr. Wharton bowed low. "If you will excuse the liberty of a perfect stranger, I wish to make a trifling inquiry; I am in search for a house in some country village, as a place of residence for my mother and two sisters, and although there is no one here with whom we are acquainted, yet from what I have learned of the place, I think my mother will be satisfied with it. I have, therefore, taken the strange liberty of making an application to you. Is there a probability, sir, that I could procure a place?"

Mr. Wharton did not reply immediately, but turning his eye from the young man, it met that of his lady, who at once put down her knitting.

"If the white cottage was only good enough, Mr. Wharton?"

He shook his head. "It would hardly answer, my dear, for a family that had been accustomed to city life."

"If the house, sir, is only at such a convenient distance from the place of worship, so that my mother could walk there, we should not be particular about other things, for it is from motives of economy that we are about to change our residence."

Mr. Wharton looked steadily at the youth as he said this, and his heart began to warm towards him; he had been struck with his personal appearance on his entrance, and this acknowledgment of straitened circumstances, made so off-hand and manly, excited at once his noble and generous mind; his countenance assumed immediately that blandness which was its most natural expression, and the tones of its voice were softened as he replied:

"There can be no objection on the score of its distance from our place of worship, and I think, with a few trifling repairs it might answer your purpose. But we shall not be able to visit the place this evening; make yourself at home with us to-night, and in the morning I shall be happy to accompany you to it."

The young man arose, and bowing politely, "I could not think, sir, of thus encroaching upon your hospitality. I have left my horse at the tavern, and feel that I have

taken a great liberty in even making the inquiries I have."

"By no means, by no means, sir. And if you have no particular objections, I should rather deem it a favor, than otherwise, for there are many questions I wish to ask about the city, and a visitor from there is a treat at this season of the year."

"Your horse will probably fare better than you would; our tavern is not just what we could wish, so you must permit me to add my earnest request to my husband's, and besides, you know, as a lady, I may be indulged in a little curiosity. If we are to be neighbors, it is right that we should get somewhat acquainted."

The young man could not resist this united plea; he blushed deeply, and seemed hesitating as to the propriety of resuming his seat, when Mrs. Wharton, smiling in her most winning manner, continued: "You know visitors are not apt to be so plenty as when the warm weather drives our friends from the city, and perhaps you may be acquainted with some of them?"

"I fear not, madam. Since our residence in the city, circumstances have prevented us from forming acquaintances; we scarcely can be said to have made any."

"Then you have not been long in New-York?"

"But three years, madam."

The storm now commenced in earnest, and beat furiously against the windows; the prospect without was cheerless indeed, and the young man began to congratulate himself that he was not exposed to its fury on the road. The strong contrast, too, which the scene within presented, was not lost upon him, and in spite of his feelings, as a stranger in a strange place, he began to enjoy the tokens of comfort with which he was surrounded. The cheerful fire blazed briskly, in the Franklin stove; illuminating its black and polished sides, and showing the little figures with which it was ornamented in all their glossy beauty, while from the brazen andirons and fender, and tongs and shovel, and from every little hook and knob, were bright rays dancing off and enlivening the hearth-scene. And, as he cast his eye around, every article of furniture, whether of wood, brass, marble, or silver, was throw

ing off from its bright surface the lively, dancing light which the crackling blaze sent forth.

There are spots in this varied world of ours, like oases in the desert, where sweet sights, sweet odors, and sweet sounds, throw upon the senses their united influence, charming the wearied spirit to repose, causing it to forget the trials of the past, and renewing its strength for the onward struggle.

To many a wearied sojourner had this humble dwelling proved a resting place for the heart. The neatness and order that were displayed, even in the most trifling matters, the air of calm and dignified enjoyment that was so manifest in the countenances and deportment of that reverend pair, the spirit of love that flowed forth in words, and tones, and manners, perfuming like the breath of spring, the very atmosphere around them all, like a potent spell, entranced the spirit, hushed its angry heavings, and soothed it into humility and peace.

To this youth such an influence was all powerful; he felt it stealing over him each moment in sweeter and stronger bands. The world looked brighter to him than it had done for months or years.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Wharton, "did I understand aright? is your name Edwards?"

Mr. Wharton had been walking about the room, as was his custom, and looking out occasionally upon the driving storm; while his lady, in her mild and pleasant way, was drawing out from the young man such relations of his family, as were consistent with delicacy, and a strong desire to know more of those, whose representation had made such a favorable impression on her mind.

"Yes, sir, James Edwards." Mr. Wharton took his seat and eyed the youth with an earnestness that was almost painful to him.

"And did you say that your father came from the South? from what part of the South?"

"From North Carolina, sir."

"May I ask you his first name?"

"John T. Edwards, of Pine Grove."

Mr. Wharton laid his hand on the shoulder of the young man.

"Are you a son of John T. Edwards? Was your father ever at Yale College?"

"He was there, sir, two years; but I have heard him say that, at the death of my grandfather, he was obliged to return home, and take charge of the estate."

Mrs. Wharton had laid down her knitting, and seemed to be equally excited with her husband, as though some strange development were at hand.

"Mr. Wharton, can it be? is it so? that this is a son of your old friend?"

"My dear son," said Mr. Wharton, taking the hand of the youth in both of his, "is it so? Yes, it must be, I see your father's bright eye and raven hair; how has this come about! Who has directed you to me? Welcome, a thousand times welcome."

Young Edwards was deeply affected; a rich glow suffused his naturally pale features, and he returned the cordial greeting of Mr. Wharton with a warmth that showed how much his heart felt this unexpected recognition by one who had been his father's friend.

There were now a thousand questions to be asked and answered, and the calm blue eye of Mr. Wharton was more than once suffused with a tear as he listened to the recital of the dark trials which had clouded the latter years of one whose youth was so bright and prosperous.

"You can little imagine, my dear young friend, what feelings this interview excites. Did you never hear your father mention an act of kindness which he did for a classmate when in college?"

"No, sir, never."

"That would be just like him. He was a noble-hearted man, but his true character was understood by very few. Did he retain in his later years a peculiar hauteur in his intercourse with strangers?"

"He was very reserved, sir, to all with whom he was not on terms of closest intimacy, and even in his family, had we not all known that his feelings of affection were of the strongest, most tender kind, his peculiar manner might have been misunderstood."

"Exactly so; he did not probably have many associates?"

"I may almost say none, sir."

"So I should have expected, and yet, perhaps, no man ever possessed a warmer heart, or one more susceptible to the strongest ties of friendship; the first time that I saw him was about one week after he took his seat in the class at college; we were in the same division of the class, and were seated together; there was something in his appearance that attracted my notice, although his cold and formal bow, as he took his place beside me at recitation, without the slightest relaxing of his stern countenance, and the dogged staidness of his deportment affected me rather unpleasantly, and was in such strong contrast with those on either side of us, that for some time I felt his presence to be irksome. I judged him to be extremely sensitive, and was, therefore, constantly in dread lest the thoughtless, though good-natured levity of those immediately about us, might produce an outbreak on his part, that would inevitably bring on him the ill will of all. Forming the opinion I did of him, and which happened to be a correct one, I presume my manner towards him was regulated thereby; I did not fear him, for we were about equal as scholars, but I studiously avoided, from feelings of delicacy, whatever might give him dissatisfaction. I also noticed that, as he shunned society, others also avoided him. He was alone in the midst of the multitude."

James was looking intently at Mr. Wharton, listening with thrilling interest to the peculiarities in his father's early life, when the last remark deeply affected him.

"And that may be said of him, especially for these few years past; my father——"

But the endearing name was yet too tender a remembrance, under his present state of excitement. He could proceed no farther. Mrs. Wharton's sympathizing heart was fully waked up, the more so as she perceived the manly efforts of the youth to suppress the strong feelings that were struggling for vent.

"Of course I never intruded myself upon him, but, as my own circumstances kept me from engaging in many of the frivolities of college life, and in some measure to seek retirement, I fancied, at times, that Mr. Edwards felt more complacently towards myself than he did to any others. On one occasion, I remember, he invited me to his room, and once or twice he did me the honor to seek my assistance in a diffi-

cult problem; to me he was civil and gentlemanly; to others distant, though polite.

"In our second year, a sudden blow came upon me. My father was utterly ruined in business, and I received information that I must return home, and seek some other calling. It was a moment of agony. I had maintained somewhat of a distinguished station in the class. I was intensely anxious to complete my course; all other employment appeared like drudgery of the most painful kind, and, to crown my calamity, I was in arrears to a considerable amount, not having for the last term received any remittances, and the letter which had just come to hand, contained only money sufficient to pay my expenses home.

"Disappointed, mortified, and almost hopeless, I shut myself up and made apologies of indisposition for non-appearance at recitations. Many of my class-mates dropped into my room in the course of the day, but to none of them could I unbosom myself, and when the evening began to close in, I was almost in a frantic state. There was a gentle tap at my door—your father entered—a kindly smile was visible to me. He accosted me in friendly tones, such as, until then, I should never have expected from him. He had seen, at the first glance, that some trouble was upon me.

"I am not apt," said he, "to intrude myself upon my friends—nor do I wish to do so now; but excuse me for inquiring if some peculiar trouble does not at present agitate you?"

There was so much sincerity in his whole manner, that I could not resist the impulse, and at once unburdened my mind. He said but little, yet the few sentences he uttered went to my heart. After remaining a short time he left me, and very soon the porter of the college handed me a letter. It was from your father. It contained not more than half a dozen lines, merely informing me that the inclosed amount was what he could spare with perfect convenience, until such time as I might be able to return it—it contained two hundred dollars."

The trembling tones in which Mr. Wharton closed his narrative, showed with what deep feelings he had treasured up this generous act. Young Edwards arose and walked to the window; his soul was on fire. He knew his father's noble spirit. The world had never known him; it had looked

coldly upon him, but his ear had heard the living testimony of one who realized his worth, and had felt his generosity.

The fountains burst forth; they had been sealed, even to his heart's better aching, in the presence of the multitude, but now they would not be restrained; and other tears were flowing fast, than those of that devoted, noble boy; and love, pure and true, was gushing forth its feelings, and the heart of him who came there as a stranger, was made to feel the joy, the comforting assurance of strong and enduring friendship.

CHAPTER IV.

It is an easy matter with a few dashes of a pen, even a poor one, to accomplish a mighty deal of work, to change residences, build houses, set people in love, get them into trouble and out of it; but each operation, in its actual performance, has many concomitants; many agents must be employed, and as one event in this shifting life either leads to another or has proceeded from another, it will not always answer to dash on from point to point in the story of human affairs, without sometimes entering into particulars, both of character and agency, that we may see more clearly the mutual dependence of effect and cause.

When such an operation as the removal of a family into the country is to be performed, it cannot be accomplished without time and patience, or, at least, it could not be at the time when the scenes which my story narrates took place.

It was then, and is now, a very easy matter to send for a cartman, and order him to take certain articles down to a certain slip, and place them on board a certain vessel, bound to such a place, and to sail, wind and weather permitting, on such a day. But the sailing of said vessel, and the time she would reach the place of her destination, were very doubtful matters forty years ago.

James had, at the urgent request of Mr. and Mrs. Wharton, taken his mother and sisters immediately to the parsonage. It was a sweet relief to their torn and sensitive spirits, to exchange the city, with its associations, now so painful to them, for that quiet resting place; amid warm and congenial

feelings to enjoy the sweets of sympathy, and revel in the interchange of pure and exalted friendship, to hold communion with those whose hearts opened wide to receive them, to talk of him whose clouded day had passed, but whose memory was embalmed in thoughts that blessed his noble spirit.

There is in every village, almost without exception, some one active and stirring body, whose business it seems to be to do up all the odds and ends that must be done by somebody.

Generally, this personage is one, upon whom his own cares and duties hang rather loosely. He keeps a pair of wild, daring horses, and is ever on the drive, from "pillar to post," and seldom home but at meal times.

The village in question, however, was served in this respect by a very different sort of character. Mr. Timothy Tightbody kept the only store in the place. He was a man well to do in the world. He had worked his way from very small beginnings to quite a respectable station in society. Early in life he had left his home by the bonnie banks of Doon, and acting ever on the principle, that "mony mickles mak a muckle," had found himself, at length, able to purchase his present stand and stock of goods.

Mr. Timothy Tightbody carried his economical, thriving principles into his new business, and as he took good care of his shop, that, very soon, began to take good care of him. He was a thickset, little man, of rather prepossessing countenance, with a sprightly way of speaking, and just enough of Scottish accent to give piquancy and force to it. He was well versed in all the proprieties of life, and had a winning way with him, that took well with all classes. To Mr. Wharton, he failed not to pay the utmost deference, being always the first to aid in such duties as the parish owed to their minister, and punctually attendant upon all the services of the Sabbath. How far the spiritual advice of the good pastor was attended to by Mr. Timothy, we will not pretend to say; but he was always in his seat, never slept during the sermon, and was sure to be just opening his pew door as Mr. Wharton passed down the aisle; and there was then such a cordial grasping of the hand, and such earnest inquiries after the health of Mr. W. and his good lady, as was quite a lesson to all who witnessed it.

Mr. Timothy was, just now, a widower, and, as he often said, "had neither chick nor child." A young man that assisted him in the store; an old colored woman who kept his house, with a "young black varmint," as he called a negro boy, that was forever committing some blunder, constituted his household.

Mr. Timothy had a pair of fine horses, and a very respectable barouche, in which he sometimes flourished on extra occasions. But the barouche was seldom drawn out of its resting place; a good lumber wagon served his turn generally, and, like all Mr. Timothy's establishment, was turned by him to very good account. It served to bring and carry goods from and to the landing, which, being at some distance from the centre of the village, it became a matter of great convenience to that vicinity.

Mrs. Edwards' goods had been placed on board a sloop and were daily expected. Mr. Timothy had been applied to by Mr. Wharton for aid in bringing them to the white cottage the moment the vessel should arrive. Mr. Timothy had also called and conversed with Mrs. Edwards on the subject. He had seen her two lovely daughters, and had made one of the most polite bows which he ever remembered to have made, as he took his leave. Mr. Timothy was much elated; it was an era in his being. Never before had he come in contact with such feminine sweetness; and many animating thoughts excited his rather susceptible heart. "These were to be his neighbors;" "he would doubtless have many opportunities of doing them a kindness;" "he would have the privilege of waiting upon them at his thriving establishment, measuring off yards of ribbon, and supplying *et ceteras* of nice things, such as would be suitable for persons of their standing." For, although Mr. Timothy knew of their reduced circumstances, yet he was a man who strongly believed in degrees of rank in this lower world, which depended not on the mere dollars and cents. High, very high on the scale did he place the widow and her daughters. The son he had not yet seen.

Time brings along events at last, and so, in days long gone by, sloops would get to their port of destination, but oftentimes not without a sad wear upon the patience. In the present instance the delay was a matter of small moment to the

good people at the parsonage, either to the visitors or their obliged entertainers, for the latter certainly appeared to feel, and doubtless did so, that the favor was all done to them. It was a sunny hour to them all; one of friendship's holy communion, where hearts were opened in their truth and beauty, and sweetly read by each, until, in one strong bond of love, they were fastened for the rest of life.

But Mr. Timothy, to use a homely phrase, "was on the tenter-hooks;" day after day, had he watched, with an eagle eye, for the white sail of the long-expected craft; and when it was at length seen, winding its tortuous way through the long stretch of meadows, he found that it was too late in the afternoon to hope that his important commission could be accomplished until the following morning.

Mr. Timothy was an early riser, and tried hard to bring his "family" into the same commendable habit; but old Bet was never in a hurry to go to bed, and equally as disinclined to use expedition in the morning. Pomp was always ready with his "yes massa" as soon as he was called, but it often amounted to nothing further until the same call had been repeated some several times. This morning, Mr. Tightbody had, however, succeeded in getting master Pomp to his "wide awake senses" just as the gray dawn was tinging the eastern sky. It was not very light in the stables, but, as every thing there was kept in its right place, it mattered not.

"Oh, you precious villain, see here!" Mr. Tightbody made this exclamation on passing by the side of his favorite horse, and feeling his head gear. "You rascal, how is this? You imp of the old one, look here; the whole blessed night has the poor beast been standing on his legs."

Master Pomp made his appearance from under the other horse, and letting his under lip fall, stared somewhat wildly at his master.

Pomp was rather an odd-looking specimen of humanity, somewhere between seventeen and thirty years of age; it being a difficult matter to determine, by looking at him, to which of the periods he ought to be assigned. He was short, and rather thickset, with very large features; his eyes, and nose, and mouth, and the whole apparatus of a head, seemed to have been designed for a tall frame. The first impres

sion on a stranger was, that he was on his knees or had lost his legs. He was, however, to use his own expressive term, "a whole nigger;" the body, legs and arms were all there, and the head part and parcel of the concern.

Pomp was verily confounded; he saw the dilemma in which the poor horse had been, but not the most distant recollection had he of having done the deed.

"He's been playing me a trick," was Pomp's next thought. Pomp had a strong religious belief, but it was all of the dark kind. It affected him when in the dark. The spirits, in whose power he believed, were dark spirits; he never expected any help from them, his only idea being, that their chief aim was to do him a mischief, or, as he said, to git a poor nigger into trouble. All the evil that happened to him he charged to their account; all his wrong-doings, especially if found out, he laid upon their shoulders, and if at any time an extraordinary event took place which brought him into trouble, without his being able to see exactly how he was to blame for it, he had a ready solution for the difficulty.

"He's been a playin' me a trick." Who Pomp meant by *He*, was best known to himself. He never spoke his name, but evidently considered him Captain-General of evil doers and evil doings.

"Don't look at me, you thundergust; look here at your doings; the horse tied tight to the ring of the rack, and not a bit could he lie down the blessed night. Aint you a precious villain? and won't I finger you!"

Pomp was somewhat startled by the tones of his master's voice; the names he called him by, being rather household terms, were matters of indifference to him; the tones were decidedly sharp. Pomp pulled hard upon the wool; he must do something to start the ideas; he began to remember a little of what had passed the previous day.

"Me, massa, me—no, no—me no 'member-tyin' Tom dat way—somebody else. Me no 'member 'bout it, massa, 'tall—when Tom come home last night?"

Mr. Timothy's ideas began to collect themselves. He had been out late with the horse; he had called at Mr. Wharton's, and he now remembered having put the horse in the stable himself, not caring to disturb the slumbers of Master Pomp, who was, after all, quite a pet with his master.

Why he had fastened the beast in such an unusual manner was, however, beyond the clear comprehension of the good man.

Mr. Timothy had, for a few days past, begun to hold his own head up. He was anxious to appear to the best advantage, to make the most of himself. Perhaps some such thoughts were passing his mind while tying his steed; he was much puzzled, however, to account for the act.

The recollection of matters, at once softened his feelings towards Pomp.

"Well, Pomp, never mind it now, my boy; finish cleaning the horses, and give them a good polish, do you hear?"

"Yes—will—massa."

Pomp was again at his work, rubbing away for dear life.

There are some days in this checkered life of ours, when every thing goes with a hitch and a check. It generally happens on some busy day; we seem to be under the influence of nightmare. We would go very fast; the urgency of the case demands it, but we are constantly meeting with pull backs, and often, under such circumstances, the faster we drive the less speed we make.

This may be set down as one of Mr. Tightbody's unlucky days; there were unexpected hinderances continually coming up, but he had finally overcome all obstacles, and was ready for a start. And, as he expected to have considerable handling to do, Master Pomp was summoned as an accompaniment.

It was rather a cool morning, and Pomp was chilly; he had therefore "saw to it," and arrayed himself in an outer coat, which had been in its day a plump little garment, that fitted well to the person of his master. It looked rather baggyish on the present wearer, but it suited the head. Pomp was not particular; he had turned the cuffs up to let his hands out, and it offered no obstruction to the full play of the legs. Mr. Tightbody was about to object to the singular appearance which his valet made, but Pomp stowed himself away in the bottom of the wagon, and, as his head only was visible, was allowed to pass muster.

His own person Mr. Timothy had attended to with more than usual care; he might, in the course of the morning, see

some "good company," and he wished to appear as a man should.

Never did the horses behave better; they held their heads up as though the spirit of their master possessed them; and as they passed the Parsonage put on some of their best airs, so that Mr. Timothy had much ado to restrain their excited feelings. After passing the mansion which just then affected the little man with so much interest, the horses' heads were gracefully turned from the highway into a narrow road which led directly to the landing. They had proceeded but a short distance, probably a quarter of a mile, when, by some caper, one of the horses got his head under his fellow's rein. By dint of much pulling and coaxing Mr. Tightbody succeeded in bringing them to a halt, and Pomp was ordered out to fix things straight.

As I have said, this was one of Mr. Timothy's unlucky days.

Wishing to return two empty flaxseed casks by the sloop from which he was to receive the goods, he had placed them in the wagon. Being a careful man, the heads had been replaced as soon as the casks were emptied, and, as Mr. Tightbody said, were as tight as a drum. On one of these casks he had packed himself, and had felt, not only quite elevated but perfectly secure.

Just as Pomp had succeeded in putting things to rights, and was leaving the horses' heads, he heard a slight noise, and turned quickly towards the wagon.

"My golly!!!"

Pomp looked around him on every side, but no master was to be seen; he stuck his arms akimbo, dropped his under-jaw, and opened his eyes to their widest stretch. He was utterly confounded.

"My golly! where massa!!!"

A deep, hollow call reached his ear—

"Help—help—Pomp—quick!"

"He's got him. My golly! massa gone case."

Pomp started off to one side of the road; again the voice called: it seemed further off still—

"Pomp, Pomp, help! help."

Pomp could stand it no longer. The sudden disappearance of his master; the call for help, as if from under

ground, all convinced him of the catastrophe. His turn might be next.

"Massa gone case, sure 'nuf."

Pomp's legs had full play, and they travelled off with a speed equal to the extremity of the case.

Mr. Tightbody had not gone lower than the bottom of the flax-seed cask; it was, however, low enough, in the position that he entered it, to hide all that was mortal of him. The tallest among us would make but small show in the world doubled up like a slapjack, and could be stowed away in no very large apartment; but Mr. Tightbody was not tall, as I have said. Once in, he was fully absorbed, and as helpless as Jonah, in the whale's belly. The horses were restless beasts, and no sooner was Pomp away from their heads, and well on his race, than they started likewise. Mr. Tightbody felt that they were going, and might, firmly anchored as he was, have held on to the reins with a tight purchase. But here was a difficulty, he had but one hand at liberty; the other happened to be, at the moment of his descent, in a hind pocket, and there it had to remain, and the reins had been slackened, the better to assist Master Pomp in fixing the horses. He felt them gathering speed; in fact, they were taking matters into their own hands, or heels, and where he or they would land was an uncertainty, not very pleasant to anticipate; he knew that the road he was upon soon led over two bridges that crossed the creek in its windings, and neither of them protected by railings; and he thought of many things that are apt to be kept out of mind in the common run of life. In fact, there was a rush of feeling, such as the poor man had never experienced before.

Just as Pomp started on his race, a young man sprang over the fence from an adjoining field, and made rapid bounds towards the wagon. He had witnessed the scene through an opening in the bushes that lined the road, but had not been observed by either Pomp or his master. Fearing if he attempted to seize the horses' heads he should give them an alarm that would only increase the difficulty, he made directly for the hind end of the wagon; he was within a few feet, and grasped at the hind-board, but a sudden spring of the horses took it beyond his reach.

"Help, help! I'm a dead man. Pomp, help, quick."

Excited by the cries from the helpless man, the youth made a desperate effort; he felt that the life of a human being depended upon his success. One leap more, and he seized the board; his feet in an instant flew from under him, for the horses were at their speed; but his grasp was strong and his arm nerved with the vigor of youth, and the desire to rescue the sufferer from his deadly peril; a few efforts more and he was within, and the reins grasped by a skilful hand. Without any fear himself, he soon managed to calm the apprehensions of the beasts, who were beginning to be alarmed at their unrestrained speed. As soon as he had brought them to a halt, he cast his eye down upon the sufferer, who also looked up piteously to him. They were strangers to each other.

"The blessing of all things be upon you, for a brave heart and a true hand. I was a dead man but for your aid, my young gentleman."

"Have a little further patience, my good sir, until I untackle the horses, for they are much excited."

It was the work of but a few moments, for the young man was no novice at such business. The horses were released from the wagon and fastened to the fence, and a fair prospect was now opened for the deliverance of Mr. Tightbody. Many expedients were thought of by both parties, and the only feasible one seemed to be that of rolling the cask on its side, with its cargo of humanity, and by some means, not very obvious just then, helping him to work his way out.

Mr. Tightbody found it no easy thing, with all the assistance the young man could give him, the work of the latter being to keep the head and feet as near together as possible until the whole carcass had been withdrawn, when he lay stretched straight out upon the bottom of the wagon, taking long breaths and making sundry short exclamations, the purport of which not very easily defined. Starting up, finally, from his prostrate position, he cast his eye around, as if to take the bearings of his whereabouts, and speaking very deliberately,

"Can you tell me, my young gentleman, have you seen any thing of a black varmint that was by the horses when this spree came on?"

"I saw something black, sir," said the young man, smi-

ling "making rapid strides towards the village; he has probably gone for help."

"The black scoundrel! and a pretty story he'll make of it. But may I take the liberty of asking the name of one who has been so serviceable to me? you must be a stranger, I take it, in these parts?"

"I am a stranger, sir, having but recently come to the village; my name is Edwards—James Edwards."

Mr. Timothy was utterly confounded; what an unfortunate circumstance! but he must make the best of it.

"Edwards! What! not a son of that excellent lady who is about to settle among us?"

"I am the son of Mrs. Edwards, sir, and am very happy that, in my ramble over the fields, I happened to be in this vicinity, and thereby so fortunate as to be of service to one to whom our family will be neighbors."

"And right proud and happy am I, sir, in the prospect of such an event, and shall hope to prove my gratitude to you, my young gentleman, before we've done with one another. I am not the man to forget a kind act. Will you ride to the landing with me, Mr. Edwards? it's a fine morning, and the beasts are in good heart."

"I was on the point of asking the favor, sir. Your servant, I believe, is returning; at least, I think yonder is the boy who left you so suddenly."

Mr. Timothy answered not; he looked in the direction to which the young man pointed, satisfied himself, doubtless, as to the identity of Master Pomp, and also of the fact that he had been for help, for a man was walking beside him, and both were making haste towards the wagon; and then springing to the horses, began with all haste to tackle them.

The surprise of Pomp on beholding his master in the breathing world, safe and sound, was very manifest in his bewildered look. It was all hocus-pocus to him; but he said nothing, for his master had given him an expressive shake of the head, as much as to say, "Very well, my gentleman, you've done it; never mind."

Mr. Tightbody was well acquainted with the person whom Pomp had brought along, and he was one to whom he felt little inclined to be under obligations. He, therefore, assumed a very indifferent air, as though nothing had hap-

pened, called Pomp to "jump in," cracked his whip, and was off, leaving the man in no little astonishment at the whole affair.

The ride was as agreeable now as a ride could be. Mr. Tightbody became quite enamored with his new acquaintance, for James had not only proved himself a skilful manager of horses, but when work was on hand, manifested a readiness to take hold that was very satisfactory to the mind of Mr. Tightbody; and a few days after, in speaking of him to a person of some consequence in the village, he did it with much emphasis.

"He's a true gentleman born and bred, that any man can see; and he is not afraid nor ashamed to put his shoulder to the work when it is on hand to do."

As things go, this opinion of Mr. Tightbody was of some consequence, and it may prove so to our hero.

CHAPTER V.

THERE are many noble sentiments cherished in the heart, which are never brought to light in real life, because the energy necessary to carry them into effect is wanting. A few untoward circumstances are, in most cases, sufficient to dampen the zeal and put an end to the finest suggestion.

To quit ourselves like men in the great contest on the field of life, we must keep our eye fixed on the goal to which our hopes aspire, amid all the obstacles that obstruct our way, and through all the windings to which necessity compels us.

James Edwards had accomplished one part of the plan in reference to his mother and sisters. He had procured for them a dwelling in a retired, country village, and he had attended them to their new abode, and assisted in arranging the few articles of furniture, which they had reserved from the general sale. He had introduced them to kind friends, and when he left them to seek a living for himself and them, rich were the tokens of love he had received from those dear

ones of his heart, and strong was his confidence that he should soon send tidings of good to relieve their anxiety, and prove his ability to accomplish what his true heart had devised.

Those of my readers who have been long acquainted with the city of New-York, will remember, in the upper part of what was once Sugar-loaf street, some distance from Broadway, houses were not quite as plenty as they now are. And perhaps, on a fine afternoon in the fall of the year, some of them may have taken a game of ball there, and sometimes have been obliged to climb over the piles of boards, which belonged to a lumber-yard near by, in search for the missile, which some unlucky blow had sent in the wrong direction.

Near to this lumber-yard stood a small wooden building, back from the street, and almost hidden by a high board fence running parallel with it, and on a range with the two-story brick houses, which commenced at some distance from Broadway. In this fence was a gate, or door, generally open, and the passer-by would be almost sure to give a second look as the rural aspect of the place attracted his eye; for there were a few shrubs scattered around, and the premises were always neat and orderly. Over the gate was a little tin sign bearing the inscription, "Boots and shoes mended here by J. Upjohn."

As the dwelling-house in which Mr. Edwards lived was not far from the described premises, James had become acquainted with the family, by stopping in occasionally to take advantage of the handiwork of Mr. Upjohn.

The pleasant manners of the boy won the good will of the old man, and often when at leisure, James found it an agreeable place to stop and chat for an hour. He was always made so welcome, and there was such an air of comfort by the fireside of this little family, and each one had so much to say to him in their homely, pleasant way, that with the exception of his own home, he knew no place so agreeable.

Mr. Upjohn was a native of New Jersey—a plain, unassuming, sensible man, who worked diligently through the day, but who would, for no consideration, put his hand to his awl after candle-lighting; he was fond of reading, and fond of arguing, and sometimes a little too positive in expressing an opinion, and then in adhering to it; but with

something of a bluntness of manner, not always agreeable, he possessed a kindness and gentleness of heart, which few could boast. His wife was an amiable, soft-hearted, soft-spoken woman, with a pleasant countenance, upon which there could always be seen the light of a smile. Besides this couple, there was but one other member of the family—a niece—without parents or other kindred nearer than those, who had taken her as their own. They loved her tenderly, but perhaps not wisely. Gertrude had some wild ways with her which should have been corrected when a child, and now they might have been remedied by a little care; but the good folks did not realize that there was any thing out of the way.

"Gitty was a thought giddy; but she was only a child."

She was sixteen, however, and rather tall of her age; marks of beauty were already developing, and gave promise of more than a usual share of that dangerous attendant. Her flaxen hair had, indeed, been too light to please the fancy of many, but it was evidently assuming a browner tinge. It curled, one would have thought, quite enough, naturally, but Gitty helped it along a little. It still lay in a childish manner around her ears and down upon her shoulders. Whatever "fixing" it had certainly evidenced much taste; her features were well made, forming an open, joyous countenance, and her complexion was pure and bright.

The kindness of Mr. Upjohn during the sickness and death of Mr. Edwards has already been noticed, and when James returned to the city and called according to his promise, he was welcomed with all the warm-hearted interest of near relatives.

"And now, master James, I hope you will not take it amiss, that I ask you to tarry with us; we are poor folks, to be sure, but what we have, you are heartily welcome to, and wife can fix you a place to sleep in, not quite so good as you have been accustomed to, but it will be clean, that I'll warrant, and may be you will rest as well in it, as in some grander place."

As Mr. Upjohn said this, his wife laid down her needle-work, took her spectacles off, and with a look of earnestness, while a smile played over her honest countenance, spoke as truly as looks could speak, that she heartily agreed to all her

husband had said; while Gitty pulled one of her long curls, and blushed, and manifested by many restless signs, that it also met her decided approbation.

James felt the kindness of the offer, and the color that mantled his pale cheek, and the moistening of his bright eye clearly indicated how much he was affected by it. A moment, he looked at the honest pair in silence, and they, from their hearts, hoped that he was concluding to do as they desired.

"I thank you most truly, my dear sir, for your kind offer; I should be happier here, now, than any where else in this great city; it seems indeed like home to me; but you know that my plan is, with all expedition, to procure a situation where I can be earning something. The only business with which I am acquainted is that which will qualify me for a clerkship in some merchant's office; to accomplish this, I must be where I can meet with such as might employ me. You know, also, how strangely destitute I am of friends, or even acquaintances, who could aid or recommend me. I must form acquaintances for myself. I must be among those who are in active business, and have, therefore, engaged board at a public house in the business quarter of the city."

Mr. Upjohn felt that there was just reasoning in what the youth spoke.

"You will come then as often as you can to see us," said Mrs. Upjohn, "and let us know how you get along; and if at any time we can do any thing for you in the mending way, just bring it along, and if the work is too fine for my old eyes, why Gitty will be proud to do it."

Gitty became very restless; she pulled the curls harder than ever, and smiled until her beautiful white teeth were fully exposed through her ruby lips. Gitty's mouth was, to say the truth, finely formed, and gave a richness to the whole expression of her countenance.

James expressed, as well as he was able, his sense of their kind offer. It was to his young heart a draught from the cup of life, that warmed its generous throbbings into a glow of love. At the very threshold, as he stepped forth into the wide world of strangers, he had been met by a generous sympathy. It was a bright world; he knew it was; there might be dark spots in it, but it was much better than

many said it was, better than he himself had thought it. And as he left those humble friends, and walked, with elastic step, to his new place of abode, kind faces seemed to smile upon him, and generous hearts seemed ready to pour out their fulness for him, in all the hurrying multitude that passed him on his way.

CHAPTER VI.

HOPE is a mighty power within the fresh, young heart, and, like the daring chief of Macedon, the youth, with reckless ardor, ventures forth upon an untried region, beneath that soul-inspiring banner, with scarce the meagre ration which that hero had. Well for him will it be, if, in his bright and sunny hour of life, he meets not with those blasting storms, which often sweep across the track which man must travel; when his heart will quiver at the gathering of the blood-red tempest, and his limbs falter beneath the influence of the poisoned air, and his banner, torn from his grasp, go with the roaring wind, and, on the weary wilderness, himself lie down a hopeless, human wreck.

Many such there are. We meet them in our daily walk. We hear of them in our daily tidings from the busy world. We heave a sigh, perhaps, or drop a tear, and then pass on.

A situation, such as James sought for, is not so easily obtained as persons unacquainted with the city are apt to imagine. Interested friends and strong recommendations are often needed to place a young man where an amount of salary is paid that would make it desirable; and especially are these necessary when a stagnation of business has made clerks abundant and places scarce.

The pressure of such a trial to the mercantile community was felt in all its sad realities, with full as much severity as it had been for months past, and with the exception of the favored few who were beyond the chances of trade, the mass was struggling amid difficulties that caused many a sleepless night, and many a sad and silent fireside.

"I wonder why it is, wife, that James,"—they all called

him James, so much at home had he become at Mr. Upjohn's—"I wonder why it is that James has not been here for now more than two weeks?"

"I fear the poor child is getting discouraged; he seemed very much down-hearted when he was last here. I guess he finds it hard to get a place; and aint you most afraid, husband, that he is spending all his money. Poor boy! you know he hadn't much."

"I met him last evening, aunt, or rather I passed him in Broadway; he looked very pale and thin. I was almost a mind to stop and speak to him, but I didn't."

Mr. Upjohn looked a moment rather sternly at Gitty, and then cast a significant glance towards his good woman, as much as to say—"there, wife, there's something about that; you had better see into."

"And where did you say, Gitty, that you met him? in Broadway! I thought you was spending the evening at Lydia's."

"Well, so I was, aunt, but you see we girls got tired of sitting so still; the old folks, you know, are rather dull, and we wanted a little run."

"What! you two girls alone, Gitty?" and her uncle looked very soberly, as he said this, into the bright fire. Gitty gave her head a toss, just to throw the curls back where she would have them."

"Oh, you know, uncle, Mr. Jones was with us; he stepped in to see Lydia."

Alas, poor uncle! he knew nothing about it; but Gitty smiled so sweetly at him, and put her arm so playfully upon his shoulder, that whatever severe thing he may have designed to say, was at once suppressed.

"Be careful, Gitty, be careful. Jones, did you say? what Jones?"

"Oh, how should I know, uncle! but Lydia knew him, you see. He seems to be a clever fellow, any how. I felt very sorry, though, about James, and meant to have spoken to you about him." Gitty was very anxious just then to turn the thoughts of her guardian away from herself.

"I think, papa, Mrs. Upjohn frequently gave this title to her husband for the reason, perhaps, that there were no

little ones to call him so."—I think, papa, you had better go down to-morrow and see about him."

"Not to-morrow, wife; there is too much work on hand, and I've promised it to be done; but there's some one has opened the gate; perhaps he is coming now."

A gentle tap at the outer door was immediately recognized as his, and Gitty arose at once to admit him.

"Ah, Mr. James, welcome, right welcome; take a seat. Gitty, that chair; how has it been with you? Draw your chair close to the fire, it's a chilly evening."

"We were just talking about you. I was saying to Mr. Upjohn, that I wished he would walk down and see how you got along; do you know it is more than two weeks since you was here?"

James had, as yet, said nothing in answer to either of the good folks. He bowed politely to them, took the seat which Gitty placed for him, and as Mr. Upjohn requested, drew it a little nearer to the corner. The bright light shone full upon him, and all present noticed the change which had passed upon his countenance. It was much paler than usual, and had almost a haggard look; had he passed through some great trouble, it could not have worn a more marked expression.

"You have not been well, Master James?"

"Yes, sir, oh yes, quite well; I had a slight cold, but it has passed off."

"It seems by the papers, that times are dull among the merchants yet."

"So it appears, sir, very dull; many are failing and all business seems to be at a stand; it looks dark ahead."

"How have you succeeded in getting a situation? found one to your mind yet?"

Mr. Upjohn asked this question in a rather indifferent manner; he had not much hope, from the aspect of things, that it could be answered in the affirmative, and although he was painfully anxious that it might, yet he wished to convey the idea, that it was a matter hardly to be expected in so short a time and under existing circumstances; his kind heart prompted at once the thought, that hope, encouragement, must ever be held up to the youthful mind; let these stimulants be withdrawn, and they are at the mercy of every

difficulty. James answered in tones that spoke a stronger meaning than his words.

"Not yet, sir, no; and I fear very much that I must give it up." Mr. Upjohn looked steadily at the fire without expressing any surprise or exhibiting any emotion; he saw clearly that the poor youth was under intense and excited feelings.

"I have heard as yet, sir, of very few situations; I have applied to each of them, but without success. In fact, I have about given up; one place I might, possibly, have obtained, but they wanted recommendations from some person with whom I had previously lived, and that you know—"

"True, true; that might be a difficulty with some, but that is not such a serious one after all, and when the times change, it will be different."

"I wish I had a good trade, Mr. Upjohn—I would hardly care what it was, if it would only afford me an honest living."

"Oh, Mr. James!" and the old lady put her spectacles on the table, and clasped her hands together on her lap—"how you do talk! How would you look with an apron on and an awl in your hand, and a last strapped over your knee; or may be with a trowel dabbling in mortar, or a plane and a saw? You wasn't made for it."

"I was not brought up to any such employment, Mrs. Upjohn, but perhaps it would be much better for me now if I had been."

"Every one for their calling," said the old man, rising and putting back a brand that had fallen on the hearth; "we've got to bide by that which we have been brought up to. A trade is a good thing, that is, if a man sticks to it. We must expect to live plain, to be sure; but it is my way of thinking, that it aint much matter whether we live in a big house or a small one, so as we bring our mind to our means. A man can be very happy, even if he lives in a poor way. Two and twenty years I have worked on my bench—"

"That is, by daylight, uncle."

"Yes, by daylight, you hussy, candle-light was never meant to work by; and besides, I expect to make a life business of it; and a man wants something for his mind to feed

on as well as his body; my evenings, I like to spend with a book, or may be chatting with a friend. And I don't know but I enjoy my fireside as much as some who live in grander style. But as I was saying, two and twenty years I have worked steady, but moderately, at my trade, and we've lived comfortably in our way. Many whom I have known have gone up a good deal higher; and sometimes I have felt as though some other occupation would have been better; but when changes would come about, and people were tumbling down from their high places, and gray hairs were covering heads that were not so old as mine, then I have thought that my old seat was about as safe a one, and as easy a one as some others;—but, as I was saying, we must follow our calling."

"But what if there is no employment in that calling, Mr. Upjohn? and there seems to be none in mine, or none that I can live by working at."

"Well, Mr. James, I apprehend your difficulty; but you are not alone. There always will be these reverses in business when things are all turned heels uppermost; merchants gloomy and sad, many of them broken to pieces and disheartened, and not knowing where to get bread for their families. It is a dark time now, very dark; I pity those who are standing on a pinnacle, not knowing but they will soon be plunged in the dark gulf which lays beneath them. I pity them; but a man must put on a good courage, and when the storms are about him, do the best he can. Clear skies will come again."

James listened to the reasoning of his old friend. It might be all well enough, but to his sad heart no encouragement was of any moment that did not hold out the prospect of immediate relief, a place in which he could labor, and obtain food for those dependent ones who had cast themselves upon his feeble arm.

The fact was, and the truth may as well be told at once, James had reached a point in the state of his affairs at which he must come to a stand, and look forth in some new direction for a path to follow. He had engaged board in a public house much frequented by merchants and merchants' clerks; he had watched every new advertisement, and made application to each in turn; he had endeavored to become

acquainted with young men already employed, and who might possibly help him to a place, but all in vain. The small amount of money which had been left from the sale of the furniture, had been much reduced by the expense of removal, and the most of what was left, he had from necessity taken with him. Some weeks had passed in his fruitless effort; and his funds were reduced to so small an allowance that he had only sufficient to bear his expenses for another week.

Winter was at hand, too, with its frosts to chill the heart, and dry up the streams of trade, already sluggish and shallow.

He was possessed of strong, even violent feelings. Hitherto the effect of them had been to nerve his heart with the most engrossing tenderness to those upon whom his love was placed, and its outpourings had filled those dear ones with the fondest hopes, and the most affecting consolations.

But his very strength of feeling was now turning in upon himself, and working upon his sensitive spirit with a power, that would soon unfit him for the severe and manly struggle in which he had engaged.

It conjured up before him all the dark visions of the past, only to throw a deeper gloom upon the stern realities of the present. With a sad and desolate heart, he mingled with the busy multitude through the day, and retired at night to his sleepless bed, or to awake from troubled dreams to the consciousness of his dependent and unhappy condition.

No wonder if a change was so manifest on his youthful brow. Alas! dear youth; this is but a taste of the bitter cup. What, think you, would it be to wring out the dregs and drink them?

There are more evils in this changing scene than your young heart has yet imagined; and yet there are sweet draughts too, whose potent charms steal o'er the soul, entrancing it with pleasures beaming from a better world, and giving rich foretaste of what it may yet enjoy. The lights and the shadows, the sweet and bitter draughts are appointed with a wiser aim, and for a better end, than our fancy fashions.

While Mr. Upjohn was engaged in his homely way, giving true and manly advice, and endeavoring to cheer up the mind of young Edwards, Gitty had been stirring round to

some purpose, and arranging things on a little table in the centre of the room.

"Come, Master James, draw up your chair. Gitty, you see, has been getting some nic-nacs for us; that's the way with these girls, always throwing temptations in our way—move up, Master James, move up."

Gitty had, indeed, gathered quite a little variety of good things, and they were placed upon a snow-white cloth. There was a plate of large red apples, shining like rubies; and a dish of Kissketom nuts, well cracked, and showing abundance of rich meat, and another plate of plump, tempting doughnuts, and a large pitcher of spruce beer, with the foam rising in a pyramid upon the top. Gitty's eyes, too, were sparkling with delight, and Mrs. Upjohn's needles flew with astonishing rapidity, while her husband almost allowed a smile to rest upon his rigid countenance.

Scarcely had they commenced partaking of these simple refreshments, when the little gate was heard to open, and soon there was quite a rap at the door.

Gitty, as was her custom, immediately caught a light from the table, and attended the summons. As she opened the door a young gentleman, fashionably dressed, was standing on the step. He was evidently confounded for a moment; Gitty began to think he had made some mistake, and was just putting on one of her pretty smiles, such as play around the mouth of these mischief-makers, when they find one of the sterner sex at fault.

The young man felt the awkwardness of his silence; he saw the smile.

"Pardon me, Miss; I was directed here from No. — street, as the place where I should, probably, learn something of James Edwards."

"He is here, sir; will you please walk in?"

James had heard his own name mentioned, and immediately stepped to the door. It was Rudolph Hunt.

The young men at once recognized each other.

"I have called on you, Mr. Edwards, to inquire whether you have yet procured a situation."

"I have not, sir; will you walk in?"

He accepted the invitation, with almost too much readiness quite to satisfy the delicate notions of Edwards, for he

at once laid down his hat, and threw off his outer coat. James could not do less than introduce him to the little circle; he blushed deeply as he did so, however, and so did Gitty, who threw her curls back, and seemed for a time quite restless.

"I am glad to hear, Mr. Edwards, that you have not yet suited yourself, for my uncle seems now quite anxious to engage you. I say my uncle, for although they are both my uncles, you, no doubt, perceived the last time you called, that the difficulty was only with one of them."

"I should be very sorry if his objections, whatever they were, have been overruled by any —"

"Oh! it has all been of his own will, and I think if you will call to-morrow, that an arrangement will be made satisfactory to you."

Reader, have you ever bowed down under the burden of care? has your spirit ever agonized beneath the load that was pressing upon it? has the curtain of night, not sweet starlight or sweet moonlight night, sparkling in beauty above, or spreading its mild loveliness in your path, or by your sleeping couch, but night, drear and fathomless, whose deep drapery has wrapped your soul in gloom, and filled it with uncertain horrors, ever enveloped; in such darkness, have streaks of morning suddenly darted through the gloom, and from such a burden, has some kind hand, in an unexpected moment, delivered your sinking frame, and administered a cordial balsam to your spirit;—then can you tell what change a few moments, a few short sentences have wrought upon the mind of this lone youth.

There was much lively chatting now, around that humble board. Rudolph Hunt appeared quite at ease; he had much of the polish of the gentleman, but to Edwards, who had a keen sense of propriety, his freedom of manners was not agreeable, and, more than once, James felt the blush warming his cheek, at what he thought not entirely consistent with the conduct of one so lately a stranger. Gitty was, however, highly elated; it was a bright evening to her; but well for her, if it prove not the beginning of sorrow.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Mrs. Edwards bade adieu to James, as he left their new abode to seek his fortune in the great city, she put on a cheerful smile, and gave him such words of encouragement as she felt he needed for the serious undertaking upon which his mind was fixed. But her heart was sad; she indeed hoped much from his strong resolution, his industrious habits, and his virtuous character; but she knew more of the world than he could as yet possibly know. Hitherto he had not been beyond a parent's roof. He had not come in contact with those ensnaring influences, which meet the young in our large cities, and draw so many into their resistless vortex. She, also, knew more of the difficulties which he might, and doubtless would, have to contend against. But his heart was full of hope, and she could not bear to quench its ardor, or to throw a shadow on that quickening beam. Still she had her fears, a mother's fears; they would come unbidden, and disturb her most peaceful moments. She knew that James had noble sentiments, strong filial love, and that hitherto his pure mind seemed to be unsullied by one dark spot; but how would he conduct when left without a guardian; when the sweet influence of mother and sisters would be wanting, and his ardent temperament should come in contact with the allurements of the city? And what would life be worth to her now, should he prove recreant to the high character he had hitherto sustained? The trembling spirit could alone quiet its maternal anxieties, by casting the loved one upon the care of an unseen Protector. Delightful, however, to her mourning heart, was the change from the bustling city, to the quiet and seclusion of the country. In the heyday of life, in youth and prosperity, the city has its fascinations, but when we have tasted of the bitter cup, or have become wearied with chasing the retreating phantasies of life, there is no place like the country. Its noiseless beauties invite the soul toward its great Parent. The freshness of its pure breezes cools the burning brain and allays the fevered pulse; the bright loveliness of summer, the bursting life of spring, the waning tints of autumn, and even

the storms of winter, each has a power of its own that speaks to the heart, that strikes its finest cords, and wakes a melody there which lulls the sufferer to sweet repose.

There, too, the child of sorrow meets with that sweet sympathy from his fellow man, which in vain he looks for in the crowded mart. The rich man, who affects the pomp and show of city life, and thinks by the glitter of his wealth to claim that homage which obsequious multitudes have paid for the sake of his favor or his gold, may not meet with it. Farmers, in our happy land, tread freely on their own soil. They meet the city millionaire with an open brow, for they fear him not; and all his wealth could not purchase one single favor that would not be granted, willingly, to the most abject being that dwells in their neighborhood. But to the downcast sufferer, from whatever cause, there is ever a ready hand and a feeling heart among those who have been reared amid the suns and storms, and free, pure air of the country. They have been trained to feel that, when trouble was upon a neighbor, it was their business to be doing something. When the swift tempest, or the unsparing flame destroys the humble dwelling and the happy home, soon, like a Phoenix from its ashes, arises another and a better in its stead, the gift of many hands, poured forth willingly into the bosom of the unfortunate; and when the dark, walking pestilence is abroad, and sickness and death do his bidding, no hireling watches around the last bed; those who have been companions in the work-field, or together laughed lightly at the festive board, are watching with noiseless tread, within the sick chamber, administering with their own hands to every want and weakness; and when death has done his work, they still are there performing the last sad offices, until the departed one is laid to rest in his long home. These and a thousand nameless acts of love beget a fellow-feeling, of which those who live where money buys all service that we need, from the cradle to the grave, know nothing.

Blest rural life! Thy homely fare, thy simple pleasures, thy manly toil, and thy calm retreats, may be despised by the flutterers in the thronged and splendid mart; but keep to thy plain and homeborn virtues, maintain thy jealousy of pomp and state, nor ever covet the glittering tinsel that, at times, flashes across your quiet path; could you see the

aching hearts it covers, you would love your inheritance the better.

Mrs. Edwards had been reared among the gay and fashionable, but long had she withdrawn from these, and sought her joy alone in the smile of him to whom her heart was given. Her husband's home became her festal hall, and there she reigned sole queen of those she loved. That home has passed away, like all other visions, and now she finds herself the centre of deep responsibilities, and with a frail and uncertain prospect, even of a scanty subsistence. But the even tenor of her placid mind is undisturbed; with the same dignified and graceful step, she walks within the lowly cottage, as when she trod the stately mansion in former days. The same mild beauty sheds its loveliness around her, and the same soft tones fall sweetly on the ears of her children, or those new friends and neighbors, whose constant kindnesses she experiences and warmly prizes.

The fruition of our hopes is often delayed, so far as we can judge, only to make the blessing more truly realized, and our hearts more happy.

A lonely winter day had just come to a close, and Mrs. Edwards and her daughters were surrounding their little table before the fire, and plying their busy needles.

"I fear, mother," said Mary, turning her full lustrous eyes up from her work, "that James will be obliged to yield to stern necessity, and come home to us, disappointed and chagrined."

"It may be so, my dear; I have had my fears all along, and yet I cannot but hope he may be spared that trial."

"What would he do, dear mother? His mind has been so fixed and his confidence so strong; oh! how I do feel for him. It is no trifling thing to be poor."

"It is not, my dear; a state of dependence involves in its contingences scenes of deep and terrible suffering."

"I should feel worse, mother, to have brother come back disappointed, than if we were all obliged to live on a mere crust of bread and a drink of water."

"We all should, Julia, and it is such a trial, as that would be, which gives to coming poverty its sharpest pang: it is not the fear that we shall not have bread and water, or that the home which shelters us will be rude and small, but

It is the crushing of fond hopes, the blasting of noble and just intentions, the disabling of a mind whose views are pure, from carrying out its grand idea and accomplishing an exalted end."

"Mother, will you read his last letter again?"

There was no reply to this request, for a sudden rap at the front door put the little circle at once in a state of wonderment. It was a rap of such peculiar kind that each one instinctively exclaimed, "Who can it be?"

It was not the common rap of any of the neighbors. There was a flourish to it very unusual; first a loud rap with a little accompaniment, and then a long string of delicate touches, ending with one almost equal in volume to the first.

"I will soon see," said Julia, laying down her work and seizing a lamp from the table.

As the room in which they were sitting was somewhat removed, it was not easy to distinguish voices; but some one was chatting in a lively, pleasant way with Julia, and by laying aside his outer garment, was evidently intending quite a call.

Never did old Sol, when on some fair spring morning his mild, broad disk arose upon our goodly earth, shine with more complacency than did the full, round face of Mr. Timothy Tightbody, as he stood in the door of the little room, and bowed to the two ladies, who were still seated at the table and indulging a very natural curiosity respecting the coming guest. From top to toe, he was in his best—an entirely new rig. A bottle-green coat of the newest cut, with small brass buttons, a bright buff vest, held together by three of the same kind of fastenings; a frill, broad and full and with very small plaits, gracefully protruding, adorned the upper man; bottle-green nether garments, and well polished boots, completed the array. Above all these, however, and to which, properly speaking, my figure of the sun was intended to apply, shone his full, round face. Mr. Timothy had certainly, to use a homely phrase, "been giving himself a good scrubbing;" he had used the soap unsparingly, for his well-filled cheeks and apple forehead glistened like an alabaster bust; and to crown all, just on the very peak of what would otherwise have been a flat head, there dangled a very graceful curl of rather grayish hair, formed by gathering the stray locks from adjacent

parts, and by some sleight of hand, causing them to combine and twist together, thereby not only making a finish, which some might admire, but also covering up a spot that, I am sorry to say, had no covering of its own. And never did the aforesaid planet manifest more real good will towards our little ball, than was exhibited in the smile accompanying the very polite bow with which Mr. Timothy ushered himself into the room.

"Your servant, ladies; Mrs. Edwards, I hope I see you well; Miss Mary, your most obedient; don't rise, ladies, don't rise"—seeing them on their feet, and doing their best to return his respectful salutations.

Mr. Tightbody was immediately provided with a seat, but it was some time before he could make up his mind to take possession; he had two or three extra bows to make, and finally, just as he had apparently decided to be stationary, all at once he made a rapid movement towards Mrs. Edwards.

"Excuse me, my dear madam, but I had like to have forgotten my errand."

He handed her a letter. The bow, and the smile, and the presentation of the letter, together with the rapid retrograde move to the chair, was a sight not often witnessed.

"A letter from James!" said Mrs. Edwards, holding it up to the view of her daughters, "and there is no post-mark upon it; is it possible you have brought it from my son, personally?"

Mr. Tightbody was again on his feet, and bending his body forward. "It affords me infinite pleasure, madam, to be able to answer in the affirmative; I saw your son at six o'clock this morning, and he—but I will not anticipate; the letter probably, madam, will reveal the whole."

"You will excuse a mother's anxiety, sir, and pardon me, if I leave you a few moments to the care of my daughters."

Mr. Timothy would have been obliged to rise again, but as it happened he had not yet reached a resting place, the bow was the lowest, the very lowest one he had made. "I shall be but too happy, madam, to be in such company; let me be no hindrance in the least, for although I have no chick nor child of my own, I can well realize——"

A brand just then fell down; Mr. Timothy flew towards the tongs, and Mrs. Edwards left the room.

How long she was absent, Mr. Timothy would not, in all probability, have been able to say, for he had so many anecdotes to tell; he was fond of anecdotes, and it so filled his whole heart with ecstasy to see the bright smile play about the rosy lips of the staid Mary, and to hear the whole-heart laugh of Julia, that time went with him for nothing.

When Mrs. Edwards returned she held the letter in her hands; her countenance was lighted with an expression of deep feeling; she had evidently been weeping, but they must have been tears of joy, for her mild eye shone with unusual brightness, and every feature was softened into a look of happiness.

"Joy! girls, our dear James has found a situation."

"Joy! joy! dear mother," was responded by both the happy sisters at once.

"And we are under many obligations to our friend, Mr. Tightbody, for his influence on James's behalf; for he frankly acknowledges, that without the aid of some such friend, he should not have succeeded."

The two sisters turned their eyes, glistening with tears of happiness, towards the benefactor of their brother.

"Don't, ladies, don't say one word, I beg of you," Mr. Timothy was standing again; "not one word, my dear madam," turning towards Mrs. Edwards; "if any poor word of mine has been of any service to him, I mean to your son, madam, and your brother, ladies, it is a cause of unspeakable satisfaction to me."

It took some little time to get things righted again, or at least to get Mr. Tightbody quietly seated in his chair; he was just like a jackjumper, the moment he was a little warmed by any exciting remark, up he would go, and when up, he seemed not exactly to know how to get back. At the present moment his feelings were flowing very fast, almost running away with him; in fact, he could hardly be said to have had the reins in his own hands, a combination of exciting circumstances having almost proved too much for his equanimity.

In the first place, he had put on a brand new suit, enough, generally, of itself, to affect the mind of a common man;

then this was his first formal call; he had thought a great deal about it beforehand, and not only that, but his head had been full of strange fancies ever since his first interview with the family; he was nervous whenever he heard their names mentioned; he had peculiar feelings whenever he passed their cottage, or when he saw the mother and daughters walking, in all their gracefulness, to the church or along the highway; and even his dreams were more or less affected by visions in which they acted a conspicuous part. How long Mr. Timothy would have remained in this partially entranced state, there is no telling, for in the midst of these enchanting thoughts, there was an alarming rap at the front door. All started, even to Mr. Timothy.

Julia immediately seized a light, and, sprightly as a fawn, was at the door in an instant. She was no coward, but on turning the latch, such a singular object presented itself, that she involuntarily stepped back a pace or two; as she did so, the person, or thing, walked within the door way.

"Is massa here, missus?"

"What is your master's name?"

"Massa, massa; me been lookin' for him all ober de trete."

Just at that moment a little gust of wind blew out the light, and Julia at once retraced her steps to the sitting-room, not very sorry for an excuse to get there, for although she had been accustomed to blacks from her infancy, she had never seen any thing in the shape of the one just then before her. No sooner did she turn to go through the passage, than she was conscious that the creature was shuffling along after her. Beginning to be alarmed, she quickened her speed; immediately her clothes were grasped; in the excitement of the moment, she screamed at the top of her voice, "mother! mother!"

With a cry of terror, equally loud, the being behind her called out, "Mam Bet! Mam Bet! hold de light!"

In an instant the inmates of the room, light in hand, rushed to the spot. Mr. Timothy, as gallantry dictated, was in the van, and was the first to encounter the object which had caused the alarm.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies, don't be alarmed. Pomp, Pomp, what is this? how did you dare? go along this in-

stant." This was said in a low voice, accompanied by pushes and pinches, which caused the subject for whose benefit they were intended, to make a few rather rapid movements.

"What de matter now, Pomp? What fur you holler; Massa Tim, no dere?"

Mr. Timothy lifted up his eyes. "My ——!" What word or words Mr. Timothy substituted for these blanks, it would be hard to say; for nothing escaped his lips but that simple monosyllable. His look, however, betokened strong emotion. Immediately before him, and filling the whole door way, stood old Bet, his housekeeper, her immense arms, and shoulders, and head, revealed by the light of the lantern, which she held on high, the better to see what was going on in the passage, which was long and narrow.

"Oh! Massa Tim, I'm most frighten to det. You mos kill Bet." She was, indeed, breathing very hard and short.

"I been all ober de trete a huntin for massa; you see missus," she now addressed herself to one of the ladies, who had stepped towards the door, "you see, missus, me was so frightened; me waits till eight o'clock and no massa, and then me waits till nine o'clock, and he no come yet; so I says, Pomp, you mus go fine him; but you see, missus, he aint no better as a fool, he is so feared for de dark; so he sais, 'mam Bet, I no goin stir foot, 'ont you go long wid de lantern.' I knowed Massa Tim gone for see de ladies, for he put on de bran new clothes and de best pleted bosom; so I sais, Pomp, me call fust at Massa Watkins', may be he gone to see Miss Julie, but he was no dare; den me call on Miss Dinah and de widow, but Massa Tim no dare; and so me taut may be he gone to see de new quality folks; but my bret is all gone."

During this long harangue, Mr. Timothy was obliged to be a silent listener; he would have been comparatively happy could an earthquake, tornado, or some such outbreak of nature just then have turned up, and carried him and the two members of his family, no matter where, only away from the present company; he would have interfered and silenced his housekeeper, if he had not known that the thing was impossible; one word from him would have brought a dozen from her.

Mam Bet however, having delivered herself of the budg

et, stepping carefully, as an elephant does when not sure of his ground, finally got down the steps, and waddled along, swinging the lantern and calling upon "Massa Tim and Pomp to come along wid her, if dey wanted to see de holes and de ruts."

However Mr. Timothy may have suffered, and suffer he certainly did, there was too much genuine politeness on the part of those whose guest he had just been, to allow of any expression of feeling, after he had parted from them, which they would not have manifested in his presence. It was a source of pain to them, that they had been witnesses of his extreme mortification, and other matters of deep interest at once absorbed their attention.

"And now, dear mother," said Julia, as she closed the door and placed the light upon the table; "now for James's letter; do let us hear it, mother."

"Mary may read it if she pleases; it is quite a long one."

Mary took the precious document from her mother's hands, and as she opened it and saw the well-known writing, she imprinted a warm kiss upon the unconscious paper.

Letters are usually uninteresting documents, except to those for whom they may be at the time immediately intended; but as the one now under consideration will elucidate some part of our story, my readers must excuse its introduction.

MY VERY DEAR MOTHER:

The business of the day is over, and I am now seated in my snug room in the house where I expect and hope for some years to come to make my abode.

I have been, shall I say, fortunate? My dear mother, I feel as I have never felt before, that a kind Providence has been watching over me. No peradventure has placed me where I am; may I ever realize, as I now do, that He, who watches the sparrows when they fall, orders my concerns.

Little did I think when I bade you adieu, when with your sweet embrace you promised me all the aid it was in your power to give me—your constant prayers,—and when to encourage my heart, you repeated to me that benediction which my father left me on his dying bed, how much I should

need the first, and what a precious legacy—precious beyond all value that gold and silver have—was that farewell blessing.

I will not tell you, now, all the dark scenes that have visited me since we parted; it is enough that they are past. Light came at the darkest moment; in the hour of my extremity, influences which I could not have dreamed of operated in my behalf and placed me where I am. I have never told you, dear mother, all my thoughts and feelings in reference to this matter; nor how solicitous I have been for months past to obtain a situation such as I now have.

When my father was compelled, through the power of his fatal disease, to close his worldly business, to relinquish all pursuit of gain, and retire to his sick bed, I plainly saw that at no distant day, my efforts must be put in requisition for the support of the family. I knew as you did not, how slender were our means. I saw, day by day, the little stock melting away. I knew that my father was conscious of that approaching poverty which he had so long dreaded, and my spirit agonized in sympathy with the anguish which racked his. You know how peculiar were his feelings; how unwilling he was to indulge the thought that any of us should ever be compelled to take a lower station than the one we held, to seek a living by those more humble means, which is the portion of the many. It was my wish, as soon as he closed his office, to procure a situation where I could have labored for you all; but I dared not propose it to him. My imagination was alive with sanguine ideas of what I could accomplish, and the highest happiness my mind portrayed, was that of being able to earn, by my own efforts, a decent support for you all, and of knowing that the burden which lay so heavy on his heart was relieved; but I had not the courage to propose it to him; I feared that in his low and helpless estate, his sensitive mind would at once have taken the alarm; he would have felt that want was immediately upon us. At length it became evident to me that necessity would soon demand that something be done, and without the knowledge of my parents I made the attempt. I saw an advertisement by a firm that wanted a clerk, and I applied for the situation; I did it with much trembling; my application was not wholly rejected, but obstacles were presented which

I had not anticipated. The firm was one of a peculiar kind, of substantial circumstances, close in calculation, and watchful over every particular of their interest. I felt that I could please them, for I knew that I was competent to the duties to be performed, and my efforts for their interest would have been untiring; but they required a reference as to my qualifications, to some one with whom I had served as clerk; you can realize my difficulty. Immediately our scene of trial came on.

On my return to New-York, the same difficulty met me on each application, and crowds were rushing to every opening for a place. I began to feel that my attempt would be a failure, and that I must return to those who, at my own urgent plea, had cast themselves dependent upon me, and tell them, even if my heart should break in doing it, that the way before me, in the only employment to which I had been trained, was completely closed.

The day before I left you, as I was strolling over the fields, I witnessed a singular accident to a person who was driving near where I happened to be. His life was in danger, but by some exertion I succeeded in effecting his rescue. It proved to be our neighbor, Mr. Tightbody, then on his way to procure our goods which had arrived. I accompanied him, and assisted in loading and unloading, as you know. It was but a trifling circumstance, and one that passed from my mind, filled as it was with care and anticipation. A few days since, I met this same person in the city, and was conversing with him about things at our new home, when he was accosted by a gentleman as he passed, and I bade him good morning. It was the elder partner in the concern with which I am now employed—Mr. Gerardus Hunt. That evening, while visiting Mr. Upjohn, I received an invitation to call and see the firm, to which I told you I made my first application.

The way was now open for me, and I immediately entered upon the duties of the office. I am to board, free of all expense, with the family of the elder partner, and to receive the first year three hundred dollars, with an annual increase.

And now, dear mother and sisters, I wish I could let you see how happy my heart is. You all seem dearer to me

than ever, because I feel that I have a right to love you; I can prove it in a more substantial way than by mere words, although I do not think for a moment that you would ever have doubted my warm affection. But has it not been strange? You will not wonder now that I have been made to realize a Providence, that orders our private affairs, and works by what we are apt to call trifling events.

This Mr. Tightbody must be a man of kind feelings, and I hope if he calls to see you, that he may be received with attention. I thought the girls were somewhat disposed to smile when his name was mentioned; he cannot help his name. Adieu, my dear mother and dear sisters, and be as happy as you can.

CHAPTER VII.

I do not know how it is with my readers, but for myself, I must confess that when interested in the progress of any work, or the development of growth, either in the natural or moral world, I like to let periods of longer or shorter duration occur, when I shut them away from my observation, that I may mark with more distinctness the advance which has been made. A pleasure is often afforded to the mind more impressive than can be derived from the same objects, while viewing the slow and imperceptible operation of cause and effect, as they work their steady change.

Is it too much to ask my reader to take an electric leap over three whole years of our mortal existence; to leave our weary planet, with all its countless interests, to roll through the long journey, while we take no notice of its "idle whirl?" The thing cannot be done except on paper; but since in this way long jumps may, at times, be made, and profitably too, I must be indulged with the experiment.

Three years make great changes sometimes. It is long enough, with the whirling speed that now marks every movement, to make us strangers in our world, could we let go our hold upon it, and cease to mark the vision, as its changing

form melts before our view into other forms and attitudes. We must run fast, now, would we keep up with the world.

But at the period which our story embraces, things moved at a more healthful pace. Man breathed more freely, and jogged along at his leisure, and seemed to feel that the world was given him to enjoy, and not merely to fly through.

Within the little circle of our story, three years have done something; changes have been gradually working. Those interests which the heart most dearly clings to, have been rolling on with accumulating power. The light-hearted playfulness of the maiden of sixteen, upon whose days and nights no darkness ever spreads its veil, has melted into the more serious and entrancing loveliness of womanhood, where springs of curious workmanship play with intensest power, grasping the whole being within their firm embrace, and filling it with ecstasy, that knows no counterpart but in Heaven's own beatitude, or pressing its warm and beautiful emotions beneath a crushing weight.

The little family of the Upjohns has moved on in the same quiet and steady round. Not a wrinkle more has gathered on the brow of the old man, and the same kind smile marks the placid countenance of his good woman; still content with their humble lot, and industriously plodding the daily path of life, their fireside is yet cheerful and warm with the glow of kindly feeling.

Gitty has altered somewhat. The girl with prudish airs has passed into the full bloom of womanhood, graceful in her carriage, and beautiful in her form and features.

Whether her heart is as light as it once was, I dare not say, although the happiness which thrills it may exceed all that her thoughts could once have imagined. She has reached an age when the affections bear sway, and reason and prudence too often yield to their power.

The Messrs. Hunt have found in James Edwards a valuable assistant. His entire devotion to their interests, and his increasing ability to discharge the duties devolving upon him, have fully realized the expectations of his friends, and even Mr. Geordie Hunt reposes implicit confidence in his fidelity.

The only shadow that, at times, comes across the moral atmosphere of the young man, is caused by some peculiari-

ties in one who, although partner of the concern, and as such, his superior, has ever been more as a companion than a master. Rudolph Hunt was one whom James could never fully comprehend.

He could not, indeed, complain that Rudolph had ever usurped authority over him, or treated him with that distance which junior partners are too apt to indulge towards those subordinate to them in station, although equal in other respects; on the contrary, their intercourse had been familiar, and many a kind act on the part of Rudolph had laid James under obligations which he could not easily forget. But with all his suavity of manners, and the generosity he had manifested, the latter could not be blinded to certain dark traits which would, in the freedom of intercourse, obtrude themselves: marring what he would have wished to love, and shaking his confidence where he would have been glad to feel that there was a sure foundation upon which to rest.

The call which Rudolph had made at the house of Mr. Upjohn, in search of James Edwards, and the introduction he received that evening, were but a prelude to a course of visits and serious intimacy. His manners were pleasing, and the occasional calls he made by no means unacceptable to the little family. Gitty did her best to welcome him, and make the evening pass pleasantly away. These calls had at length become quite frequent, and on fine summer evenings, when the streets were thronged with the seekers for pleasure, Gitty would be invited abroad to see some fine sight, or to enjoy the promenade. Her guardians would much have preferred that she should always be by their side, but how could they think of thus fettering one so young and light-hearted; they had once been young themselves. The young man too was of fair standing, and perhaps in the opinion of many, higher on the scale than she. But of this, the old folks thought not. They could imagine no class of society that Gitty was not fully equal to; and yet, when they would sit together, while she was thus away even until the evening had been spent, thoughts would come over them that for the moment were like the shadow of a dark cloud, but like it, they would soon fly by, and Gitty would come home, and smile sweetly upon them, and Rudolph courteously bid them a good night, and it was all well.

But alas ! all was not well. Gitty might not have been gifted with that strong sense of propriety which many have ; she may have been less on her guard against the faithlessness of man than many of her sex and age, but she had a free and guileless heart ; she thought no evil, and she feared none. Every attention on the part of Rudolph, she received as an expression of his good will, of his kind feelings towards her. She received it in all honesty of soul, and as these tokens of his feelings were neither few, nor far between, they won upon her heart. He became more and more associated with the happier spots in her existence ; his presence seemed to be necessary to make every occasion of joy just what it should be. In every vision of beauty that flitted through her young mind, he was a conspicuous figure. In her dreams by night, and in those livelier and more entrancing dreams by day, in which her spirit loved to lose its present realities and bathe in delights of its own framing, he was one, the principal one, whose virtues, as her mind painted them, gilded the whole scene with rays of beauty. And thus around her young and susceptible heart, by degrees a chain has been cast. Its links may have been formed of nothing stronger than the trifles I have named, but they held her ardent feelings in an embrace firmer than the iron clasp that holds the criminal to his cell.

The little family at the White Cottage are no longer mourners. The weeds of sorrow have been laid aside, and time has kindly soothed their agonized feelings. Their humble home has been surrounded with many little embellishments, the work of their own hands. Shrubs and plants are blooming without, and order, neatness, and taste, are manifest in every department within. They have known no real wants, although compelled by restricted means to the practise of rigid economy.

Faithful to his trust, James has consecrated every cent of his income, except what was needful for the supply of decent apparel for himself, to their comfort. Occasionally, he has been enabled to spend short periods with them ; pure seasons of delight they have been—each visit unfolding new charms in each other, and binding in stronger and more tender bonds their warm affections.

The fears which a mother's sensitive heart at times called up, lest this loved one should be led astray, have long since

been quieted. His generous spirit sparkles before her in all its purity and brightness, and she feels that her prayers have been answered, and looks forward with perfect confidence to the day when his faithfulness shall reap its reward, and her noble boy stand high among the competitors for distinction as he now does before her—as a true and tried son and brother. Three years then have relieved their distresses, and confirmed their hopes ; and around that little family bright scenes are shining, warming with life, and painting with loveliness, the scenery that forms the circle of their interests, and tinging even the few scattered clouds that rest upon their horizon with hues of beauty.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was Saturday afternoon, and seated in his neat and commodious study, surrounded with those rich stores which the great and good of past ages have left for the benefit of all coming generations, the Rev. Mr. Wharton was just finishing his exercises for the coming Sabbath, when there was a tap at the door, and the servant maid announced that Mr. Tightbody was below, and would be glad to see Mr. Wharton alone.

"Show him up, by all means."

Mr. Tightbody has altered in nothing material since we last saw him, except, it may be, that his round face is a little rounder, and his coat might be rather more difficult to button. The expression of his countenance was, however, of a different cast from any that we have seen him wear before. Something of a serious and alarming nature it must be, for his color has gone, and, as he bowed and addressed Mr. Wharton, there was a tremor in his voice, and the hand which he extended was as cold as an iceberg. He took the seat assigned to him in silence, and taking from his pocket a paper, "I have just come from the Point, sir, and while there, accidentally cast my eye upon an article in this paper. Perhaps, sir, you have heard something more particular from the family, and can throw some light upon it."

He handed it to Mr. Wharton, and with a trembling hand, pointed to the paragraph. Mr. Wharton was of a nervous temperament, and the evident excitement under which his visitor labored, did not fail to produce a corresponding effect upon him. The article was among the news of the day:

"ROBBERY.—A robbery to a large amount was yesterday ascertained to have been committed upon Messrs. G. & A. Hunt, ship-chandlers, in — street, and a young man by the name of Edwards, living with them as clerk, was suspected, and, circumstances being so strong against him, has been arrested, and for want of bail, committed to prison.

"The sum taken from Messrs. Hunt is six thousand dollars. It is supposed the young man has squandered it at the gambling-table. Until the time of his arrest, his character was thought to be unexceptionable. It is said that a mother and two sisters are dependent upon him for support."

Mr. Wharton read it through, and then turning his pale and troubled countenance upon Mr. Tightbody, who had been watching him with intense interest, "Can this be true?"

"I know not, sir; I saw it, as I told you, at the Point, and, not knowing what to do about it, have first brought it to you, sir."

"Then you have not shown it to Mrs. Edwards?"

"No living soul in the town has seen it, sir, but yourself."

"I believe this paper is not taken here?"

"No, sir, nor any other from the city, but the one you take, and that will not be in until the first of the week."

"We must move cautiously in this matter, Mr. Tightbody, and do nothing to circulate this terrible news. The family must be informed of it in as gentle a manner as possible; and who shall do it?"

"There is no one but Mr. Wharton himself that is fitting for such an errand. I would not undertake it myself for all the land between this and the ocean."

"There may be some mistake after all; but if you will leave this paper with me, Mr. Tightbody, I will endeavor to do the best I can, and act as circumstances shall dictate. When did it take place; yesterday?"

"The paper is dated yesterday, sir; the sad occurrence must have taken place on Thursday."

"Thursday; that would almost give time for the family to receive some tidings to-day; perhaps we may be saved the sad necessity of unfolding the intelligence to them. I think, Mr. Tightbody, that I shall delay the matter until Monday morning; in the mean time, let no notice of it by any means get abroad."

"It shall never get abroad from me, sir."

As Mr. Tightbody departed, Mr. Wharton again cast his eye carefully over the notice, and then arose and walked the room, under strong excitement; he had put a powerful restraint upon his feelings during the interview, but when left alone, the calamity in all its aggravating form came up vividly before him. He dearly loved this family; he loved this young man; he loved, with almost parental affection, the elder sister, who had been for three years under his tuition. Her gentleness, her respectful attention, her brilliant mind, her ardent feelings, all had won his heart.

And then what course should he pursue? Should he go and show them this fatal paper, or wait for some intimation from them as to their knowledge of the circumstances? Either alternative presented to his sensitive heart a sickening aspect.

The Sabbath was at hand. He would wait until its sacred hours had passed, when both he and they might be better fitted to sustain the severe ordeal. He then rang the bell for Mrs. Wharton.

On entering, she uttered an exclamation of surprise at his troubled appearance. The only reply he made was to hand her the paper, and point to the fatal paragraph, requesting her to read and be silent.

"My dear husband, what does it mean? Edwards! Edwards! can this be our James?"

"I fear it is; I cannot doubt it."

"Oh, Mr. Wharton, how can it be! James Edwards! What will his poor mother and sisters do? My dear husband, it will kill them. And what does it say at the last part of it? Gambling! Oh, the poor, ruined young man! But the dear child has no father;" and Mrs. Wharton relieved the agony of her feelings by a flood of tears.

The sweet Sabbath came with its multiplied blessings, but the heart of the pastor was weighed down under a burden that his spirit could not throw off. Mrs. Edwards and Mary were in their seat at church, and as his eye fell upon them, in passing over the congregation, the sickening assurance almost palsied his efforts, that they knew nothing of the hateful secret, which he feared it was to be *his* painful duty to disclose to them.

Monday came; a calm, bright, beautiful day. The frosts of late had left their changeful influence upon the trees and shrubs, and to those who admire autumn's variegated hues, it was a time for the heart to take its fill of nature's beauties.

Mrs. Wharton concluded to accompany her husband to the cottage. Julia espied them a short distance from the house, and came tripping like a fawn to meet and escort them in. At the door, Mrs. Edwards was ready with her friendly greeting, and Mary's bright eye sparkled with delight, as she came into the room after they were seated, and thanked them most affectionately for their early call.

What would they not have given then, to have been ignorant of the heart-rending intelligence, they had come to communicate.

"Mr. Wharton," said Mary, "I forgot to tell you, when at the parsonage on Saturday, we had received a letter from James."

A thrill of hope electrified his frame.

"What was its date, Mary?" he asked eagerly.

"It was dated on Tuesday last; I don't know why it has been so long getting to us."

His hope was gone.

"Was he well?"

"Oh, yes, sir, very well; and his letter is in a much more cheerful strain than usual."

However painful the task, Mr. Wharton resolved at once to unfold his errand, and requesting Mrs. Edwards to accompany him into the adjoining room, she politely led the way, and as soon as they were seated; "Have you no intelligence, Mrs. Edwards, from your son since the date of that letter?"

"None, sir, whatever," and looking at him with a searching eye; "Have you, sir heard any thing from him?"

"Not directly."

"Mr. Wharton," said she, clasping her hands firmly together, and her lip quivering with emotion, "you have heard something; tell me, oh, tell me, what it is."

"Mrs. Edwards, have you ever suspected James of any improper habits?"

"James, sir? James? why, sir? why do you ask me? You know, Mr. Wharton, we have every reason to believe him most spotless; who doubts it, sir?"

"I never have, my dear Mrs. Edwards, but I have received a paper from New York, which contains a paragraph that I must say has caused me a great deal of suffering, and I have thought it my duty to show it to you."

He handed her the paper and pointed, as well as his agitated nerves would allow, to the fatal article. He sat a moment in breathless suspense; he saw the paper gliding from her hands, and caught a glimpse of the deathlike palor that overspread her countenance, and calling in haste for Mrs. Wharton, the children rushed with her into the room.

When the heart pours out the first wailings of its agony, when dire calamity, in its most crucifying form, first strikes the appalled senses, there is such an utterance to the horror of the soul, such an outbursting of the spirit's pangs, such a heaving away of all barriers by the rushing floods of passion, that into its whirling current any heart is drawn that stands within the bounds of sympathy. Neither Mr. Wharton nor his wife were made of such materials as fitted them to witness the thrilling scene; but where deep responsibility rests upon us, the spirit is sustained to do and to dare with superhuman energy.

After using such remedies as the house afforded for the recovery of Mrs. Edwards, as soon as there were signs of returning consciousness, Mr. Wharton left the room with Mary, who had been imploring him with tears to inform her of the cause of her mother's distress.

In his hands was the fatal paper; but he dared not venture committing it to Mary, until first her mind should be in some measure prepared for the blow.

"My dear child, I want you to nerve your mind with all the fortitude you can command, not only for your own sake,

but that you may help sustain your mother; I offer you a father's home and protection."

She threw herself into his arms.

"Oh, Mr. Wharton, you have been a father to us; but tell me, ah, tell me, is my brother dead? is my brother dead? tell me, tell me!"

"He is not dead, Mary."

She drew back, and clasping her hands, looked at him in a calm but most earnest manner.

"Is he not dead?"

"No he is not, Mary."

"Is there any hope of his life?"

"His life is not in any danger."

A moment she covered her face, and then fixing on him the same earnest gaze; "Mr. Wharton, now you may let me know the worst. I am not afraid to hear any thing now."

"There may be some mistake after all. But here is the paper, my dear child, read for yourself."

Mary sat down and looked steadily through the paragraph, and even went over it a second time.

"Mr. Wharton, this may all be true, but true or false, I must go and see my dear brother; innocent or guilty, his sister will suffer with him. Oh, James! James! my brother! my brother!" She wept bitterly.

Mr. Wharton left her, and again entered the room where Mrs. Edwards was. She had recovered from her swoon, but was still reclining on the bed. Mrs. Wharton was sitting beside her.

"It is a bitter cup," said she, extending her hand as the reverend man approached: "but my Father would not have put it to my lips, if he did not see that I needed it. Oh, sir, the pangs which my poor heart has suffered within this short hour, may you never know. My poor James! But he shall soon see that a mother's love changes not; his guilt and his prison I shall share. But where is Mary?"

She heard her mother's voice and immediately entered the room. Her tears were wiped away. She came with a light step to where her mother lay, took her hand, stooped and kissed her affectionately.

Mother, I must go and see James."

"We will both go, my dear; if we can do nothing else, we will bear the shame with him."

"Mother, dear mother," said Julia, who had been sitting in one corner of the room, and weeping in agony, "let me go too, I know I can comfort James; do, mother, let me go."

After some consultation, it was concluded that Mr. Wharton should accompany Mrs. Edwards and Mary to New York, and that Julia should make her home at the Parsonage until their return. He could not, however, leave the house until he had knelt with them before our Heavenly Father, and committed this afflicted family to the care of Him who has been known in all ages as the Father of the fatherless and the God of the widow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE report which had caused such alarm and sorrow at the White Cottage was, alas! too true. A sad change had taken place in the circumstances of James Edwards, and in the opinion which his friends in the city had entertained concerning him.

The Messrs. Hunt had, for many years, been in the habit of keeping at the house of the elder partner, a strong box or iron chest, for the purpose of depositing therein their more valuable papers; such as notes of hand, bonds and mortgages, deeds, &c., &c.

Within the same strong box was also lodged, very safely every night, a small fancy trunk, containing whatever moneys might be on hand at the close of each day: for, as I have before said, the Messrs. Hunt made no deposits in any bank; besides this little trunk, which travelled daily between the store and the dwelling, there was stationed in one corner of the chest, a small box with a sliding cover, containing the private funds, &c., which belonged to the elder partner, and it was from this box that the contents were missing.

It appears that for some weeks a sum of money had been lying idle beneath the little sliding cover, Mr. Hunt having

received it for some property of his own which he had sold; not finding an opportunity that suited him for a permanent investment, he had concluded to loan it to the concern, as they were about to lay in a large stock of some leading article in their line. It was not until the very day upon which the funds were to be used, that Mr. Hunt ascertained to his inexpressible consternation that the little box was empty. James had just arisen from the breakfast table, and gone on his way to the store, when Mr. Hunt took down the key from the place where it usually hung, (in a little cupboard which opened into his own bedroom), and went down stairs into a cellar under the back-building of his house. As he attempted to open the door with the key which he had brought with him, to his surprise he found one already in the door which turned the lock with ease. He opened the door—it was a small neat room, the walls whitewashed, and the floor paved with brick; on one end were several shelves filled with choice wines, too good to be used very freely, and in the centre, alone in its glory, stood the before-mentioned iron chest.

The old gentleman was startled by the phenomenon of the key, and his first thought, as soon as he perceived that his chest was safe, was that some one had been making free with his Madeira; but not a vacancy was visible, except the one made by the withdrawal of a bottle a few days previous by his own hands, to treat a rare friend.

He then tried the lid of the chest, and shook it hard, but it refused to open; he applied the ponderous key; the strong bolt flew open with a sound that made the vault ring; he raised the lid, and every thing appeared to be in statu quo; again he locked it and began to ponder about the strange key in the door; compared with the one in his hand, there was but a shade of difference. Thinking it possible that Mrs. Hunt could throw some light upon the matter, he requested a servant from the adjoining kitchen to call her. Mrs. Hunt was well to do in the way of flesh, and came as rapidly as could be expected; as soon as she was in the little room, he shut the door.

"Do you know, Peggy, any thing about that key?"

"Know! why, yes; that's the key of this ere vault, looking at her husband as she spoke."

"No, it aint—no such thing—see here; this is the key I just now brought it down out of the cupboard."

"Where did you find this, then?"

"Sticking in that door."

Mrs. Hunt put her two hands against her sides, and looked at her husband in great astonishment.

"What upon earth does it mean, Geordie?"

"That's just what I sent for you to tell me; don't you know nothing about that key?"

Mrs. Hunt, finding that her husband was becoming somewhat agitated, put on her spectacles and examined the key in earnest.

"It looks to me, Mr. Hunt, like the key to the boys' room; but I will send up and see."

Just then her niece made her appearance in the passage, singing a lively air and skipping along on her way up stairs.

"Sally, Sally."

"What, aunt?" and Sally, or Sarah, full of life and beauty, came quickly to her.

"Did you call me, aunt?"

"Yes, child, here; do you go up to the boys' room; James has gone to the store. You just step up there, and see if this key isn't the key of their closet door; but stay—Betty will know more about it—I'll send Betty."

And so she fumbled her way into the kitchen, Sarah resumed her pleasant tune, threw back her curls, and was soon out of hearing.

While Mrs. Hunt was holding counsel with Betty, Mr. Hunt began to think that he might as well open his chest again, and examine more particularly into matters there. He did, to be sure, feel no uneasiness as to there having been any fingering of things in his strong box, when he found it under the control of its own key which he held in possession; it might be broken open, he knew, by a crowbar or other powerful instrument, but as to opening it in a fair way, it was out of the question. No lock was similar to it in the country; the smith who made it on a new principle, having died just as this single one was completed; he had therefore been in no haste to make particular examination of the interior, when, as I have said, it opened to the key which he generally kept under his own eye. But still, he

thought he might as well see that all was safe; he had opened it again, therefore, and was just removing the lid from his little box, when Mrs. Hunt entered the room; he was seated on the chest which he had shut down, and as he took out his papers, one by one, he laid them with great care beside him; the last thing he took out was a worsted pocket-book, tied together with green ribbon.

"Is your money all there, Geordie?"

Finding that he did not make any reply, but only looked up at her as he sat on the chest with a wild and vacant stare, she took the pocket-book from his hand, and began to examine for herself.

"Why, there's nothing here; did you keep it in here?"

Geordie answered not, but kept his eyes still fixed upon her, swallowing, and choking, and apparently wishing to say something.

"Mr. Hunt, there's nothing here, see," and she shook the pocket-book and a little gold piece dropt out.

"There, that's all there is; I thought you said last night, that you had six thousand dollars you was going to let the store have?"

"So I had," screaming in a high voice, "but it's gone, it's all gone,"—louder and louder—"we're robbed and ruined;" jumping up at the same time. "Oh, dear, oh, dear," walking up and down very fast. "Oh, dear, oh, dear," pressing his hands against his sides as in great pain. "Oh, dear, oh, dear; wife, what shall I do? I believe I'm getting one of my turns; we're robbed and ruined. Oh, dear, oh, dear, it's all gone. Do, wife, get something, a little something or other; I shall die—it grows worse and worse."

Mrs. Hunt made all the haste a person of her size well could, to prepare some drugs which she kept on hand, Mr. Hunt being subject to violent attacks of pain. Betty had, at that moment, returned from her exploring expedition in regard to the strange key, when meeting Mrs. Hunt, and hearing the uproar in the vault—

"May I be blest!—and what's that? is it another turn he's got?"

"Yes, Betty, put on some water, quick."

"And that I will, ma'am; the poor soul, how he laments."

Betty had scarcely time, however, to hang the kettle on, when she heard Mr. Hunt's voice calling loudly for her.

"Betty! Betty!"

"I'm coming the instant, your honor"

"About that key, Betty; can you tell where it belongs? Oh, dear! oh, dear! where is it?"

"And it's up in the boys' room, sir; jist where it belongs."

"Do you know the key, Betty?"

"And do I know myself, sir? Aint I locking the door every day after I've claned the room, and aint there the very mark Mr. James put upon it himself."

"What mark?"

"Why, sir, when the kay to the kitchen pantry was mislaid, and it was I that couldn't get in, and Mrs. Hunt calling for supper, and no supper could I get by raison of the key that was gone, Mr. James was going through the entry just there away, and hearing me making such a to-do, he asks—'Betty, what's the matter?' 'The matter,' sais I, and 'aint there matter enough? here are they calling for supper, and no kay to be found.' 'Let's see, Betty,' sais he, 'what kind of a kay do you want?' and he looked at the door and says, 'I guess, Betty, I can help you.' 'That's a darlin,' sais I, and up he goes and brings down a kay, and opened the door in a trice, and right glad was I; and when I wanted him to lave it until such time as the other could be found, he says—'I'll mark it, Betty, so that you shant be claiming it for the kitchen, and Mrs. Hunt be scolding me for the kay, and so he marks it with a cross, and it's plain to be seen on it now."

"And was that key in his door yesterday?"

"That's more nor I can say, sir, for it's true as I live, I never locked it yesterday."

Mrs. Hunt now came with her mixture, and Betty ran for the hot water, as Mr. Hunt was still exhibiting signs of great distress. The usual remedy, however, soon brought some relief. As soon as he could attend to matters, he requested his brother to be sent for from the store; although of very different dispositions, they were much attached to each other, and nothing of a joyous or troublous nature affected one, but the other must be called to share in it.

Mr. Augustus Hunt obeyed the summons, promptly, and was soon among them, listening to the wonderful narration of his brother's disaster. He was, as I have before hinted, the better looking of the two, and, indeed, would have been remarked any where as a person of good appearance; his form was portly, his face round and ruddy, as though his fare was good and nourishing; his eyes, not large, but they had a lively, pleasant twinkle; and the whole expression of the countenance of that open, cheerful character which, at once, wins the confidence of the beholder, and indicated what he really was—a shrewd, kind-hearted man.

After all due expressions of sympathy for his brother's trial, he sat down, and, in a very calm and quiet manner, began to question him as to every particular of the affair.

Geordie answered rather tartly, and continued to walk up and down the room, at times groaning with pain, and then uttering a volley of execrations on the villain who had robbed and ruined him.

Mr. Augustus seemed to think a great deal about the fact of the key being found in the door; he sent for it, examined it closely, scrutinized the mark on it, and compared it with the key belonging to the vault.

"And where, brother Geordie, do you keep the key of the chest?"

"Why, you know, Gussy, I always keep it in that there cupboard in our room, right in sight."

"Well, do you always go to the chest yourself, or do you let the young men go to it?"

"No, no, never; they never go to it; I always go to it myself, and hang the key up just in that place; it has hung there these fifteen years; that wife knows."

"Yes, yes; Geordie is very particular about that; he never gets into bed, but the last thing he looks at is the key, to see that it is safe."

"Are you sure, brother, that you examined the chest thoroughly, and that there is no possibility of its being in some corner or other there now? have you any other box there?"

"No, no; there's nothing else there but the little trunk, and that is here; I brought it up with me. Oh, dear! oh, dear! you can look at it yourself."

Mr. Augustus sat silently for some time, and then looking significantly at his brother. "I think, brother, it looks very much as though there had been some foul play here; don't you think so?—you say that you saw it there last night?"

"No, no, no; I did not say last night; it is a week ago last night, I said, since I counted the money; you remember, wife, don't you? I told you about it. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"Yes, yes; I remember very well. You see, brother, Mr. Hunt is very particular about that key; he always hangs it up just in one way; step here and I'll show you; there, that's the way he hangs it; he's as particular about it as can be. Well, last week it was, just as he was going to bed, he looks up at his key and then says—'Wife, some one has been at my key; it aint hung up right;' so I looks at it, 'no,' says I, 'it aint right;' so he goes up and takes down the key and looks at it. 'Somebody has had this key, that's sure; see here,' and he comes and shows it to me, and there seemed to be something on it just like dough,' says I, 'Mr. Hunt, you had better go right down and see that all is safe; so down he went, just as he was, and when he came back, he said it was all straight, the money was all there; but we've always been puzzled about the key's being hung up wrong.'

Mr. Augustus kept his eye upon his brother as he walked to and fro, groaning and soliloquizing, while his wife was detailing the scene just recorded; at length, shaking his head significantly—

"There's something wrong, brother, depend upon it there's something wrong; I shouldn't be surprised, brother, if it should turn out that you had been robbed. What do you think about it?"

"Think about it! why aint I told you a dozen times already, that I've been robbed; where's the use of thinking and thinking about it. I know it—there's the pocket-book; look for yourself—its all gone—six thousand dollars—all gone—and if any body could tell me—oh, dear; oh, dear—where it is—oh, dear, dear, dear!"

"Well, brother Geordie, that's just what I've been thinking—the money's gone—that's a clear case. Now the next question is, where has it gone to? and my opinion is, look

ing at Mrs. Hunt very significantly, "though Geordie must do as he likes, seeing the money belongs to him, but my opinion is, that he had better send for old Catchem; if the money is to be found, he will find it, and if the rogue is in this world, he will catch him, only give him the scent."

As Mr. Augustus Hunt's opinion coincided with that of his brother, old Catchem, one of the chief constables of the city of New-York, was sent for, and that great terror to evil doers was soon under their roof, and prepared for his work.

As he was a personage not met with every day in the common walks of life, a description of him may not be uninteresting to many of my readers. His stature was of medium size, rather thick set; large bushy head; dark complexion; large projecting eyes, very black; aquiline nose, and a very large mouth, with a heavy under lip, considerably rolled over. When he walked, he had a slouchy, rolling gait, his head moving from side to side, and his eyes in perpetual motion, glancing from object to object, and from person to person, apparently not looking long enough at either persons or things to receive any impression, and yet, it is said, never passing either without taking full cognizance thereof, so as to be able at any time to recall them perfectly. He was a fearless, faithful officer, and went straight forward in the discharge of the duties before him, as though there were no such thing as personal danger, and without making much allowance for the more tender feelings of human nature.

Mr. Augustus Hunt took upon himself the task of explaining matters to this officer, and was careful to mention that his brother would give five hundred dollars for the recovery of the money, with or without the thief.

Old Catchem soon showed that he was a master workman, and convinced Mr. Hunt that the theft must have been committed by some member of his family, or by some person in the habit of frequenting his house.

He summoned the inmates of the kitchen, Betty and Jim, and would not allow them to stir from his presence. Their niece Sarah was called in, and a messenger dispatched to the store for young Edwards. James had no idea of the purpose for which he was required, and appeared to be much surprised when he found himself in the presence of a constable, and heard the account of the lost money; had he

been perfectly innocent, he could not have acted more like himself. Some few questions were put to each separately, with special reference to the matter of the key—where it was found—where it belonged, &c. Betty was called upon to tell over all she knew about it. During her recital, the eye of the officer rested a moment on young Edwards; a slight flush passed over his countenance; it was but a flush, and was gone in an instant, but Catchem saw it, and did not forget it; he kept his eye more steadily that way. This very circumstance might have affected James, as he was full of sensibility.

The officer now desired to be led to the apartments occupied by Betty and Jim. Betty started ahead, muttering, as she went, about "going into people's rooms before one had time to make them a bit decent."

"Never mind, old lady, I've seen all kinds of rooms in my day."

"I'm no leddy, nor auld, neither; but there's the trunk; you may look as ye like; I wants no money but what my own hands arn—there, look as ye like, and be blest to you!"

Betty's trunk was pretty thoroughly examined, and then master Jim was obliged to lead the way to his roost, which was a small room at another corner of the garret; he went directly to his box, and was beginning to throw out the few articles it contained, when Catchem, very unceremoniously, laid hold of his collar, and giving him a jerk, left him standing in the middle of the room, and proceeded to overhaul Jemmie's treasures in a very careful manner. He, manifestly, expected to find some clue to matters here, but was disappointed; not any signs of money, good, bad, or indifferent, could be found, it being an article which the owner of the box contrived to get rid of, without the trouble of hoarding it.

"And now, my young gentleman, show me the way to where you keep your choice articles."

Edwards colored deeply, bowed very formally to him, and with a measured step, proceeded to his room. He was either much displeased with the manner of the constable, or very much excited by some other cause; so much so that some of the family could not but notice it.

The key was again introduced, and Betty called upon to

repeat her story. She invoked all the saints to witness that she spoke nothing but the truth, and that Mr. James would tell them how he had marked it with his own hands. The keen eye of Catchem was fixed upon Edwards during her recital, and when she ceased, he was asked to repeat the circumstances himself.

"I think, sir, you have had already sufficient explanation as to the identity of the key."

"Well, young gentleman, how do you account for this key being found in the door of the vault?"

"I do not feel, sir, that it is my business to account for it," at the same time eyeing his interrogator with a look of scorn.

"Perhaps you may find it your business, before you get through—so don't be huffy, sir. Who occupies this room with you?"

"No one, sir."

"Do you ever carry that key in your pocket?"

"No, I do not."

"Are you in the habit of locking that door?"

"Occasionally."

"Is the key always kept in it?"

"I believe it is."

"Have you missed the key this day or two?"

"I did miss it."

"Have you made any inquiries in the family for it?"

Edwards colored deeply again.

"No, I did not; I thought—I supposed it had been taken probably for some other door in the house."

"Now, young man, let me have the key of this trunk; it is yours, I suppose?"

"That you shall not have, sir. If Mr. Hunt suspects that there is any thing in my trunk belonging to him, I will open it, and satisfy him that there is nothing in it but my own property."

"Young man, I order you to hand me the key of that trunk, and let me open it and examine its contents; if you do not, it shall be opened by force."

"Touch it, sir, at your peril; I have already offered to satisfy those who have any interest in this matter; let any one else touch it at their peril." As he said this, he stepped

ap close to the trunk, and with an eye flashing indignation, surveyed the group before him.

"Young man," said the officer, at the same time taking a short iron instrument from his pocket, "you might as well save all this trouble; this trunk shall be opened, with your leave or without it, just as you please." So saying, he stepped deliberately towards it, when Betty, fearing Mr. James was "going to be kilt," threw herself between him and the constable—

"For the love of goodness, Mr. James, give him the key, give him the key, and save your young blood, and character too." With that, she wrested the key violently from his hand and threw it on the floor.

"There, honey, now, let him have it, let him look as he likes; he'll never find any thing there but belongs to it. Do, do, now honey," seeing James making efforts to recover the key; "for the love of goodness, Mr. James, hear to me, and leave him to look."

James's better sense returned to him, he felt that he was wrong, and Betty in the right. He took a stand at some distance, with the rest, and suffered the examination to proceed, looking on as an indifferent spectator.

Every article in the body of the trunk was thoroughly searched, and replaced. Nothing that could be claimed by any one but Edwards was there.

The little rod was then taken out, which secured the opening into the cover of the trunk; the officer thrust his hand into it and, almost immediately, brought out a small parcel, and, on opening it, discovered a roll of bank-bills.

"Mr. Hunt, are these the bills which you have lost?"

Mr. Hunt took them, and examined the backs of each carefully.

"These are some of them, sir; I marked them with the letter D, in red ink; you can all examine them."

The identity of the bills was abundantly proved; but only five hundred dollars of the amount could be discovered in the trunk by the most scrutinizing search.

It would be vain to attempt a description of the scene which followed. James had been a great favorite in the family; his amiable disposition, his respectful behavior, the care he took to give as little trouble as possible, his whole de-

meanor, so unassuming, yet so engaging, had won the hearts of all. It was a sad, sad fall. Mrs. Hunt sat down, overwhelmed with astonishment. Betty wrung her hands, in deep distress.

"Oh, Mr. James Mr. James! Is it yourself that has done this?"

The Messrs. Hunt were sorely confounded; such a result they had not anticipated. They had been highly pleased with his faithfulness and business talents; always in his place, ever attentive to their interests, critically correct in his accounts, and prompt in every duty committed to him, he had won their entire confidence; the present catastrophe was like a thunder-clap with a bright sun and a cloudless sky.

There was yet another witness of that trying scene. She sat silent in a corner of the room, her face covered, while tears were falling, such as lovely woman sheds when her pure and trusting heart meets the cruel thorn where it had hoped to find a holy resting place.

Young Edwards had stepped up with the rest, to look at the bills; he said nothing, but retiring to a seat, rested his head upon his hand, and seemed overwhelmed by the perilous situation in which he found himself. The officer took the Messrs. Hunt aside, and after some conversation with them, all were requested to leave the room, and the officer and Edwards were left alone together.

"Now, young man, I don't wish to injure you; this matter can all be stopped where it is; you just show me where the old man's money is, and save all my searching, and yourself a turn in the State's Prison too; hand me the money, and I'll see you clear in less than no time."

Edwards arose from his seat, and fixed his eye calmly and steadily upon the officer: "I regret exceedingly, sir, that I suffered my feelings so far to control me, and that I did not, as I ought to have done, yield at once to your right in making a search for the stolen money."

"Never mind that; that's nothing; I'm used to such things; young blood will show itself—that's neither here nor there; all you have to do now, is just to plank down the rest, and I'll have you out of harm's way, and no more said about it."

"I have no desire, sir to get out of harm's way, as you call it: I have no money to give up, nor had I any knowledge

of that which you have just found; it is as much a mystery to me, as to yourself, how it came there."

"It is no mystery at all to me; and for you to stand there and deny it, is only wasting words; come, come, I'm too old a hand for you at this game,"—raising his voice, and fixing his eye sternly on Edwards,—“show me the rest of that money, if you don't want these pretty wristbands on,” at the same time taking out of his pocket a pair of handcuffs; “many a fine fellow has had these on before you—come, come, I can't wait.”

Had the spirit of young Edwards been about to take its flight into another world, it could scarcely have left a more bloodless check; the sight of those instruments of degradation was enough; he sank into the chair beside him, helpless as a child.

"Come, come, young man; I'm no fool to be tricked in this way; your theatrical pranks won't go with me; I've seen too many of 'em; I'm in earnest with you—it's your last chance; when I snap this lock, you are done for."

A few moments the officer waited, but James answered not, nor did he make the least resistance, but submitting to his fate, was led from the room, a manacled culprit.

CHAPTER X.

ON the evening of the eventful day which has been described in the last chapter, every thing had settled into quietness in the mansion of Mr. Hunt. James had departed under the care of the officer of the law, and the agonized feelings of the family, if not allayed, were suppressed into silence like that which pervades the house of mourning, when the funeral rites are ended, and those who had been weeping around the grave, have returned to their desolate home. Each heart is swelled with emotion, and the words spoken are few, and in accents of peculiar tenderness.

In the parlor, the lamps had not yet been lighted, but the cheerful blaze of a coal fire was sufficient to reveal, with

distinctness, every object in the room; immediately before it sat a female, young and beautiful; she was leaning against the back of her chair, her hands lay folded idly upon her lap, and her feet resting against the small and brightly polished fender; her light brown hair was neatly parted from her fair forehead; her eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, were fixed upon the sporting, flickering blaze, apparently watching the explosions of the bituminous mass; her mouth, which seemed formed for a smile, closely shut, and the upper lip slightly curling, gave a cast of serious thought which the other features did not betoken. To look upon her now, how unlike the lively, laughing, easy-tempered young lady, whose sprightly step, and cheerful smile, and musical voice, shed such pleasantness and life around this otherwise dull family.

As she sat musing, a knock at the door startled her.

"Oh, dear! I hope there will be no company here this evening."

She then hastily lighted a lamp on the table, left her seat before the fire, removed her chair to a corner, and assuming a becoming attitude, should a stranger enter, was prepared to receive whomsoever it might be.

The door opened, and she perceived that it was no stranger.

"Good evening, cousin Rudolph," she did not rise from her seat, nor did she greet him with that pleasant smile which was wont, like sunshine, to illumine and adorn her salutation.

"Good evening, cousin Sarah, are you all alone?"

"I have been alone for a short time; I expect uncle and aunt in soon, however."

Rudolph Hunt, for it was he who had entered, helped himself to a chair, and, as he took his seat, put on a smile of complacency.

"I am right glad, cousin Sarah, that I have come in; I think you must be lonesome here."

"It is rather lonesome, this evening," looking steadily at her sewing, which she had taken up on his entrance.

"I thought you would all feel rather down this evening, after what has happened to-day; poor James! who would have thought it?"

Sarah cast her eye from her work; it glanced from her

cousin to the fire and then settled on her work again; she met his keen, inquiring gaze; it chilled her heart; she made no reply.

"Did you see James when he went off?"

"No, I did not."

"I should not like to have seen him, either; James appears to be a good-hearted fellow, although—"

Sarah looked at her cousin; but his eye turned not towards her; he was looking steadily at the fire.

"Although what, cousin Rudolph?"

"Oh, nothing; only I was going to say, he sometimes appears singular, don't you think so? have you never noticed any thing?"

"No, I cannot say that I have."

"Well, I don't know but I judge wrong; but he don't seem to be open—there is something about him you can't get at."

Sarah made no further reply; in fact, she did not relish the turn which the conversation had taken; it was manifestly unpleasant to her. Rudolph was her cousin, and like her, dependent upon the kindness of their uncles; he had been very attentive to her, and she had formerly reciprocated his attentions. As long as he made his home at their uncle's, she treated him with the utmost kindness; no sister could have been more obliging, and, although she saw many things in him which she could have wished were otherwise, she passed them over as matters which she could not regulate, never dreaming that Rudolph could ever be any thing to her but her attentive gallant, her kind cousin. But Sarah was not one, with whom a young person in Rudolph's situation, could well be on such terms of intimacy, and still be able to control his affections that no interest should be excited for her beyond what a cousin might demand.

There was too much virtuous simplicity, unaffected frankness, and noble, open-hearted generosity; there was too much personal beauty and mental loveliness, not to captivate a heart less susceptible than his; and besides all this, Sarah was the darling of her uncle, the younger Mr. Hunt; she was the orphan child of a beloved sister; he had taken upon himself to educate and support her, and had made no secret of the matter, that "his Sally," as he called her, was

to be the heiress of his estate. So beauty and mental worth, a warm heart, and doubtless a handsome fortune, were all united in this frank, laughing, lively, confiding cousin; and he was not to be blamed if he did love her. But Sarah had not the most distant idea of yielding her heart to one, in whose moral integrity, she could not confide; and when he had ventured to test the nature of her affection for him, by placing himself in the attitude of a suitor, she, at once, drew a line between herself and him, strong and well defined.

Rudolph was deeply chagrined at such a result; he was handsome, and he knew it; he had acquired those accomplishments which render youth and a fine person so engaging, and he was a partner in a very flourishing concern, with an almost certain prospect of future wealth; these, he thought, were advantages which few could offer, and which his vanity prompted him to believe, few could resist. But to Sarah they offered no inducements; her heart recoiled at any intimacy with one, whose integrity she doubted.

Whether James Edwards had been, in the least, the cause of Rudolph's discomfiture, I will not pretend to say; if so, he was the innocent cause; he had never talked of love, nor had he used any arts to gain the heart of Sarah; he did, indeed, enjoy the frequent opportunities afforded him, as a member of the family, of waiting upon her to an evening party, or of conversing with her in the domestic circle; there was a wonderful agreement in all their views, and, of late, a new chord had been struck, whose vibrations awoke sensations of peculiar interest within each heart. They had been religiously educated, and Sarah's mother had, with her dying breath, commended her orphan child to the care of a covenant God, and begged, as her last petition, that whatever else might be her lot, she might be encircled in that blessed covenant which she believed to be well ordered in all things. James, we know, was the darling object for whom a widowed mother's prayers daily ascended before the throne of grace, but it was only within a few months, that he appeared to feel any particular interest in the subject, as a personal matter.

Whether it was that the gentle words which James had ventured to speak, in reference to his own feelings, had affected her, or whether the same cloud whose mercy drops sprinkled his youthful spirit had also bedewed and softened

hers, I cannot say; but true it was, a congenial feeling possessed them; there was a oneness in their sympathies, of which, perhaps, neither of them was aware, but which was drawing their affections into a close and holy bond.

Sarah had taken her work as Rudolph came in, and plying her needle diligently, seemed more disposed to attend to that, than to the conversation of her visitor, and therefore, after a few vain attempts to excite her interest in any of the common topics, he took his leave.

No sooner had he left the house, than she laid aside her work, and resuming her seat before the fire, indulged the all-absorbing thoughts that crowded upon her; she was deeply agitated; clasping her hands before her, and raising her eye to heaven as the big tears glistened and then silently fell—"I will see him; I will know, from his own lips, the whole truth. Oh, my Father! help me to bear this trial; help me to walk fearlessly in the path of duty. Sustain him——" but she could say no more; her overcharged feelings burst forth; she indulged them for a few moments, then rising calmly, walked with a light step from the room, and descended to the kitchen. Betty looked round as she entered.

"Oh! Miss Sarah, and is it you? So glad am I to see you, for I've been wishing some one would just step in a bit, so lonesome it is, for Jim, he's been away, and it's all so still about the house; ochone, this is the warst day of my life."

Sarah could not reply; she took her seat by the side of Betty, and listened to the outpouring of her lamentations over the sad doings of the day; the good woman soon worked herself up to a high pitch, until the big tears fell upon her clean, white apron.

"To think of him, a nice young gentleman, in the hands of that ould snapdragon! if I couldn't have taken the life out of him, Miss Sarah, so rude as he was—and spaking in such a rough and bearish manner—and the dear sowl! niver a word did he answer, only when the ould whelp took hold of his arm so—and began to jirk him along—says James, 'I'll go with you, sir, without your help;' but, oh, dear, oh, dear, that my eyes had never seen such a sight. I steps up to him, and says I, 'Mr. Edwards, keep up a good heart, for I believe you're innocent, for all that's passed yet.' 'Do you,

Betty?" says he; and believe me, Miss Sarah, the tear came in his eye, and he kind o' smiled, and his lip trembled; 'yes,' said I, 'and you'll prove it to them yet.'"

Betty saw that she was saying too much for Sarah's comfort.

"Never mind, never mind, my dear young leddy; it's not to hurt you that I spake."

"It does not trouble me, Betty; but I am glad to hear you say that you believe him innocent."

"And that's what I do; but it's sore against him now; and Jim says, they've got it down at the store that its gambled he has—but I tell Jim it's a lie—he gambled—oh, dear; oh, dear. I tell you what, Miss Sarah," putting her head close to the young lady's, "there's them that aint a great ways off, that knows more about the matter than Mr. Edwards does—that's my guess."

"Well, Betty, would you not like to see James, and talk with him about it?"

"Wouldn't I, Miss Sarah? that's what I would."

"I have made up my mind, Betty, that I must see him, and that this night, if I can get you to go with me."

Betty put up both hands, and raising her eyes at the same time. "It's no in her right mind that she is. My dear young leddy, are you clean demented? Why, he's in the old city prison, and it makes my heart quake to look at it in the day time, barrin' going into it—but it's no there you'll catch Betty to-night, nor you, my dear young leddy, neither."

"Why, Betty, I've been thinking a great deal about it, and I cannot rest to-night without seeing him. You know, Betty, that he has no friends to step forward and aid him; his mother and sisters are away; my uncles will not go near him, and Rudolph—"

"Ay, ay, catch him there, my darling, he's no that friend that James thinks for—but, my dear leddy, it's not to the prison that you must go this night; why, your young heart would tremble to hear your own footsteps in the dreary place, let alone the great bolts and the heavy doors, sounding like thunder through the old bare walls; no, no, Miss Sarah, it's no place for you, and the night is dark."

However, Sarah had made up her mind, and Betty had a

sincere regard for her, and when she saw that there was danger of Sarah's attempting it alone, she, with great reluctance, consented to accompany her, but it was with many crossings of herself, and many ejaculations for mercy on them. "For such an errand no poor woman creatures ever went upon before. Oh, that I was yet to be born! Such a weary world as it is."

But when Betty set about getting ready, she showed clearly that she had her wits about her. She disguised Sarah in some over-garments of her own, and then, stepping into the pantry, gathered up a few choice bits.

"The poor soul might be hungry, and craving a morsel nice to eat."

CHAPTER XI.

It would be difficult to imagine a situation more lamentable than that of James Edwards, as he paced the gloomy apartment to which he had been consigned—the upper west room of the old city prison. The shades of night had fallen, and the light of the lamps, which glittered upon the great thoroughfare of the city, threw their glimmer into his iron-grated window, and shadowed forth upon the ceiling above, the token of his degradation; he could hear light footsteps of his happy fellow-beings, hurrying past, and the floor beneath would tremble, as the heavy coach rolled by, bearing its gay inmates to some scene of festive enjoyment, or to some cheerful, happy home; none, among that throng, cared for him; a finger might, indeed, be pointed at his prison house, as the passer-by told of his crime and its detection; but none cared for the anguish that racked his bosom, nor thought of giving consolation to one who had fallen from his integrity, and forfeited his fair fame; perhaps, had they known the story of his past life, there might have been those who would have stepped forward to the rescue, and not have suffered the iron to enter his soul, at least, before he had been allowed an impartial trial. But, ah! who was there to tell his story? James felt the sad reality of all this; the

iron gratings and the heavy bars, that shut him from the world, were to his spirit like the torturing rack; not that he eared, now, to be at liberty; it was not the walls of his prison, so bare and cold, nor the bed of straw, nor the darkness and loneliness of his cell; the prison, in which his soul was shut up was stronger and gloomier than they. His fair fame was gone, and until the stain that polluted it was washed away, he must be an outcast. To whom, now, can those helpless ones look for their daily bread; they, with him, have fallen, dependents upon the cold charities of the world.

As these thoughts rioted within his troubled breast, the heavy peals from the bell of an adjoining steeple tolled the hour of the evening; he paused to count their number; he heard footsteps approaching; the key was applied to the door of his room; the heavy bolt flew back, and the keeper entered, followed by two females. Placing a small lamp upon the dark oaken table, and telling them he would return in a quarter of an hour, he retired, turning the key upon them.

The first thought with James was, that the jailer had thrust in two other unfortunate beings like himself to share his cell. The next moment the eye of the lovely Sarah, beaming with emotion, was fixed upon him. She had thrown off the hood and cloak in which she had been disguised, and as she stood gazing upon him, just as she appeared at home, she seemed like an angel of mercy that had descended to shed some rays of light and hope on his dreary path.—James was confounded; his mind had been deeply agitated; he knew not but his reason was departing. He was soon assured, however, that it was no vision, for Betty had unrobed herself, and stepping up, presented to him some of the dainties of her pantry.

"You'll be remembering these, Mr. James—they're clane as my own hands can make 'em."

"Why, Betty, have you come here?"

"Indeed, and I have—but it's not me that's to be thanked for this turn; it's my dear young leddy, she would come, whether or no."

Sarah had not considered how she would appear, nor how she would feel when in the immediate presence of Ed

wards; it was the committal of her interest in him to an extent, which she did not realize, until Betty's plainness, and unsophisticated kindness revealed the secret. She blushed; she even felt the rich crimson suffusing her countenance, and her heart, for the first time, beat with that trembling, suffocating emotion, which accompanies the acknowledgment of reciprocal love. James knew not how to act. His first impulse was to clasp her to his bosom: to tell her that she was dearer to him than life itself; but the thought of his degraded condition, of the humbling scenes he had passed through that day, and which she had witnessed, urged him the next moment to shrink from her sight.

"Oh, Sarah, Sarah!" and he covered his face.

"James," said she, "I suppose I have acted rashly; I have done wrong, but I could not rest. I want to hear, from your own mouth, some account of this strange business."

"You have known and seen too much already."

"But before I can believe, James, that you are guilty, I must hear the acknowledgment from your own lips."

"It will avail but little if I should deny it, so long as the proofs are so strong against me."

"Will it avail nothing, James, to let me know what so deeply concerns you?"

James looked at her with his keen, bright eye, as though he wished to read the secrets of her soul. She shrank not from his gaze; her eye was softened by a tear, and her whole countenance glowed with emotion.

"Sarah, do you believe me innocent?"

"I do—I firmly believe it."

"And so do I, Mr. James—and may the time come when it will be proved so, and your enemies confounded."

James put out his hand, and tenderly taking one of Sarah's, "I thank you most truly for this expression of your confidence; it is indeed the oil of consolation to my wounded spirit. I know not what awaits me, nor through what scenes of trial I am yet to pass, but this act of yours, Sarah, this expression of your confidence will make a prison or a dungeon, light and pleasant. I am innocent, Sarah; and to Him, who knows my heart, who sees every act I do, and every thought that passes through my mind, do I most solemnly appeal, that what I say is true."

Sarah watched his eye as it rose in solemn reverence towards the dwelling place of Him whose Omniscience he invoked.

"I believe you—I believe you," said she, pressing his hand with both of hers, "but can you not tell who has done it? Can you not get out of this dreadful place? Oh, how long must you be here!"

James shook his head.

"Is there no one whom you suspect?"

"Ah! Sarah, suspicion will not do, and it may be unjust. No, I see nothing before me but infamy, degradation and ruin; I shall be classed with felons, and stigmatized as a hypocrite, yet I could even bear this, if I could but suffer alone. They, too, must go down with me—must be beggars."

He could say no more—his proud spirit labored under the oppressive load.

Sarah saw the tender chord which had been touched; her mind sympathized in the trouble that was agitating his, and her noble spirit rose above the little forms, so useful in the common scenes of life; she felt that it was no time to hide the honest feelings of a heart that was bound up in this suffering young man.

"James, your mother and sisters shall be mine. I will do for them what you have done; I am abundantly able; they shall never want."

"Sarah, my own dear Sarah." He clasped her to his bosom. "May God bless you, for ever and ever!"

She shrank not from his embrace, but suffered him to feel, that she willingly yielded the token that she was all his own.

The footsteps of the jailer were now heard approaching.

"James, let us hope in that Being to whom you have appealed this night; He can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves."

Betty was not an unconcerned spectator of the scene which had just past, but she kept a respectful silence, until she saw Miss Sarah preparing to depart; then stepping up to James and taking his hand: "Mr. James, may God bless you." James felt that she was placing something within it; he looked at it; it was a gold eagle.

"No, no, Betty, this must not be; you will rob yourself."

"Not a bit, not a bit; kape it, you dear sowl; the like o' them here won't be aiding you without the help of a little of that," and she turned her back, and as the jailer was waiting, James was soon left to ponder alone on the unexpected vision which had just passed.

Sarah retired to rest that night, but she could not sleep: too many conflicting feelings rioted in her troubled breast; one bright spot alone there was, around which her young affections loved to hover; but dark and troublous clouds kept passing over the beauteous vision. That James was innocent, she now firmly believed; that they mutually loved, she no longer doubted; and when she thought of that brief moment of bliss, that before unknown delight, that incommunicable joy of mingling spirits, a rapturous dream seemed to have entranced her. But then the sad realities of a prison gloom, the blasted reputation, the dark uncertainty as to the fate of him she loved, all came upon her mind with painful interest, too painful for her peace.

Was there no friend who could be induced to lend a helping hand to free young Edwards from his prison, and aid him in detecting the villainy which, if not found out, must rest with all its killing influence on him, and now, alas! on her! But to whom could she apply? Who would listen to her story? Who would believe, as she did, in the bare assertion of one against whom appearances were now so suspicious, yea, worse than suspicious. She might be ridiculed for her credulity, but there was little hope that any could be found who would be willing to act upon such a peradventure. The longer she pondered, the darker, the more hopeless, grew the prospect. In the agony of her spirit, she exclaimed: "Oh, had I but a father's bosom, now, on which to repose! to whom I could go for help—a father! And have I not a father? My uncle—yes, he has taken a father's place—he has never denied my childish wishes; I will open my heart to him—I will tell him all."

The morning broke, bright and pleasant, and Sarah would have hailed it with delight, but too many trembling apprehensions were alive within; it was no pleasant task before her, to confide the most sacred secrets even to her fond uncle, who might after all treat her request as a wild phantasy. Dubious as it might be, however, her mind was fixed:

a high and holy purpose inspired her with an energy, which no one could have anticipated who saw her in her every day walk; her whole appearance was affected by the strong passion which possessed her soul; the playful smile, that was ever ready with its bewitching power, gave place to a settled sobriety, and her sprightly, dancing step, to one stately, graceful and measured, more in keeping with the current of her feelings.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. AUGUSTUS HUNT never refused to attend the summons of his niece, and at an early hour in the forenoon, she arose to meet her affectionate kinsman, as he entered her own private room, in his plain and neat dress of London brown.

"Well, Sally dear," preceded a warm kiss, a good shake of the hand, and a gentle pat on the head; and as he sat down, she took his broad-brimmed beaver, and laid it with care on her little table, and, as quietly and calmly as she could, took her seat in the corner. The old gentleman occupied his usual place immediately before the fire; he sat very erect, with one hand resting on each knee.

"Well, darling, what's the news this morning?—no more robberies, I hope; uncle Geordie feels pretty sore," leaning over towards her, and smiling archly—"but it's no great loss for him, after all."

"I suppose uncle feels tried at losing the money, but the loss of the money is not the worst of it—to lose it in such a singular manner."

"Ay, ay, to be sure, that's it, that's it; you're right—singular, to be sure—strange enough, strange enough, there's something about that business, Sally, puzzles me. I don't see into it," shaking his head.

"You can hardly believe after all, uncle, that James did it?"

"I tell you what, Sally, the longer I live, the harder it is to find out things; there's a wheel within a wheel about this business, somewhere."

"But, uncle, if James is really not guilty, it is a very serious matter for him to be confined in prison, with his character blasted, which you know is all that he has to depend upon; it is worse than death."

"True, true, child, that's true; but the money, you know, or some of it, was found in his trunk, and one of uncle Geordie's papers in his coat pocket, and Rudolph tells strange stories about his gambling, and all that; what to make of it all, I don't know—its queer, queer"

"Might not James have some enemy who wishes to ruin him, and who knows if his character could be blasted, it would be the most effectual way to destroy him?"

"There is no telling, child, what might be; there are strange things done now-a-days; I sometimes have to look twice, before I can believe my own eyes."

"Well, uncle, I don't believe that James is guilty, and I have good reasons for my opinion."

Her uncle looked at her with his keen and twinkling eye, as though wishing to pry into her secret thoughts.

"And I believe, uncle, that if you were to see him, you would think so too."

"I wish it may prove so, my dear child; upon my honor, I wish it may, but I am afraid it will go hard with him. Unless he can clearly make it out that some one else did it, there is no help for him."

"Is it not very hard, uncle; if he be innocent, that he should remain in close confinement, with no friend on earth to aid him, and no power to do any thing himself?"

Sarah's voice trembled somewhat, as she said this.

"Remember, uncle, that he is an orphan."

"I know it, my child, I know it; and until this unlucky affair, I would have trusted James with thousands."

"Well, my dear uncle, you can safely trust him still; you must confide in him for my sake;—she drew her chair close to his—"if you knew, my dear uncle, what I have suffered, and what James has suffered—if you could only realize his destitute condition—with none to help him—"

Sarah's feelings were not equal to the task she had undertaken, and the old gentleman could not bear to see her in trouble.

"Well, darling, I see how it is—I see how it is; but what would you have me do?"

"I do not know what should be done, uncle; but I have been very unhappy since yesterday morning, and you know, my dear uncle, that I look to you as a father—you have been a father to me;" and she leaned her head upon his shoulder. Mr. Hunt attempted to answer, but he was a very tender-hearted man, so he took the hand of his niece, and replied by a silent pressure.

"I can only tell you all my heart, and if I have done wrong, uncle, you must forgive me."

She then frankly told him how deeply she was interested in James Edwards, how she had visited him, and how solemnly he had assured her of his innocence.

Mr. Hunt was much agitated during the recital, and had more than once to wipe away the big drops that started to his eyes. He saw plainly enough, that his niece had run a desperate venture; but he saw, likewise, that her whole soul was engaged in what to him appeared the very unlikely prospect of Edward's being able to prove his innocence.

"Well, darling, since it is as it is, what would you have me do?"

"Will you not, uncle?"—and she looked full in his face—"won't you become security for James, so that he can be released from that hateful prison until he has his trial? it is only for a few weeks."

"Ay, ay," shaking his head, "I don't know about that; supposing he should give me leg bail, I should be obliged to pay every cent of it; uncle Geordie wouldn't let me off a single cent. Ay, ay, I don't know about that."

"I will pledge you my honor, uncle, my sacred honor, that James will do as he promises; I know he will."

"Sally, Sally, don't you be too sure; don't you be too confident; these young men—I don't know about it—they play tricks sometimes."

He saw Sarah appeared hurt.

"However, darling, I shall do as you say; Edwards shall be free this very day. Will that do, Sally?"

Sarah threw her arms around his neck.

"My uncle, my father, my friend, forgive me all the trouble I have ever caused you—you are too good to me; I thank

you, and James will thank you; you will be blessed, uncle; the God of the fatherless will bless you."

"So, so, Sally—so, so; we'll see pretty soon what can be done. James shall come out of prison, only don't tell uncle Geordie. Rot his old chest, I hope the next time they'll take that along with them."

CHAPTER XIII.

A GREAT change had taken place in the mind of James Edwards since the short interview with Sarah in the cell of his prison. The noble daring of the girl, the avowal of her confidence in him, under such suspicious and degrading circumstances, the interchange of affection, all acted like a charm upon his spirit; those feelings, which were beginning to harden themselves against sympathy, were at once softened; a new stimulus was added to all the other motives, to make exertions for his own rescue from his fallen condition.

But how to unravel the mystery, in what way to shake off the heavy weight which must finally crush him unless removed, and to maintain, before an impartial jury, the innocence which he had made oath to in the ear of that confiding girl, was no trifling matter, and beyond the present power of his mind to compass; wearied at length with his own imaginings, he lay down on his bed of straw and slept; yes, in that cold, dark cell he slept, and awoke not until the light of day was streaming in its fulness through his grated window.

James had but few associates; being naturally of a retiring disposition, and confining himself closely to his duties, he felt but little inclination for mingling in society. He had, however, one companion with whom he was on terms of great intimacy, whose mind and temper were congenial to his own. Theodore Berry, for that was the name of his friend, had just finished his preparation for the practice of law; he had promising talent, was fond of the profession he had chosen, and resolved to rise in it without the aid of those grovelling expedients which too many in that noble

calling substitute for patient industry and faithful attention to business.

Theodore did not hear of the disaster which had befallen James until the following day. It was in the morning, and while on the way to his office; he lost no time in going to the place where he was confined, resolved to learn the whole truth.

As the jailer opened the door, he entered, and extending his hand; "Why, James, what does this mean?" James returned his embrace.

"Theodore, I am glad to see you; I have just been thinking how I should get a message to you."

"I have heard nothing of this, until a few moments since. I was on the way to my office, and met Rudolph; on inquiring of him how you were; 'Have you not heard about him since yesterday?' 'No,' I said; 'what's the matter?' and then he related the circumstances; but tell me, James, is it so?"

"It is pretty much as Rudolph has told you, but—"

Theodore looked at James with deep concern; he saw that his eye met his own with the same clear, bright, honest expression it ever had.

"Tell me, Edwards, there is some mistake; you are—you are—you have not done this, James, have you?"

"No, Theodore, I have not."

"Thank God for that; but sit down, and tell me all about it."

"I can tell you no more than you already know; but I think Rudolph has given you rather the worst features of the case."

James then told his friend exactly what had happened.

"But what is the story about your gambling? surely Rudolph must be mistaken."

"Gambling!—does he charge me with gambling?"

"Why, he says that is the common report; that you were seen entering a gambling house the other evening—the worst in the city."

James appeared much astonished.

"Is it possible that so much has been made out of a mere accident?"

"Tell me, James"—and Theodore took his hand and pressed it, "tell me, it is not so; you have not gambled."

"No, never; the circumstance might have been forgotten by me, if you had not mentioned that I was seen going into a certain house. I did go into one, but it was by mistake," and he explained to Theodore how it happened.

"Glad, glad am I, James, that none of this is true. But how has all this taken place? there is something more than accident in it; there has been some design, some deep design to ruin you, and whoever has done it, has taken a course that will make it very difficult for you to clear yourself; the whole of this unfortunate business rests upon you as the guilty person."

"I know it."

"Is there no one whom you suspect? is Rudolph friendly to you?"

James shook his head. "Rudolph has been very kind to me; I have no reason—I ought not to think of him in a suspicious manner."

"Edwards, I must be frank; you have no friend in Rudolph Hunt. The manner in which he spoke of you, this morning, convinces me of this; depend upon what I say, he's a—"

"Stop, stop, Theodore."

But Theodore would not stop, until he had obtained from James every particular respecting his intimacy with Rudolph, which might throw light upon the nature of his feelings towards him; all of which he minutely recorded.

"And now, James, what is your plan? It will not do for you to be cooped up here; you must be at liberty, and endeavor to ferret out this matter, and you have but a short time to prepare."

Just then, they were interrupted by a bustling in the passage, and Edwards thought he heard the voice of Mr. Augustus Hunt. The door was opened.

"Bless my soul! what a place! what a place! it aint fit for a dog to be in. Why, James, James, bless me! this is a bad business; sorry, sorry." The old gentleman stepped up kindly and offered his hand, and then casting his eye around the room, over the walls, and at the grated window, "Terrible, terrible! How did the hussy dare to come to such a place? But she's just like her mother."

James blushed deeply, and Theodore observed it, but as

nothing had been said to him of the intimacy between James and Sarah, it was all a mystery to him.

"Well, well, master James, I'm sorry, sorry; things are in a bad shape here, bad enough—this won't do—and you an innocent man too—hey?" And he looked with his keen, bright, twinkling eye fixedly at James.

James felt the intensity of his gaze, but he shrank not from it; he knew that an answer was required from him, but he could not speak.

"I believe, sir, that Mr. Edwards is innocent," said Theodore, "but it will do him little good to have the mere opinion of his friends as to his innocence; he must have positive proof that some one else put that money into his trunk."

"Just so, just so; that's the rub, as I understand it."

"The best thing his friends can do for him, is to get him out of confinement, and unite with him in endeavoring to search out the villain."

"That's just my mind, and to tell you the truth, master James, that's what I've come for this morning—so let's set about it."

"Mr. Hunt, I am well aware that appearances are against me; I have no friends to whom I could apply, under the circumstances, as surety for my appearance, and—"

"How do you know, master James? how do you know, but I would—I would—do it myself; I guess they will take Augustus Hunt's bond for \$6,000."

James could not reply; it was unexpected; the tear gathered in his eye, and his whole expression told the deep feelings of his heart. Mr. Hunt had his own feelings too; the scene through which he had just passed with his niece, had left a strong impression on his kind heart, and now called to witness the degradation of one, whom he had seen daily attending faithfully to his duties in his own counting-room, and under his own direction, whose whole deportment had ever won his admiration and esteem, he could wait no longer, so with a quick step, he left the room, telling James that he would be back presently.

Hardly had James time to recover from the surprise, which Mr. Hunt's kindness had caused, when the door was again opened, and the jailer, bowing complacently, told Mr

Edwards that he was no longer his prisoner; requesting him, at the same time, to step down into the room below. He was overcome. Theodore grasped his hand.

"Come, James, put on courage; keep up a good heart; you have friends yet." And taking his arm, he led him, almost unconscious, to the room where Mr. Hunt was waiting for him.

The old gentleman arose as he entered, and shook hands with him again.

"Ah, give me light and air—none of your pent-up places for me; bless me! I felt as if I could not breathe."

"Mr. Hunt, your kindness is more than I could have hoped for." Theodore just then left the room, saying that he would return in a few moments. No sooner were they alone, than Mr. Hunt assumed the serious air which he always had when business of importance was on hand.

"James, you are now free, until your case shall have been fairly tried; are you aware of what I have done to accomplish it?"

"I am, sir, and—"

"Well, you are aware then, that this is done in reliance on your honor, for I must tell you, James, I have yet confidence in your integrity."

The spirit of the young man, almost broken by his trial, felt, sweetly felt, the warm and cheering words of this aged friend.

"Nor am I the only one, who believes you innocent; nor am I the only one who will suffer if you should prove untrue. You understand me."

James answered not; his heart was full to overflowing, and his face was covered to hide emotions he could not suppress.

"There is one, young man, as dear, yes, dearer to me than life itself; you know well whom I mean; her reason, her earthly hopes, her life itself, hang on the truth or falsehood of your character." And his voice trembled, as he spoke it in a low, but most emphatic tone.

James raised his head, his countenance beaming forth the strong feelings at work within his breast.

"Mr. Hunt, I know well what you mean, and to whom you allude; I am well aware that the prospect before me is

dark; I know, that to prove my innocence, may be beyond my power; but, sir, there is a God above, the Being whose blessing I invoke, whose wrath, above all things else, I fear; sure as he lives, and so long as my reason shall regulate my actions, will I prove true to her—will I be true to you."

"It is a solemn oath, which you have taken, James; may you be able to keep it. There is one thing more I wish to say; it will not do for me to be known as actively aiding you; nor must it be known that I have been here; I have procured a friend, who has given his name, instead of mine. My brother believes in your guilt, and, to be frank with you, I fear that Rudolph helps him to believe so. Here is a trifle, James; more shall be ready at your need; employ the best counsel, and may God help you out, for if you are not cleared, Sarah's heart will be broken, and—"

The old man could say no more; he took the hand of the young man and pressing it in silence, left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

How strong the contrast which is often presented between the moral and the natural world. The skies cloudless and bright, and the earth smiling in sunshine and loveliness, while the heart is sick, and the soul looks forth with beamless eye upon the fair creation.

It was a fine, brisk morning; the sun had not yet risen; all the bright rays which shot up from behind the eastern hills, betokened the coming of the strong man to run his race. It was just such a morning as wakes up within the heart its warmest energies; every nerve is quickened by the frosty air, and the toils, the trials, and the dangers of the coming day, are looked forward to, not only with calm courage, but almost with a longing for the stern encounter.

At the door of the Parsonage, a respectable looking barouche had just driven up, and a small man, well wrapped in a stout overcoat, was standing by the steps which he had thrown down, and holding by one hand the open door. His

face was turned towards the group that was approaching by the little path which led to the front gate. As the gate opened, he lifted his hat high up from his head, bowed very low once or twice, and in a voice that was scarcely audible, thus accosted the company:

"Your servant, ladies; Mr. Wharton, good morning."

The voices which responded were in broken tones, and the countenances of the ladies plainly told that they had been yielding to the power of sorrow.

Mr. Wharton replied in his usual placid manner—"A fine morning, Mr. Tightbody; you are very punctual, sir."

Mr. Tightbody bowed low to this remark of the reverend gentleman, but made no other reply. As the ladies, followed by Mr. Wharton, entered the carriage, the steps were folded up, and the door closed in the most careful manner. There was no prancing of the horses, nor cracking of the whip; but off they moved steadily, as though fully aware of the feelings of their master.

"How long a drive do you intend this morning? Shall we reach the Point in time for the afternoon boat, Mr. Tightbody?"

"The morning boat, Mr. Wharton—the morning boat, sir." This was said in a low voice. "They can take us there, sir, in three hours," pointing to his horses; "but I suppose it would not be altogether the thing *to-day*, sir."

Mr. Wharton did not reply. He could not, just then, comprehend the reasoning of his good neighbor, or perhaps the latter part of the remark was unheard, so low were the tones in which it was delivered. The road wound through a country beautifully variegated with woods, and open meadows, and snug farm-houses nestling in quiet beneath their guardian monarchs of the forest, and little brooks that sparkled cheerily by the wayside, and through the distant field. On every spot the eye could reach, some new striking beauty was unfolded; some charm that stole with silent power to the heart, inviting man to come and rest his tired spirit, away from the turmoil and distracting struggle of the busy throng. But to the mourners in that carriage it was but a waste. No lovely scene in nature could divert their minds from the terrible realities which then engrossed them.

To Mr. Wharton, especially, did these realities come home

with sickening interest, for his larger experience of life enabled him to anticipate with more distinctness the sad items in the troublous scene to which they were hastening. To be an eye-witness of the degradation of that youth, dear to him by associations of the most tender kind; to lead this mother and sister into the dark prison-house, and hear their cry of agony as they mingled their lamentations with the fallen one; to hear, perhaps, a tale of misdoings that began at first in a slight deviation from the path of rectitude, increasing in obliquity until the step was taken that can never be retraced, and the dark blot made that can never be washed out, either by penitence or tears; to behold a youth of fair promise and high hopes, dashed by his own mad act, a hopeless victim, upon those dark shores where the outcast must for ever wander unpitied and unblest; his heart recoiled from the sad prospect, and deeply sympathized with those helpless ones beside him who could only mourn, hopelessly mourn, over the ruin of their earthly stay.

As Mr. Tightbody had said, they were in time for the morning boat, and had an hour at least to spare, for as they drove up to the tavern at the landing, the white sail of the small vessel, which in those primitive days answered the turn of the public, was seen at some distance rounding the point which formed one of the boundaries of the little bay which spread before them, and across which she must make her way against a head wind.

"We shall have a full hour to spare, Mr. Tightbody; I shall order dinner for the ladies, and you will not need to be in haste to return; stay and dine with us."

A very low bow and suitable acknowledgments followed this address of Mr. Wharton.

The meal was soon in readiness, and the little party sat down and ate in silence.

There was soon a bustle in the adjoining bar-room, and Mr. Timothy came at once to a halt, and started from the table.

"Don't rise, ladies; be seated, Mr. Wharton. I will see that every thing is on board."

Scarce had the little man closed the door which opened immediately into the bar-room, when he sprang back, and looking and beckoning very earnestly,

"Mr. Wharton, Mr. Wharton, quick, sir, if you please."

The little circle was somewhat alarmed, for the countenance of Mr. Tightbody was very animated, and his words came out full and naturally. No sooner was Mr. Wharton in the bar-room, than his hand was violently grasped.

"Mr. Wharton! how is my mother?"

"James! James! is it possible? is this you? The Lord be praised!"

He immediately led him one side.

"It is not true, then?"

"Mr. Wharton, has my mother heard any thing about me?"

"She has, James; but it is not true?"

"Is my mother here, sir?"

"She is."

Mr. Wharton at once led him into the room.

"My dear son!"

"My dear mother!"

And they were locked in each other's arms.

"James! my brother! my dear brother!" And Mary threw her arms around his neck.

Oh, James! how is it? what is it? it is not true?—but you look as if you had been in trouble. Oh, my son! tell me, James, you are innocent, are you not?"

"Yes, mother, I am innocent, but I may not be able to prove it."

"I knew it, mother, I knew it; I told you that James was innocent—my own dear brother." And she kissed him again and again.

"But tell us, James, how has this come to pass? is the account which we have received in the paper, correct? have you been imprisoned?"

And his mother and sister looked at him as though their life depended on his answer.

"It is true, sir; I have been imprisoned."

"Oh, brother! brother!" And Mary hid her face and wept bitterly.

"But yet you say you were innocent, my son?"

"Yes, mother, as innocent as that lovely child. Don't weep, dear sister. It is the hand of God. It is for good in some way. Do not weep so, Mary."

"Oh, my brother! my brother! if I could only have been with you. To think of you alone, and in prison, and not a friend near you!"

"God has raised up friends for me, dear sister—warm and true."

"I knew it; I have felt it; I have believed that He would not suffer the child of my prayers to leave the path of righteousness, and bring me with sorrow to the grave."

Mr. Tightbody now ventured to open the door sufficiently to show his face, lighted up with a new and bright expression.

"Come in, Mr. Tightbody, come in, sir; things are better than we feared."

"God be praised, sir, for that; but I came in to inquire," and he bowed very low, as he said this, "Does the Reverend and the ladies still design to go by the boat? the things are all aboard."

All looked to James for an answer.

"I am on my way to our home, mother, and design to spend a day or so with you."

"Then we will all return, sir."

It was some little distance to the boat, and Mr. Tightbody started with an agility that would have done credit to a boy of sixteen; but sometimes our haste does mischief; the landlord was not only a very fleshy little man, he was also sorely afflicted with the gout. Just as Mr. Timothy way flying out of the bar-room door, the old man was turning from his piazza to enter. There was a loud wail, and both bodies were laying at the foot of the steps together. The dogs barked, the women ran out of the kitchen and screamed at the top of their voices, and the old man swore horrible oaths, intermingled with cries of agony; at the same time holding Mr. Timothy in his grasp, and endeavoring to wreak upon him the vengeance that was boiling in his heart.

"I'm a dead man; he's murdered me; hold him fast; send for Squire Pearce; I'll have him in jail, that I will."

But Mr. Timothy, of the two, had the greater cause for complaint; he certainly was much the worse for the encounter. The old man in his spite had clawed without mercy, tearing ruffles, pulling off buttons, and even leaving marks on Mr. Timothy's round, plump visage, that were calculated to make him far too conspicuous under the present circum-

stances. But as Pomp could not be blamed for the present mishap, Mr. Timothy was obliged to smother his feelings, and bear his trial as he best could.

How very different did the beauties of nature appear to the little company, as they travelled back through the same scenes they had passed in the morning; their hearts could now appreciate them; the dark mist that had lain so heavily upon their warm affections, had passed away. James was by their side, not, indeed, secure from calamity, but restored to their confidence; his word was truth to them, and come what might, they could still look upon him as pure and faithful.

The sun was about to set as they reached the door of the Parsonage. Julia was the first to greet them; she saw her brother.

"Oh, there is James!" She flew to his arms; she asked not whether he was innocent or guilty; he was there, and that was enough.

"Oh, James, James, brother, brother!" She clung to his neck, and kissed him again and again.

CHAPTER XV.

THE uncertainty which hung over the fate of young Edwards, was not in the least diminished by any circumstances that had transpired since the morning of his arrest; but even the probabilities that he would be able to clear himself, grew less and less as the period of his trial approached. His friends, those who thought they knew him, had no doubt of the truth of his professions, but their good opinion could avail him nothing in a court of justice, where evidence, and that alone, must guide the decision.

Theodore was untiring in his efforts to prepare for the hour of trial. He saw the difficulties in the case, but the strong friendship he bore to Edwards, and his desire to distinguish himself in this, his first effort at the bar, stimulated him to the utmost. He had taken the responsibility, with

out hope of fee or reward, but he was not without aid; through the liberality of Mr. Augustus Hunt, he was enabled to command the services of an eminent lawyer. It required, however, assistance of a different kind to ferret out the mystery of iniquity, and he was determined to seek it. At the close of a very busy day, he left his office, and sought the upper part of the city; his mind deeply agitated, he passed along the crowded thoroughfare without heeding the multitudes who were urging their way homeward; not far above the New-York hospital, he left the throng, turned down a quiet street, and soon came to a plain, two-story dwelling.

He was introduced into a small back room.

"Good evening, Mr. Catchem; I am fortunate in finding you at home."

The officer arose from his seat before the fire, gave one sharp glance at his visitor, and without saying a word, placed a chair for him near the corner, at the same time removing his own in an opposite direction.

"Sit down, sit down, sir; a raw evening."

"Rather a chilly air; but I have walked fast, for I was very anxious to see you, and was not certain how far over the city I might be obliged to travel before I found you."

"They keep me jogging; I was just about to take a stretch over east of the Bowery; the boys think they have got track of the fellows that set fire to the buildings in Front-street last night."

"Were those buildings set on fire?"

"No doubt."

"I wish to say a few words to you, sir, about young Edwards, who was arrested a short time since, you remember at Mr. Hunt's."

"Ay, ay, I remember him."

"We have every reason to think that Mr. Edwards is an innocent person, and that some one has laid a plan to ruin him; we have no doubt of it."

"Nor I, neither."

"Then you do not believe that he is guilty?"

"Believe! yes, I believe he's guilty enough for all that."

"I understood you to say that you had no doubt of there being a design to ruin him."

"So I did; there never was a rogue yet, but the old one first helped him to mischief, and then helped him into trouble on account of it; there's no one else, I guess, has any hand in it besides the young man himself."

"But we have good reason to believe him innocent."

"I think there's more reason to believe him guilty; now you see, Mr. —, I can't call your name, though I've seen you before."

"Berry."

"Ay, yes, Berry; I suppose now, this young chap has come over you with his oaths and his nonsense about his being innocent, and knowing nothing about it, and all that; why, I've had 'em, mister, swear till you'd think heaven and earth was coming together, that they knew nothing about things, that they hadn't seen 'em, and were as innocent as unborn babies, and all that, when at the same time I had full evidence to the contrary."

"But you must allow something for a man's previous character."

"I never ask much about a man's previous character; sometimes it's good, and sometimes it aint; you can't tell about a man, until he's found out."

"You would have no objections, however, sir, to lend your aid in endeavoring to clear up this business."

"I think it's all clear enough already."

"You shall be paid liberally for your services; we are convinced that a deep plot has been laid to ruin Edwards, and we wish to enlist your efforts in unravelling it."

"Does he suspect any one?"

"Yes—no, I ought not to say that he does; but I do."

"Who?"

"Perhaps names had better not be mentioned."

"What can I do then? I must have some clue to the thing; I must know the whole about it."

Theodore sat in silence for some moments; at length, drawing his chair near to the officer, in a low tone, he explained the reason for his suspicions, and on whom they rested. The officer heard him through without interruption, and then shaking his bushy head,

"There's mighty little chance, my friend; if it should be as you say, the thing is so fixed, as I view it, that it

would take an incarnate Satan to find it out; but I'll think it over, and may be I should like to see things again in the house."

A time was fixed when Theodore was to accompany the officer to Mr. Hunt's.

Sarah had a trying and difficult part to act; she was the only member of the family, besides Betty, who believed in the innocence of Edwards. Mr. Geordie Hunt and his good wife were sorely grieved for the loss which had been sustained and would gladly have employed any inquisitorial means to extort from him, whom they believed had possession of their property, the large balance which was yet missing. The bailing out, therefore, was a severe annoyance to them.

Rudolph was again a frequent visitor, and his uncle manifested a pleasure in his society, and a confidence in his statements, which he never had before. To Sarah, he was attentive as he had ever been, and carefully avoided every topic which he found unpleasant. As she no longer looked upon him as a suitor, and as it was so evident to her, that the visits of Rudolph were agreeable to her relations, she felt that decency, at least, demanded that she should treat him affably. Rudolph had peculiar views of female character, and those not of the most exalted kind. He believed that external advantages were all-sufficient to win the best among them. Sarah had, indeed, manifested a decided preference for young Edwards, but even here he believed that the preference was made solely for the superior personal appearance and address which James possessed; these of course would be nothing now; the stain upon his character would for ever cut off all fear of one, who had been a dangerous rival.

Of his own advantages, he was sufficiently conscious. On his side were their mutual friends, the protectors of Sarah, and added to these, he founded a strong hope on the change in her own personal bearing towards him; he began to believe that the prize he had so long struggled for was within his reach; he meant to secure it while he could.

Sarah had been deeply engaged that afternoon in an interview with her kind uncle, Mr. Augustus Hunt; it had been a scene of much trial to her; many unpleasant rumors had reached the ears of her kinsman, and he felt in duty

bound to let his niece know every thing pertaining to the character of one in whom she was so deeply interested; in fact, he wished to prepare her mind for a catastrophe, which he much feared was inevitable—the conviction of Edwards with strong evidence against him.

Scarcely had she dried the tears to which she had given full vent after the affectionate parting kiss and "God bless you, darling," of her uncle, when Betty came into her room, with a countenance highly flushed, and under great excitement.

"What is it, Betty?"

"The Lord only knows, my young leddy, but I fear there is trouble in the wind for you."

"Tell me, Betty; any thing about James?"

"Well, indeed, my dear leddy, I fear he has something to do forment it."

"Sit down, Betty, and compose yourself; you seem to have been much disturbed—sit down."

"I can't sit, Miss Sarah, for she has put me into such a rumble, that I'm all in a quake."

"She?—who?—is it my aunt?"

"Oh, no, bless your young heart! I don't mind the like o' her—she aye grumbles awhile, and then it's all over; but what do you think, my darling; just as I had claned up the dinner things, and was going out with a pail of rubbish for that ould scape-gallows, the bell-man, I had emptied my pail, and was casting my eyes around to see what might be going on in the street, when I see'd a young woman, nately and dacently dressed, stopping just at our door, and looking as though she might be wanting to enter. 'May I know your will, madam,' says I. 'Can you tell me,' says she, 'does Mr. Edwards live here?' 'Faith,' said I, 'and I can't say but he does—or he did, not long ago.' 'Has he removed from here, then?' 'Not exactly moved,' said I, 'but he's not here at present.' 'When do you expect him again?' said she. 'That's hard to say, madam,' said I. The more I looked at her, my leddy, the more my thoughts began to trouble me, and so says I, 'may be you'll walk in a bit and rest you, and perhaps I'll be after finding out when he may be back, and the like o' that.' I thought I'd spake her fair, Miss Sarah, for there was no telling what might come of it."

"And did she come in, Betty?"

"Faith and she did, and she's waiting down there a bit, for I told her that I might, may be, get word about Mr. Edwards; but oh, Miss Sarah! Ochone, ochone!"

Sarah could not well comprehend the cause of Betty's alarm, but was resolved to see for herself.

"I will go down with you, and see her; is she in the parlor, Betty?"

"In the parlor, indeed, ma'am! No, no, it's not into the parlor that Betty would be takin' the like of her; the kitchen is too good for her, if my guess is right. Ochone, ochone! what a world it is!"

Sarah immediately descended into Betty's sanctum—no very uncomfortable place either, for it was kept with great neatness. The young woman arose as Sarah entered, and made a slight, but respectful obeisance to her. She was, as Betty had said, neatly and decently dressed, although there might have been some few little things rather showy, and in too strong contrast with her principal garments; not more so, however, than is frequently witnessed upon those who have not been trained to a nice observance of uniformity. Her countenance was agreeable, and the expression of it, together with her deportment, was modest. Sarah saw nothing that had any appearance of impropriety.

"You will please excuse the liberty, but I am very anxious to see Mr. Edwards, and perhaps you can inform me where he is, and how I could find him?"

"I cannot inform you where he is at present."

"Is not this his home?"

Sarah blushed deeply as she answered,

"Yes—or at least it has been his home; but circumstances have called him away just now."

"And you don't know where he has gone?"

"No, not positively. Must you see him yourself, or could we send your message to him?"

"Excuse the liberty; are you his sister?"

"No, I am not; his relatives do not reside in the city."

The young woman was evidently much affected by this uncertain intelligence, and seemed hesitating whether to depart or make some further disclosures. Sarah witnessed her embarrassment.

"Perhaps you would wish to see me alone?"

"I should be glad to, Miss, a few moments."

Sarah at once led her up the stairs, while Betty, not at all reconciled to the visitor by any thing she had heard, clasped her hands together, turned her eyes towards the ceiling, and poured out a string of exclamations, which, probably, had the effect of relieving her mind, for she immediately went to work at her household duties.

Sarah led the young woman into her own apartment, and as soon as she was seated,

"I fear you will not be able to see Mr. Edwards at present. He is in great trouble; perhaps you have heard of it?"

"I have not; in fact I am not personally acquainted with Mr. Edwards, and it is not on my own account that I have called. But a young friend of mine, Gertrude, or as we call her Gitty Williams, a niece of Mr. Upjohn's, is in great trouble. Perhaps you have heard Mr. Edwards speak of her?"

"I have often heard him speak of Mr. Upjohn's family, and I think I have heard him mention a niece of theirs of whom they were very fond."

"She is now at our house. She is very unwell, and I fear will not live, and she has a great desire to see Mr. Edwards, and if you can, in any way, direct me to him, you will do a great kindness to a poor, suffering girl."

Sarah was silent a few moments; a multitude of strange thoughts oppressed her:

"I cannot, certainly, direct you to Mr. Edwards, nor do I know if he is in the city; but, could I do any good by calling myself, upon the young woman? I can tell her some things about Mr. Edwards that may be satisfactory to her. I am no relative of his, but we are on terms of great intimacy; he has long been a member of our family. Do you think she would be unwilling to see me?"

"She would not be unwilling to see you. I am sure, and it might be a satisfaction to her, if she cannot see him, to converse with you."

Sarah took the direction which the young woman gave, and then waited upon her to the door.

It was near candle-lighting, and as her uncle and aunt

were to be absent that evening, she entered the parlor, and placing a lamp upon the table, laid her work beside her.

She was glad to be alone, that she might ponder upon the dark and troublous events that were gathering around her. The interview with her uncle Augustus on that day, had been one of trying interest. His affectionate treatment, his deep concern for her, was so marked, that she could not mistake its meaning, and yet, it had left an impression of sadness that almost sunk her young and elastic spirits. He had felt it his duty to open before her, all the dark features in the case that was so near her heart; he could see no bright spot in the aspect of circumstances which surrounded James; he had poured out freely of his means to command all the aid necessary to enable him to ward off the terrible calamity which he saw was coming fast and sure. But he could not bear the thought, that his "Sally" should be so connected with the fate of Edwards, that one blow must destroy them both; and in his love for her, he had ventured to suggest the propriety of her breaking the tie which had bound them together. She had taken it kindly, for she knew that it was kindly meant.

And now, as she sat alone, all that he had said came back with painful freshness, and across her young mind dark visions were passing, which would have filled one less determined with the gloom of despair.

She heard a knock at the street door, and knew it to be that of her cousin Rudolph. It did not, as once, cause uneasy sensations; in fact he was of late such a constant visitor, that he had almost become, as formerly, a member of the family.

His treatment of Sarah was with marked kindness; he had forbore to say any thing in reference to the affairs of James Edwards, as he saw that it was a topic unpleasant to her; or if mention was made of them in his presence, he manifested such an interest for his fate, and commiseration for his misfortunes, that he had effectually succeeded in softening her feelings, and removing her former prejudices against him. She was conscious of having indulged this prejudice; it might be wrong, and therefore she had endeavored to drive it from her. They were both orphans, and alike dependent upon the kindness of their friends; they had been

children together; his manners were pleasing, and as she knew that his freedom of intercourse with the family was gratifying to her uncle and aunt, it was but her duty to treat him with that attention, which her place in the house demanded.

How often in the discharge of a duty, at first unpleasant, a change comes over our feelings; we lose our disrelish, and like what was once distasteful.

Rudolph had only changed in appearance; how much he loved Sarah, it would be difficult to say; but a strong feeling had taken possession of his mind, that led him to use every means in his power to gain her hand.

It was not because his affections, such as they were, had become interested in her, nor was it because she had in prospect a handsome fortune; neither love nor avarice was the ruling power that stimulated him in the pursuit.

He could not bear the thought that a rival should interpose a claim to an object which his heart desired; the fire that burned within his bosom was kindled from the altar of self; it blazed with the fury of fiendish intensity, and wrapped his soul in its hellish embrace.

It is a melancholy task, no matter to whose lot it may fall, to open the heart of the bad man, and unfold its hidden evils; to see through every avenue and secret cloister there, the slimy trail of that reptile whose coil is around every passion, and whose forked tongue plays in fearful malignity against every intruder that would ennoble or bless the soul—that hideous monster Self, who suffers no feeling of the heart to go out towards another, and allows no warm and trustful love to enter from another; who wants no sweets of friendship, no interchange of true affection, no cordial grasping of the heart. Its own peculiar designs, its own unhallowed cravings, are alone to be gratified, should love, and hope, and confidence, and friendship's purest thoughts be crushed and ruined.

As Rudolph entered, a smile was on his countenance; he was dressed with peculiar neatness, and there was a confidence in his address which plainly told, that he knew the external man was as it should be. Sarah could not but notice his manner and appearance, and she could not really find fault with either. He was certainly a gentleman, and a fine-looking young man. Almost glad to be relieved from

the maze of her troubled thoughts, she met his salutations with kindness. Gifted with colloquial powers, Rudolph found no difficulty in bringing forward topics that were pleasing; his remarks were just, and corresponded with her own views; she could not but coincide, and seemed to be rather pleased that such an agreement subsisted.

Occasionally, in spite of her sadness, a smile would be forced from her; she could not help it; nor did she even wish to restrain it. The more like her former self she appeared, when she was his little laughing cousin, the more did he feel the quickening influence of hope. He went back to their days of childhood, and talked of their old homes, and of the parents they had followed to the tomb. Sarah's feelings were just in a state to be excited by a view of childhood's happy hours, and a parent's trustful bosom; and she wept. Rudolph drew nearer to her; he took a corner of the work which lay upon her lap, and on which one of her hands rested.

"Sarah, why cannot we be friendly?"

"I hope we are friends, cousin Rudolph."

"There has not been for some time that cordiality in our intercourse, Sarah, which perhaps there might have been. If I have been in fault, I ask your forgiveness; will you forgive me, Sarah?"

Sarah's tears flowed more freely.

"I have nothing to forgive, cousin Rudolph; you have, certainly; ever been kind to me."

"I have ever felt kindly, Sarah, and if you knew how many unhappy hours I spend on your account, perhaps you would feel that I have stronger claims to your friendship than you now do."

"I do not wish you or any one to be unhappy on my account, I am sure, cousin Rudolph."

"Is it kind to feel, or to speak thus, Sarah? Must I be forbidden even to sympathize with you?"

"Oh no, cousin Rudolph, by no means; I did not intend to intimate that."

Sarah gave fresh vent to her tears, and Rudolph saw his advantage; he took her hand.

"Sarah, I must entreat of you to listen to me a moment—I love you most truly; but I do not mean to trouble you

on that point. It is not for my own sake, I ask you to listen to me; it concerns your own interest, your own well being. I know well, why it is that my presence has become distasteful to you; I will not blame you for not loving *me*, but I ask you to pause—hate me if you will—but pause before you plunge into the gulf before you."

Sarah withdrew her hand, and wiping away the tears that had been freely flowing—

"What gulf do you mean, cousin Rudolph?"

"You surely cannot mistake my meaning, Sarah; you know that you have allowed James Edwards to feel that he had full command of your heart; I once thought well of James, as you now do; but now I know what you do not, or you would sooner trust the adder that lies coiled at your feet, and take it to your bosom, than you would trust that young man."

Sarah started as though the adder was, indeed, near to her.

"Cousin Rudolph, the time has been when your warning might have alarmed me. That time has passed. If James Edwards falls, I fall with him."

"Then fall you must; for his fate is sure as the setting sun. He is and must be an outcast for ever. Oh, Sarah, listen to me—listen to reason; do not, my dear cousin, persist in clinging to a connection that can only bring disgrace to you and all connected with you. You are bound by no human or Divine tie; and no principles of honor demand from you any adherence to one who has forfeited his rank in society."

Sarah turned upon him her soft bright eye, now sparkling with deep emotion.

"Cousin Rudolph, no human law, indeed, binds me to that unfortunate young man, and perhaps no principles of honor may; but you little know my heart, when you attempt to move it by such arguments. James Edwards is innocent; yes, Rudolph, he is innocent, as you are, of the crime alleged against him." Sarah saw the crimson burning his brow as she said this. "And you know that he is innocent." Rudolph's eyes flashed with indignation. "But be he as guilty as you pretend to believe, I will cling to him with all his errors, with all his disgrace, and die with him."

Rudolph was about to answer, but there was something in the holy emotion that glowed in Sarah's countenance which checked him. A knock at the front door announced the return of their uncle and aunt, and as soon as he could with propriety, after they entered the room, he retired.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE evils which come upon us in this life are, in most cases, the result of our own folly or weakness. We take the first rash step, or we allow the evil one to get his insidious hold, and then return is not so easy, nor can the ensnarer be driven off, but, it may be, by the prostration of our dearest hopes.

Mr. Upjohn was what many would have called a stern man, and yet, as we have seen, he could not at the proper time, and when a wise denial might have prevented much evil, say nay to the little laughing girl whom he had adopted as his own.

As her years advanced, the power which he once had to restrain and regulate her actions grew weaker. She had done her own bidding when a child, and it was not to be expected, as she grew to womanhood, that she would easily resign her untamed will.

The intimacy which Rudolph Hunt had formed with the family was not long pleasing to Mr. Upjohn. He was, to be sure, an engaging companion for an evening entertainment; he was polite in his behavior, and had a fund of anecdote that excited many a merry laugh on the part of Gitty, and ever made the brow of her uncle relax its sober cast. But when the heart is unsound, it is very difficult so to cover it that its corruption shall not at times break forth.

Mr. Upjohn was too shrewd a man not to notice these symptoms, and they filled him with alarm. Again and again, during the long evenings when she would be away, had he held counsel with his wife, and entreated her to use her maternal influence to win their Gitty from the fascination which had been thrown around her. But she, poor, easy soul, had long

lost her control, and for her to remonstrate was only adding fuel to the fire.

Distracted, at length, with troubled thoughts, the old man resolved to use that power which he fondly believed he yet held over this beloved one for her good.

He had a long conversation with Gitty, and plainly and fearlessly unfolded to her what he believed to be the character of Rudolph, and entreated her, by all the regard which she professed for those who had performed the part of parents to her, to act upon the warning which he gave her. Gitty wept bitter tears, for the earnestness and kindness of her uncle went to her heart; but when he closed his address by telling her that unless she wished to forfeit his good will she must at once relinquish all the attentions of the young man, and that if she ever ventured abroad with him again, the doors of her home should be closed against her for ever, the strong, uncurbed, impetuous will of Gitty rose up, and placed within her own heart an impenetrable barrier against the wish of her uncle.

She dried her tears, and without making a reply, retired to her little room. That very evening an appointment had been made, and when Rudolph called, she asked no questions, nor did she deign to give her aunt any information as to whither she was going.

Gitty retraced her steps that evening, with the full determination to ask pardon of her friends, and submit herself to their control as she had never done before. Her heart was pure; her love for Rudolph was based upon virtuous principles; she had never seen the dark spots which had been so visible to her uncle. That evening the monster was revealed to her in all his odiousness, and she turned from him with fear and loathing; but with all her young affections blasted. Her heart had been cherishing its warmest feelings, and holding them in sacred keeping for the time when his acknowledgment of love, pure and virtuous love, should enable her to pour them forth into his bosom—a priceless treasure. Mortified and indignant, she sought, alone, her uncle's dwelling; the little gate opened to her touch, but the light, which had always twinkled from the window where her uncle sat, was gone. A thrill of terror at once oppressed her; she had not believed that his threat would be executed. She sat

down upon the little stoop, and wept such tears as she had never shed before; and there she remained through the long damp hours of the night; once, indeed, she tried to raise the latch, but the door was fastened, and no one gave any sign that she was heard.

As the night went on, its chills penetrated her frame. She wrapt her light covering about her, as she best could, but it was a frail protection. The morning at length dawned; the cold had chilled her very heart, and its beating seemed about to cease. But colder and fainter was the spiritual existence of which that beating organ is but a symbol. Dark, and cold, and desolate, was the dreary waste that spread around her; every spark of that fire which so lately glowed within her young heart was extinguished. As the day was breaking, she arose, and, with tottering steps, hurried from the yard. She opened the little gate, and looking back, fixed a piercing gaze upon the dear old home. Her past short life was all before her; it was emblazoned on every board, and brick, and shrub. Every day of her remembered existence had been spent there, and all her thoughts and feelings from childhood to that hour, all met her gaze; all said, in tones that struck a deadlier chill upon her heart than the cold night air had done, farewell. She felt that it was for ever.

As her friend Lydia was the only one to whom she could think of applying for shelter, she made the best speed she could thither. Lydia had ever loved Gitty, but perhaps a friend with more discretion, and less of that lightness which leads the young to acts of folly, might have been better, might have changed the tenor of her life, and made her what her beautiful person and her lively affections once promised for her. But the past is gone, and all that Gitty could say, as her friend met her with a look of pain and surprise, was,

"Lydia, can you let me lie down on a bed? for I fear I am very ill."

And there she lay, with her senses fully awake to the folly of the past, and the misery of her present condition. Fain would she have flown to those dear old friends who had nourished her with so much tenderness, but that was now impossible; and her only desire was, that they might come to her; for she wished to tell them how wrong she had been, and ask their forgiveness before she died. The parents of

Lydia were aged and infirm; they were comfortably off, but unable to stir abroad. Lydia had incurred the displeasure of Mr. Upjohn, and did not dare to venture on an errand to him. In her extremity, Gitty had thought of James Edwards as one who, of all others, would have influence with her uncle, and for this purpose Lydia had gone to the house of Mr. Hunt, and, as we have seen, had an interview with Sarah.

When Mr. Upjohn fastened the door of his house that evening, and extinguished the light, and laid him down on his bed to rest, it was with a sadder heart than he had ever experienced before. His feelings, naturally, were of the warmest, most tender kind; but his will was of that determined character that, when once fixed, all the passions of his soul must bend to it. He had gone resolutely forward under its iron sway, and barred his home against the only object, beside his faithful wife, who had, for many years, engrossed his affections.

He had told her his determination, and come what might, his word should not be broken. Alas! how careful should we be, while praising that fixedness of purpose which steps steadily onward to its object, that we ever hold up before each other the sad truth, that we are all erring mortals; and that we may, in our right-onward progress, crush beneath our steady step some beautiful flower, that might, for a long time, have shed forth its fragrance, if we had but turned a little in our path.

On his unquiet bed he lay; and as the clock told each passing hour, he grew more and more restless. The consequences of his stern decree began to unfold themselves before him; and when far into the night, and when all expectation of her return was at an end, he would have given what few worldly goods he possessed, only to have heard her gentle step seeking again her home. Once, he almost thought he heard the latch of the door move, and long he listened; but he heard it not again, and when the morning light broke in upon him, he arose to look forth upon the little world with which he was surrounded, and see that all was desolate.

It was but two days after these occurrences, which had thus filled all the parties with bitter sorrow, when a young and well-dressed lady called at the house of Mr. Upjohn. There

was a dignity and ease of manner which, more than her expressively beautiful countenance, attracted the notice and respect of the old man, who was a great admirer of the proprieties of life. She introduced herself as "Sarah Pearsall."

"I have called," she said, "by particular request, and on an errand not strictly my own, since it concerns Mr. and Mrs. Upjohn more particularly than it does myself."

They both looked at her with a manifest desire to know the purport of her errand.

"I believe you are intimately acquainted with James Edwards; I have often heard him speak of your family."

"James has been a frequent visitor here, madam, and we have felt a deep interest for him; but from what we hear, he has done for himself for this world; and grieved, deeply grieved are we, not only for his own sake, but for those that are near and dear to him."

"But he protests his innocence, and those of us who know him intimately have no doubt of it."

Mr. Upjohn shook his head.

"I hope it may prove so—I hope it may prove so; but there is little faith to be put in the young, now-a-days, Miss, asking your pardon; little are they to be relied upon."

For a moment, Sarah spoke not; the few words Mr. Upjohn had said, or rather, what he had not said, but only signified, filled her with alarm, such as she had not felt before.

It was, however, but the feeling of the moment; her mind flew back to the hour when James made that solemn assurance of his innocence, and there it rested.

"I came, as I said, sir, not on business of my own, and merely mentioned Mr. Edwards's name as my passport to a hearing with you. I came, in his name, to plead with you for your niece, who is in the house of Mr. Langworthy, lying on a bed of sickness, from which it is feared she will never rise. She is deeply penitent for the past, and wishes to see you that she may ask your forgiveness before she dies. She has asked me to entreat you, if that were necessary, but I am sure it cannot be, for Mr. Edwards has often told me how much you loved her."

"Oh, Miss, it is from those we love the dearest, that we suffer most."

Again there was silence, except as it was broken by the

sobs of the old lady who had begun to weep at the first mention of Gitty's name.

"I hope, sir, my coming may not be misunderstood by you as officious on my part; I was, providentially, made acquainted with her but an hour ago, and as she had no one by whom she could send the message to you, I offered my services."

"And I assure you, Miss, it is far from me to be offended at what you have done. It is a sad trial that we are suffering under, but if the poor child wishes to see us, it is not in our hearts to say no."

The voice of the old man trembled, and he paused. "No, it is not in our hearts to say that, God knows."

He wiped the tear that was stealing down his furrowed cheek. "Come, wife, if Gitty wants to see us, the sooner we are there the better."

Sarah had spoken words of kindness to Gitty; she had talked to her about things that Gitty felt were of more consequence now, than all earthly matters, and when she had parted from her, the poor sick girl entreated, if it was not too much to ask, that she would return once more.

The distance was not great, and soon passed over. It was but a few days since the youthful sufferer was in the bloom of life and beauty. She was beautiful still; but, alas! when the heart is sick, and disease has laid his hand upon us, sad changes are speedily made.

Mrs. Upjohn preceded her husband to the bedside; she saw the pale and disconsolate countenance of her who had been so long their child, and throwing herself upon her bosom, poured forth the overflowings of her heart.

Gitty, however, had a heavy heart to unburthen, and she could only do it to her who had ever been her confidant in the days of her childhood; and there, in the ear of her weeping kinswoman, she poured out the whole story of her wrong.

Mrs. Upjohn dried her tears, and rising with a smile of joy upon her countenance,

"Husband, let us praise God. Our Gitty has been injured, but she is still as pure and spotless as when she was a child upon your knee. Oh, come to her, papa."

The old man raised his hands.

"Thank God!" and he bowed his head over his dear Gitty, and looked silently into her eyes now glistening with unnatural brightness, and the tears fell fast and free.

"My dear uncle, forgive me, oh, forgive me."

"I do, I do;" his head rested on her sunken cheek, and her arms clung to him as they had often done in her days of childhood.

CHAPTER XVII.

ADJOINING the house in which the sick and sorrow-stricken Gitty lay, was a small building, rather old and rickety in its appearance. It had, in its day, been a little more elevated in the world than it now was, for it had required an ascent of several steps to enter it; but the ground upon which it was built, not being so high as the good fathers of the city thought it should be, to correspond with adjacent parts, they ordered the street, which passed the little building, to be filled in and raised sufficiently to suit their taste; the consequence was that, as the owner did not feel able to raise the foundation of his house, he was obliged to reverse the order of its steps, and, instead of walking up into his dwelling, its inmates were obliged to descend into that, and ascend into the street.

It was a narrow building, and almost the whole front, beside the door of entrance, was taken up by a bow window. It was one of those windows which, in the great city, go without much washing or dusting. In fact, I do not know but the dust and cobwebs which had gathered upon it, were considered by the occupants as rather useful than otherwise, for sufficient light found its way into the little room which lay back of it for all necessary purposes, even on the darkest days, and when the sun shone brightly, his rays were somewhat shorn of their lustre in passing through the thick covering—no small comfort on a hot afternoon.

At the bottom of the window, ran a shelf, covered with a curious variety of old locks, rusty keys, brass door knobs, very much soiled by exposure, together with an assortment

of tools, such as files, little hammers, spring-saws, long steel awls, &c., &c.

Through all hours of the day could be seen, by the passer-by, a little man, seated before a table which joined the window seat at a right angle, and ran back into the room. His position was near enough to the window to enable him with ease to reach any instrument or article which might lay upon it, and yet, with freedom, to turn a small lathe connected with his table, upon which he was almost always employed, holding some small piece of iron or steel, and working it into such shape as he no doubt had a clear idea of, but which a looker-on would have been sorely puzzled to make out. There was no sign up to designate the business which was carried on within; but it could not well be mistaken for any thing else than it really was—a place where old keys were mended or altered, and locks not too badly injured, repaired.

A lighted door opened from this shop into a long, narrow room, that was kept, if not very neatly, at least sufficiently so to be quite in contrast with things in front. It was the parlor, bedroom, and kitchen, which served the old man and his wife for each of these purposes respectively.

The occupation was one laudable enough, and brought in quite a little revenue. There are more old keys to be mended in a large city, than one such establishment can attend to, and as the shop in question drew its customers from a large area, there was always work on hand.

It is, probably, not quite according to the strict rules of justice, that the maker of an article should be responsible for the use it may be put to; yet there are some trades of such peculiar character, that the vender or manufacturer can scarcely be called innocent, unless a watchful eye is kept upon his customers.

Among the variety that came to purchase old keys, or to get others changed to answer some particular lock, the old man could sometimes give a good guess as to the character of the applicant, and the use to be made of the article; and many a watchword has he, in his day, given to one who was much distinguished for his adroitness in following the clue to a roguery.

It was drawing towards the close of a lowery day, when a

man of robust appearance entered the street not far from the described premises, and walked towards them with a loitering gait, his eye wandering carelessly from person to person, and from thing to thing, now glancing at the loaded cart and its driver, and then at the dwelling by which he happened to be passing. He had rather a stubborn-looking cane, which he carried in a careless manner, holding it near its centre, and dropping it upon the pavement in time with his own step. As he came opposite the little lock and key shop, he paused and fixed his eye for a moment upon its busy occupant, who could be but dimly seen through the dusky light within. Then stepping down he opened the door without ceremony, and stood watching the operation without saying a word, or receiving any notice or salutation. Presently the wheel stopped buzzing, the old man looked very intently at the work he had been performing, and then laying it carefully by itself, threw his spectacles on his forehead, and turned one eye full upon his visitor, while the other seemed to be resting on some object in another part of the room.

"Well, uncle, you keep the little wheel buzzing, I see. What contrivance is that you've put away so carefully?"

"It's nothing that concerns you, or any of your craft. It is something I'm fixing for a real honest man."

"Then you acknowledge you do jobs sometimes for folks that may be a little slippery?"

"Why, I did one for you the other day."

"Ha, ha, ha,—well done, uncle Bill."

"But come round, man, and take a seat, I want to chat a little with you about a small matter, and as you are always hunting for game, may be I can put you on a scent."

The visitor turned his eyes round the little room, and taking an old, short-legged stool, placed it at one end of the long table, and resting his chin upon his fists, which he had piled one above the other upon it, looked straight across at the owner of the shop, who had fixed himself very much in the same position.

The two looked at each other in silence, for some time, and formed rather a grotesque appearance, for neither had any thing to boast in the way of beauty, and their features and forms were in perfect contrast. The visitor was stoutly

built, his countenance heavy, and his projecting eyes, as he rolled them up in the position in which he was sitting, presented rather a severe aspect.

The other had little besides his covering of skin, and that very much dried up and wrinkled; he was small in stature, and small in latitude; there was very little of any thing to him; his features were screwed together, probably having become so, from the habit of looking hard at small objects, and his eyes were not at all in harmony with each other, for they never looked at the same object at one time. There was, however, a shrewdness to the cast of his countenance, and a penetration to his eye, that might have suited a lawyer, whose professional business was chiefly with hard accounts and tangled statements.

"Well, old Jack, what will you give me now for a clue to a villain?"

"Me!—give!—nothing—I can put my hand on more villains than I can on honest men, any time."

"No doubt of that, for your hands have no business on honest folks; but say, what will you give?"

"Pshaw, what is it to me! but tell, if you've got any thing worth knowing."

The old man changed his position, turned from the table, and crossing his legs:

"You know James Upjohn?"

"Yes, what of him?"

"Nothing of him; but his niece is next door here, with old Simon Longworthy's folks; there's been some trouble between her and the old man; you see I learnt it through their daughter Lyddy; she runs into our house every now and then to have a chat with the old woman. These galls, I tell you what, don't they beat the mischief?"

"I don't know much about the girls; I never had much to do with them; but go on, and let's hear what you're driving at."

"Well, you see, this young one of Upjohn's took a notion to a dandy-like young Jack that old Jemmy didn't fancy; the old man, you know, sees straight ahead; he's no fool, you know that."

"Yes, yes, I know him; but get on with your story."

"Well, Upjohn ups and tells his niece that she must

chop him right off—and the old man, you know, won't be balked, if he can help it—and she knew when he said the thing, that was enough. Well, she wouldn't give him up, so she clears out—and what do you think?"

"How should I know? for you are telling such a cock-and-bull story, the old 'un himself couldn't see the end of it."

"That incarnate, what shall I call him? that false-hearted fiddlestick of a fellow, just when she got into trouble, and all for his sake, turns his back upon her, and leaves her; don't you call him a villain?"

"Yes, villain enough for all that matter; but if I should be obliged to look after such kind of rogues, I should have work enough; the law won't touch him, you old fool, if he should break a dozen girls' hearts; is that all you've got to say?"

"Not exactly; you won't wait, and hear me out. You see, a man that will do such a thing as that, aint too good to do worse—that's my mind. Well, one day, not long since, a youngster came in here to get a job done for him; I know a few things, and I can tell when there's deviltry in it; thinks I, young chap, I shall keep my eye on you, for all the cut of your rig is so smooth. Well, he wanted me to fix him a key, like a pattern he had, and a curious thing it was, I tell you. I've seen all kinds of keys, but I never saw such a twistical concern as that; and what kind of a pattern do you think I was to make it from?"

"Why, another key."

"No, it war'nt—no such thing; nothing but a piece of dough; and how the critter contrived to git such a clean cast of it was a mystery to me; he's a cute one, *that*, depend on it. Well, I took the directions and all about it, and off he goes, and now just see how queer it happened; you see that curtain there up to the door: the old woman keeps it down a little, just so she can see through. Well, who should be in the room all the while the young fellow was here, but Lyddy, and you know these gals are full of curocity; so Lyddy takes a sly peep into the old shop. 'Who do you think,' says she to my old woman—'who do you think it is? I know,' said she."

"Who was it? What's the name?"

"Well, I can't remember names without I put 'em down. But you see she wouldn't tell the name; whether she was afeared there was something wrong going on, or afeared that I should tell him that she had been peeping at him, or whether it was for clear mischief, I can't say, but we couldn't make her tell; only, she wanted to know when he was coming again, and I telled her."

"Did she see him again?"

"She did; but we couldn't get the name out of her, do our best."

"Why didn't you get him to leave his name, when he gave the order?"

"There now! is that *you*? and don't you know better than that—don't you, now?"

"Why, I suppose, if there was any deviltry in it, he wouldn't be very likely to give you the right one."

"There you have it. He did give his name; but when a man stammers at his own name, then look out, says I; but I got the right one for all that; I've got his name, there in my locker, and no mistake."

"How do you know?"

"Why, you see, it was by pure luck, or may be the old one helped along a little; you know, sometimes, he helps rogues the wrong way; just hear now. I finished the key, and he was satisfied that it was the thing. 'What's to pay,' says he? 'So much,' says I, and with that, he outs with a handful of change, papers, keys, and every thing from his pocket, at once; it was getting dark like; he laid it all down among my rubbish on the counter, and after he paid me and picked up his trash, I saw he had left a penknife, a little bit of a concern; thinks I, 'Bill, keep dark;' he never saw it, and just then old Sandy Ferguson stepped in, and the youngster went off like a shot."

"A name on the knife?"

"Isn't there, my boy—all out in full as pretty as a picture."

"Let me see it, Bill?"

"What will you give me?"

"Oh, none of your fun, uncle Bill; I am serious now; this is a matter of more consequence than you think for."

The old man immediately turned round, and unlocking

a small desk, handed a neat and costly penknife to Mr Catchem, for the reader may as well know the name, if he has not already guessed it.

A grim smile played upon his features as he read the name, engraved on a silver plate.

"A good-looking fellow, wasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Dark hair?"

"Yes."

"Dark eyes?"

"Yes."

"Pale looking?"

"Yes."

"Rather genteel in his rig?"

"Just so."

"It is just as I thought; he is the rogue, and they will find it out as I told them."

"Then you know about him?"

"I know enough about him; as much as I want to. He is the very one that had some of old Geordie Hunt's money in his trunk, and swore to me that he knew nothing about it, and all that; and he's made some of them believe, that he is innocent as a lamb. But part of your story, Bill, don't hang together; first you went on to tell me a long rignmarole about a young fellow that jilted that girl of Upjohn's; what has that girl to do with this?"

"You are always in such a hurry, Jack, that a man hasn't time to put the ends of his story together. You see, when Lyddy first got sight on him, she came up slyly to my old woman—says she, 'that's Gitty's beau; what can he be wanting?' But the old woman didn't know about their beaus, you know these galls have so many of them; and she asked the name, but then she wouldn't tell. But last night we found out all about it, and he's the very one that she saw in here, that was the cause of all the trouble that poor girl is in, and like as not she won't live; they say she won't."

"Well, well, here's this pretty little tell-tale; you keep it snug, till it's called for. You can swear to the chap if you see him again, can't you?"

"Never fear of me; I could pick him out among a thousand; I've marked him."

"That's you. Well, I must be jogging; so bad luck to you, old fellow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

TIME rolls on his steady round, and the fears and hopes which agitate the breast of man, which have pressed his vision forward into the dark future, must at length have their truth or falsehood tested. And how many of us are there who live alone on the interests of the present moment—who have no to-morrow hastening towards us, whose revelations shall crown us with the wreath of happiness, or sink our heaving bosoms into the gloom of despair!

"To-morrow," said James Edwards, as he paced the little room in a lodging-house where he had spent the most of his time since his return from the country, and in which, hour by hour, he had sat and ruminated over the tangled maze in which his fate was enveloped, "to-morrow! it will be over—the worst will be known." And the thoughts that rushed upon him as he said this, the dark images that arose like magic spectres, and spread out their horrors to his view, threw back the life-blood to its covert, and, helpless almost as an infant, he cast his trembling frame upon the couch that was near at hand, and wrung his hands in agony.

Alas! for poor fallen man. The relics of that better state which once was thine, which spread such enchanting loveliness even around the tattered wreck; the loves which pour their perfume on the heart, and almost make it feel that airs of Heaven are breathing their freshness round it, how even these, rich treasures left thee, are oft "the envenomed tooth," the wormwood, and the gall of life. And now around that pale and trembling youth start up all the enchantments that love and friendship can awaken. Their beautiful images flit before his agonizing mind, and every friend whose being was the solace of his heart, and every joy that had blessed his past life, and every hope that

sparkled in the distant future, were all near, but as cruel thorns within that secret place where love and hope abide.

He is aroused from the power of his troubled thoughts by a tap at the door. A well-timed friend, Mr. Augustus Hunt, has come on business of deep moment, and the anxious look he brings with him denotes that he, too, has his own cares and distresses in view of the "to-morrow" which was so near at hand.

James arose as he entered, and the greeting between them was cordial, although the hand was grasped in silence, and not even a smile was visible on either countenance.

Mr. Hunt took the seat which was offered him, laid his large brimmed hat upon the table, and wiped away the drops which had gathered on his brow.

"I have just come from having a long talk with our counsel; have you seen them to-day?"

"I have, sir."

"Things don't look much brighter as they view them."

"So it seems, sir."

"I have, as I said, had a long conversation with them both. Your young friend, like all young men, has a hope that something may turn up, but it is a very serious matter to have the judgment of twelve men passed upon us, under oath to decide according to the evidence brought before them; and, as it now stands, with all the evidence on one side—all against us."

"It is so, sir; but what more can be done?"

"I said your young friend was still hoping that something would turn up; but the other feels differently; he is a man, you know, of large experience in such matters, and he looks things right in the face. I don't know, James, but he has said to you just what he has to me; but to him it looks dark."

"Yes, sir, he has told me so."

"And you asked me just now what more can be done. I see but one thing that can be done, and I have come here this evening to propose it to you."

James fixed his eye intently upon him for a moment.

"I should be glad to hear it, sir; and I assure you, Mr. Hunt, if it is any thing that I can do——"

"Well, well, but before I propose it to you, Sally must know of it; I must see you together. I won't do any thing

underhanded about it. She is now at the house of a friend, where I promised to bring you, and where we can have a free talk together by ourselves; and now I want you to go with me."

James answered not, for the rush of thoughts, at the prospect of meeting Sarah, had utterly confused his mind.

"You seem to hesitate, Master James; one would think you would rejoice at an interview."

"Mr. Hunt, you will excuse my appearing insensible to your proposition, for I am sure it is meant in kindness; but you know, sir, that I have not seen your niece since the hour when, like an angel from Heaven, she came to my cell in prison, and ventured her all of life upon my assertion of innocence. I have felt that, until I can stand again an equal with my fellows, and every taint of this suspicion, which now rests upon me, is washed away, it would be unjust to her that I should do aught to connect her name with mine, or continue an intimacy that may possibly, and I do not know but I must now say, will in all probability attach disgrace with it."

"I know it all, James; I respect your motives; you have acted in this matter as a man should, but it is idle to let small matters come up now. I wish to propose a step to you that will concern her, as well as yourself, and it must be done in the presence of you both."

"I have nothing to say, but will do as you wish. I will accompany you, sir."

The feelings which rioted in the breast of James Edwards, as he entered the room, it would not be very easy to describe. The first glimpse of her lovely countenance, as she turned her mild bright eye upon him, unfolding the strength of that affection which no circumstances of dismay could weaken, had well nigh unmanned him; he could have fallen at her feet, almost a worshipper. But his strength of purpose at once roused every faculty of his soul to its aid. He received her offered hand, and even felt her warm grasp pressing his with the cordiality of a sister's greeting, but he returned it not; his cold and unmeaning salutation might have answered for one whose heart had no feeling for the hand to express.

A chill struck the heart of Sarah, and it was with difficulty she reached the seat, which with such bounding feelings she had left to greet him on his entrance. Her womanly pride

however, soon came to her relief, and her whole frame was quickened by its powerful stimulus. There was no time, however, for the indulgence of emotions, comparatively trivial.

"And now, my darling," said Mr. Hunt, as he took his seat, "we must proceed to business, for there will be no time to lose. I have brought you together, that what I say may be said before you both, and then there can be no misunderstanding. To-morrow is coming on fast, and when it comes, there will be no time for any new arrangements; and now to the point. I have had a free and full talk with the counsel, and as I have told you before, my darling, and as I have told James, this evening, they give no encouragement. Now, when an evil is coming upon us, there is no use in shutting our eyes, or turning away our head; it won't keep off the danger, nor fit us to meet it. In this case, the consequences of a defeat are too terrible to think of; I need not tell you what condition James would be in, nor is it worth while to say what condition his family would be in; and there is no prospect now but that a verdict must be given against him. When we cannot face an evil, we must fly from it."

Mr. Hunt paused and cast his eye towards James, who was looking at him, every feature strained with the intensity of his interest.

"How can I shun the ordeal which is before me, sir? Surely you would not ask me to do it by flight."

"There is no other way."

"And what would be the consequences?"

"The consequences I expect to meet. As your surety, I shall be held responsible for the amount of bail; that I will readily pay, and moreover, besides that, I have now by me a sum sufficient to carry you far away from here, and to enable you to establish yourself in a new place. There will be but little pains taken to search for you, and in a short time the whole matter will be forgotten."

James fixed his eye firmly upon Sarah, if possible to pry into the feelings which were working in her breast. Mr. Hunt noticed his searching glance, and as though he could look into the thoughts of the young man, continued,

"This proposal comes entirely from myself, and it is the first idea of the kind that has escaped my lips to either of you."

James at length arose; his countenance was flushed, for he was highly excited.

"Mr. Hunt, I appreciate your feelings; your offer, I know, is dictated by kindness; but allow me to ask you whether my flight would not be construed into an acknowledgment of guilt?"

"It doubtless would, but what would the opinion of the public be, if you become the tenant of a prison?"

"I thank you, sir, most heartily thank you, for the liberality of your present offer, and for the noble and generous conduct you have manifested towards me in my sad and friendless condition; you shall be remembered by me with gratitude while my mind retains its consciousness. I know well, sir, how terrible will be my condition should I fall beneath the solemn verdict of a jury, which, from all that now appears, there is every prospect I must suffer. I have a loving mother, whose heart is bleeding in anguish at my hopeless state, and I have two angel sisters, who would go to prison and to death for me; I love them with the full power of my mind; and above all these, I hold, as my heart's richest treasure, that lovely being now sitting by your side. To these, I fear not to say I am ready at any time to sacrifice my life. But, sir, dear as these priceless treasures are to me, I hold them all as nought, when compared with that integrity of heart which I will cleave unto, even to the depths of degradation. To-morrow I am to be arraigned as a culprit; my friends may leave me, my counsel may desert my cause as hopeless, and the world may point at me as a recreant to virtue; but at that tribunal I shall appear, if God spares my life, alone, unfriended, if so it must be; and if nothing else, I can at least appeal to Him who knows my heart that I am not guilty of the act alleged against me; if it be His will that I suffer, His will be done; but never, never, never, will I do an act that shall be an acknowledgment of guilt."

Sarah threw herself into her uncle's arms.

"Dear uncle, he is right; James is right; let the will of God be done."

Mr. Hunt was deeply affected; he grasped the hand of the young man.

"I'll—I'll stand by you, come what will."

James parted from Sarah as he had met her; he felt the

deep stigma that rested upon him; his heart yearned in its fulness towards her, but he felt that, until his innocence should be made manifest, he could never clasp her as his own.

Mrs. Edwards and her daughters would gladly have followed James to the city, that they might, in the event of his conviction, have been present to sustain his spirit, and, as far as they could, share his trouble; but at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Wharton, they had concluded to remain at home until the result should be known, on condition that he should take their place.

Mr. Wharton did not reach the city until the morning of the trial. A dark, chilly morning, too, it was; and in that respect, accorded with the feelings of those whose fate hung upon the uncertainties of the day. Few words passed between James and his old friend as they met in his little room. There are moments of bitterness in life, when, like the companions of Job, the lookers on in the sad drama feel that all the consolation their words can afford, is to the sufferer's heart but the sighing of the idle wind.

Mr. Wharton had been removed from the circle of all those rumors, which from some source, not generally known, were originated and spread about, all tending to weaken the confidence of his friends, and perhaps, upon all of them, exerting more or less influence. One alone remained unshaken; her heart had never wavered. She had taken his word as perfect truth, and amid all the dark surmisings which had been scattered thickly around her, she retained her confidence, unshaded by a single doubt. To Mr. Wharton, also, for reasons above stated, he appeared but as the victim of some vile plot; he saw no dark spot upon his character; he viewed him with no suspicious eye, as many did; his mind had never been affected by the tongue of rumor.

A court of justice is a serious place to all who enter it with interests of importance depending upon its decision; whether these interests are of a pecuniary nature, or involve, what is of infinitely greater moment, the loss or gain of character. To the judge and to the jurors whose decision is to affect a fellow being, perhaps, for the remainder of his days on earth, it is doubtless a cause for much anxiety; for no man, whose heart has not become callous to the sym-

thies of our nature, can sit as an arbiter upon his brother's fate, without some fear lest, after all, his decision may not be according to truth, and his fiat consign an innocent sufferer to eternal ignominy. But beyond these, it may not be ill-natured, nor unjust to say, there is but little feeling. The lawyer, indeed, acts well his part; his serious look, his earnest words, his animating questions, and, sometimes, even his falling tear, answer their end, and almost cause the lookers on to believe, that where there is such a blaze, there must be heat; where there is such an expression of truthfulness, the reality must be somewhere at hand. But, alas! the look, the words, the gestures, and the tear, are often, far too often, but the actor's tinsel dress, thrown aside with disgust when his hireling work is done. Beyond the bar, too, where the multitude assemble day by day, and feed their polluted appetite, how the heart sickens to behold the motley throng gathering on the long benches, and stretching their eager necks forward to catch the dainty treat. The unmeaning stare, the prying look of curiosity, and the heartless smile, all meet the eye, and almost shame us as we own them for our fellows.

At the hour appointed for the opening of the court, James entered, accompanied by Mr. Wharton, and took his seat. Every eye was at once fixed upon him, and few, who watched his composed look, his gentlemanly demeanor, and his open, manly countenance, could spy those secret, sinister marks, which are so often said to lurk about those lineaments which characterize the man and distinguish the rogue, even through all his disguises. A few moments after the prisoner entered, the judge took his seat, and the preliminaries of opening the court, empannelling the jurors, &c., took place; when the district attorney at once arose and stated to the court and jury in a plain, simple, straightforward manner, the grounds upon which the indictment had been made out, which brought this young man before them as a prisoner.

He told over the circumstances of the loss which Mr. Hunt had met with, and the reasons for believing the prisoner guilty.

"And I expect to prove to you, gentlemen of the jury the different circumstances just related, in so clear a man-

ner, that I think you will be forced to the conviction that the prisoner is guilty."

He then sat down and commenced calling the witnesses. Mr. Gerardus Hunt was first sworn and examined. He testified to the fact of his having deposited the money in the chest; of his knowing it to be there for some time subsequent; that on the morning of—November last, on searching for the same, it was not to be found; also as to the circumstance of a strange key being found in the door of the room where the chest was kept. "And I wish you, gentlemen of the jury, to bear this circumstance in mind, for I shall prove to you by another witness, that this key belonged to a closet in the room where the prisoner slept."

He then examined him as to the key of the iron chest, where he kept it, the peculiar construction of the key, &c., and then showing it to the jury: "There, gentlemen, is a curiosity, and I will venture to say, not one of you has ever seen its mate or any thing like it." The jury examined it with care, put one or two questions to the witness, and seemingly satisfied themselves that it was rather unique, and not likely to have a counterpart in the city. The witness was then turned over to the opposing counsel.

"Mr. Hunt, may I ask you—I believe the question has been put to you already, but I will trouble you to answer it again—where do you keep the key of this chest which you think has been robbed?"

"Where do I keep it, sir? why, I keep it in a closet in my bedroom."

"Very well, sir, and do you allow any one but yourself to go to that closet?"

"No, sir; no one but my wife."

"Do you keep the key of that closet, Mr. Hunt?"

"I do, sir, in the general way."

"In the general way! what do you mean by that? do you mean that you generally keep it?"

"Yes, sir, generally."

"You acknowledge, then, Mr. Hunt, that you do not always have possession of this key; may I ask, who besides you has it at times?"

"My wife, sir; no one but my wife."

"Then I understand you to say, Mr. Hunt, that no per-

son, except yourself and your wife, is allowed, for any cause, to go to that closet."

"That's the case, sir."

"Please speak so that the gentlemen of the jury can hear you, Mr. Hunt."

"Yes, it's so, sir," in a loud tone.

"That you and Mrs. Hunt alone go to that closet."

"Yes."

"And do you really suppose, Mr. Hunt—now I wish you to remember, sir, that you are under oath—are you willing here solemnly to swear, that this money was forcibly, or in a secret manner taken from your chest?"

The witness was somewhat confused.

"Why, sir, I can swear that I put the money into the chest, and that when I went to look for it, it was gone; but how it went it is not in my power to say."

"That will do, sir."

"Mr. Hunt," said the senior counsel of Edwards, "have you had any reason to suspect the prisoner as a person who could be guilty of such an act, previous to the time when the money was found in his trunk?"

"No, sir, not the least in the world."

"That is all, sir."

"The witness may take his seat," said the judge; "call your next witness."

Mrs. Hunt next took the stand, and was particularly examined as to the habits of herself and husband in regard to the keeping of the keys, and many things were elicited before the jury, which satisfied them, that although they kept the key of the closet with much safety, still there were other keys in the house which would open it, and that a member of the family, if so disposed, might have access to the closet.

The countenance of Theodore lighted up as this witness retired, as though he could see an opening by which an object might be accomplished favorable to his client.

The niece of Mr. Hunt, Miss Sarah Pearsall, was next called, and as she advanced to the stand, every eye was drawn towards her with deep interest. Some were attracted by a knowledge of the fact that she was so deeply concerned in the fate of Edwards, and others, by the grace of her movement and the beauty of her countenance. There are

few faces that are not much improved when the mind is absorbed by some controlling feeling; but to a countenance like that of Sarah's, it was the one thing wanted to give surpassing richness to her beauty. Never, in her brightest hour, when sunshine played around her, and the light smile of happiness continually rested on her features, did she appear so lovely as when, laying her hat upon the seat, she walked to the witness's stand. She was dressed with much neatness, but without the least attempt at show, and was evidently too much concerned in what might be the end of the investigation, to heed the public gaze then resting upon her.

The questions put to her by the District Attorney, did not seem to be of much consequence; he evidently did not feel called upon to allow his duty as a lawyer, to control the feelings of the gentleman; but, perhaps, he knew that evidence of a more direct kind was yet forthcoming, and he could afford to give as little trouble as possible to one whose whole demeanor was shaded by a cast of sorrow. As so few questions were asked by the prosecuting counsel, it was not supposed that any cross-examination would be made, but as she turned to leave the stand, the junior counsel of defendant rose.

"May I ask you, Miss, a few questions? I will endeavor not to detain you long."

"Certainly, sir." And as she cast her eye in the direction of her questioner, it met that of her cousin Rudolph, who had just entered and taken a seat among the witnesses. He was very pale, and evidently, did not feel at ease; perhaps the unexpected order he had received to be present was not agreeable; it had not been his design to witness the trial; and he had also understood, that he had been subpoenaed by the counsel for Edwards. Whether Sarah noticed any thing peculiar in the countenance of her cousin, that caused her to rest her eye upon him, I cannot say; but she did fix it, with an earnestness, before which his eye immediately fell, and as he saw that others were attracted by her gaze, his confusion was very manifest.

"May I ask you, Miss Pearsall, in reference to visitors at the house of your uncle? You have lived many years in his family, I believe?"

"Yes, sir, from my childhood"

"You have frequent visitors, doubtless, at your uncle's? Are there not some who are very much at home in the family?"

"There are, sir, certainly," and her eye again rested on Rudolph.

"Some of these have access to all parts of the house, are in fact almost members of the family?"

"If your honor please," said the District Attorney, rising in haste, and looking at the Judge, "I object to that question."

"Mr. Berry," said the Judge, "what do you wish to establish by these questions?"

"May it please your Honor," said Theodore rising, with much animation, and speaking with a confidence that he had not hitherto assumed, "there is a deep mystery about this unhappy transaction, and I wish to expose to your Honor and to these gentlemen, some of the secrets of this family. I believe your Honor will instruct these gentlemen, that if a reasonable doubt exists in their minds as to the guilt of my client, that doubt should be resolved in his favor. I wish to prove to your Honor and to these gentlemen, that there were those, who, by intimacy with this family, might avail themselves of access to all its privacies with even more assurance than my client, and if I can also show a motive, a detestable motive, to be sure, and one which, if proved, must consign its subject to eternal infamy; if I can prove—"

"Have you any proof direct, Mr. Berry, that will go to establish the fact as to who it was that perpetrated the act charged against the prisoner?"

"Not direct, your Honor, but—"

"It will not answer, sir, however assured your own mind may be on the subject. All the evidence hitherto is against the prisoner; if you have any counter-evidence to prove that he did not, or could not have done it, you may bring that forward; but it would not be allowable to raise a mere suspicion against an individual not on trial, and of course not able to defend himself."

"May it please your Honor, and with all due deference to the decision of the court, still, the evidence against us is as yet but circumstantial. I acknowledge, indeed, that as

such, it bears strongly against my client, and unless its force can be broken, will go far with an impartial jury to compel a verdict against him; but the court will doubtless remember the great suit reported from the English court—'The Crown versus Jones,'—wherein the defendant was arraigned for a similar offence, and the money was found upon his person. Yet even in such a case, the court allowed testimony to prove a motive to destroy the character, and bring terrible evil upon the defendant, and which, finally, resulted in his acquittal."

"The case to which the counsel refers is well remembered, but the proofs adduced to substantiate the charge were direct and sufficiently strong to prove beyond a doubt a conspiracy against the defendant. If I understand the counsel, all that you expect to prove by testimony, is an evil motive which might, by possibility, have induced an attempt upon the character of the prisoner."

Theodore took his seat.

"Your next witness, gentlemen."

The District Attorney beckoned to Betty to take her place; she immediately arose, laid aside her hat and came forward with an elastic step, the broad frill of her decent looking cap flying back as she walked, and her face reddening like a true daughter of Erin.

"What is your name, my good woman?"

"Betty sir, is my name."

"What else? that's not all your name, is it?"

"It's all that's naeful; I'll answer to it any day."

"But we want the whole of your name; you were not christened Betty, were you?"

"That's more nor I can say, sir, you must ax them as knows."

"My good woman," said the Judge, "we want your name just as you sign it."

"Please your Honor, and that's what I never did in my life; I jist makes a bit of a cross, and that's the end of it. But, sir, my name is Manahan, Elizabeth Manahan, or Betsey Manahan, or Betty; but Betty's good enough, and it's the most convenient to me."

"Well, Betty, how long have you lived in the family of Mr. Hunt?"

"Eight years coming next Christmas, and it's truth."

"Then you have been there all the time that Mr. Edwards was in the family?"

"It's true, sir, I have."

"Did you see much of him?"

"Did I see him? I seed him every day; how could I be living there, and not see him?"

"Well, did he go much about the house? Was he not occasionally in different parts of the house?"

"I can't say but he was."

"You mean by that, that he did go into the different rooms, sometimes into the parlor, sometimes into the kitchen, and sometimes into the bedrooms, or closets, just as any member of the family might do?"

"Upon the life of me, if I can just say that I ever seed him as your Honor says, in the bedrooms and the closets; no, no, I'll tell you the truth. He would sometimes jist as he was passing the kitchen door, put his head in and say 'good mornin, Betty,' or 'good evenin, Betty,' for I'll say it afore his face and behind his back, that a real gentleman he was, and not afeared to spake to a puir body, be they black or white."

"Well, Betty, you remember the circumstance of Mr. Edwards' key, or the key of his room being found in the door of the vault?"

"I do, sir."

"You are sure that it was the key of his closet?"

"Ah, sir!" heaving a sigh; "it was even so."

"And how do you account for its being there?"

"That I don't know, sir; it's past my comprehension."

"But you saw the key there, and knew the key to belong to the closet in Mr. Edwards' room?"

"Yes sir, I know the key well."

"Is this the key, Betty?" handing her a small key; Betty examined it, and handing it back,

"It's the very same, sir, and there is the very mark he made on it wid his own hand;" and then, as requested, she told the whole story, which she had related at the apprehension of Edwards; the account she gave of the affair seemed to affect the Judge and the jury rather unfavorably towards Edwards, and his counsel felt that, if possible, some effort

must be made to counteract it, for Betty, by her strong sympathy for James, manifested in her sighs and ejaculations, left a decided impression of her fears that all was not right, and as soon as the District Attorney signified that he was through with the witness, "Betty," said Theodore, "you would not wish the court to understand that you supposed Mr. Edwards had any hand in opening the vault door with the key?"

"Oh bless your soul!" lifting up both her hands at the same time, "it's the furthestest from my thoughts; that it is—no, no, I'd cut my tongue off first."

"Well, Betty, I did not believe you thought so, only I wished to let these gentlemen know, that you did not think so."

"If it's my mind that they're wanting, I'll give it and fear nobody."

"We don't wish your opinion, my good woman," said the Judge; "Mr. Berry, if you have no more questions to put to the witness, she may take her seat."

"You may take your seat, Betty"—and Betty marched back in the same quick time with which she had come to the stand. As the officer who had apprehended Edwards was not able to be present, his affidavit was read, stating in a clear, concise manner, the whole scene which transpired at the time of his being arrested, and it was truly unfortunate for James, that he had manifested any reluctance to having his trunk examined. It told, evidently, a very bad story to the minds of the jurors.

The testimony for the prosecution now closed, and Mr. Berry arose immediately to open his case.

He stated in very simple and plain terms the peculiar difficulties attending the cause which he had undertaken to defend; he acknowledged, frankly, that the testimony which had been brought forward, and which he had no doubt was true testimony, so far as it went, was very much against his client; but the jury would bear in mind that, after all, it was circumstantial. "And I am free to acknowledge, that there are cases where this species of evidence, when its combinations are complete, forms the strongest of all proofs, and proclaims with its mute tongue the guilt of him upon whom it bears, as truly and as eloquently as the heavens above us

and the creation around us proclaim the hand that made them. But it is, also, a species of evidence that may be brought to bear upon the innocent, as well as the guilty. If there be within the social circle of any man, a being vile enough to plot his ruin, it wants but a little artifice, to weave a net from whose toils the purest reputation may not free him. Within the meshes of such a snare, do I most firmly believe the prisoner has been caught, and he stands now before you, gentlemen of the jury, almost a helpless victim. He has no power to solve the mystery, or explain away the circumstances that testify against him. All he can do is to prove, to you, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the purity of his life, and that, until the fatal hour when this catastrophe was developed, not a stain rested upon his noble, generous, faithful character; and when we have exhibited before you, gentlemen, undoubted proofs of what we assert, surely you will hesitate before you consign to infamy, upon the grounds of such evidence, one whose path has hitherto been so spotless."

The first witness called on the part of the defence, was the Rev. Mr. Wharton, and as he arose, and walked to the stand, and bowed respectfully to the whole court, there was an involuntary return of the obeisance from the judge, the jury, and the bar. He was dressed with more than usual care, and this, added to his manly form, his calm and dignified expression of countenance and courtly manners, was well calculated to excite feelings of reverence and respect. Without much questioning, the Rev. gentleman was requested by the judge to say what he knew of the young man, now the prisoner at the bar; and he did so in a clear and impressive manner; each word was articulated with a distinctness that could not fail to reach every listener in the vast room; a decided impression was made upon the feelings of the jurors, and one could almost read in their strained countenances, the desire for some testimony that would enable them, with a clear conscience, to place the young man again where he had once stood, and restore him to the hearts that were bleeding for him. But alas! justice, in her impartial decisions, cannot compromise the right to the yearnings of human sympathy.

The district attorney, doubtless, noticed the effect pro

duced by this witness, and felt it to be his duty to allay the excitement.

"If the other gentlemen are through with the witness, I would merely inquire, sir, whether what you state of the character and conduct of the prisoner has come from your own personal knowledge, or by hearsay?"

"Undoubtedly, sir, much of the information I have given has been derived from others, but from such sources, as leave not a shadow of doubt on my own mind of its perfect truth."

"Certainly, sir; we are fully assured, Mr. Wharton, that you have testified to what you believed to be facts; but is there no possibility that you may have been deceived?"

"I can conceive of none, sir."

"Well, sir, allowing the representations, which you have just made to be as you think they are, still, you know nothing of the habits of the young man while in this city?"

"I do not, sir; I could only take them for granted."

"Exactly so."

"We are prepared on that point, Mr. Attorney," said Theodore, rising, "we can prove his character here, sir, abundantly."

"Mr. Wharton may take his seat," and he retired with the same dignity and grace, bowing to the court, and receiving the salutation of the judge, who, in grace of manner, dress, and personal bearing, was evidently a pupil of the same school.

The other witnesses were then called in turn to the stand; they were the two Messrs. Hunt, Mrs. Hunt, and finally Mr. Berry, his junior counsel. The testimony related, almost exclusively, to his habits and deportment, and was decidedly favorable. Rudolph Hunt had been subpoenaed by the counsel for Edwards, with the hope that such latitude might possibly be given by the court, in the examination of witnesses, as might have made his testimony, on some points, of consequence.

But as the result then stood, there seemed no opening whereby his testimony could be made to bear favorably on the cause of Edwards. All eyes were now directed to the counsel for the prisoner, who were in close consultation. There was evidently strong sympathy excited for the young

man, but mingled with sad forebodings of his fate; still, however, a hope remained that his counsel had in reserve some expedient that might turn to his account. This hope was soon at an end; in a few moments Mr. Berry arose and bowing to the judge.

"May it please the court, we rest our cause."

There was a sudden hush throughout the assembly, and every eye was fixed upon the young man, who now stood forth to make his last effort for one whom he had undertaken to serve, not only as a counsellor, but as a friend; the strong emotions which his countenance betrayed, the solemn, measured tones, with which his exordium was spoken, plainly told that he felt the responsibility of his situation, and the value of the interest for which he was about to plead. He recapitulated in brief, the account which had been given of the affair, just as the testimony had declared it to be. He denied nothing. He then went on with the history of young Edwards, touched with most feeling, burning interest on some of the leading points of his life, told them of his filial piety, of his untiring diligence in the discharge of duties, and his spotless reputation.

He then adverted to the circumstance which had brought him before them as a criminal.

"To you, gentlemen, it is unaccountable; an inconceivable mystery hangs over and around it; and I doubt not that each one of you, upon whose judgment depends the future weal or woe of my unfortunate client, would, from your hearts, rejoice if the veil could be removed, and the dark deed so exposed that its perpetrator should stand before you in all his odiousness."

"Doubts, I know, rest upon your minds, and your judgment lingers to reach the painful conclusion, to which, in all honesty and truthfulness I must say, the testimony would lead you."

"I wish I could lift up this veil, and show you what my own eyes so clearly see. I wish I might be allowed to say to you all what I believe to be as true, as that the sun shines in yonder heavens, in reference to this unhappy business; but I have no testimony, that will be allowed in a court of justice, to substantiate what I might say, and here the truth itself can have no hearing, but through her witnesses. But,

gentlemen, there are strange scenes acting in this world of ours. They are forced upon our notice in our daily round of life. Have not each of you, gentlemen, witnessed cases where some poor sufferer was obtruded upon your notice, his wrongs touched your heart, and your understanding convinced you, that he, who caused the wrong, was well known through all the disguises which he had assumed. You could point your finger at him, and say, 'Thou art the man;' but you might not be able to bring such testimony to sustain your consciousness, as would be allowed in a tribunal of justice. And now, gentlemen of the jury and this honorable court, bear with me for a moment, while I repeat a story full of deep meaning, and in my humble judgment, in no obscure manner, illustrating the very point which I wish, in all the solemnity which the momentous issues of this case demand, to press upon you, who have its decision in your hands.

"In this city lived a young man of pure and noble mind, he was destitute of what the world calls wealth, but he was rich in the qualities of a generous heart, and in the possession of mental abilities, and those personal attractions, which combine to throw around their possessor charms which make their way to every heart. His days were devoted to the faithful discharge of those duties, which he owed to employers, to whom he felt bound by strong obligations, and his evenings to the cultivation of an active mind. Within the domestic circle, which he called his home, was one whose attractions of mind and person were the theme of all who knew her. As kindred elements, when brought in contact, coalesce and mingle according to the harmonies of nature, these spirits blended their beautiful sympathies, and rested happy in each other's love.

"Within the same circle was one, not devoid of external graces, nor of many collateral advantages. He was in a fair and prosperous business; and before him arose the prospect of almost certain wealth. He had, too, a cultivated mind and winning manners, but he wanted an honest heart. Those warm affections, which fire the soul with its purest ardor, he knew nothing of. Virtue and loveliness had no charms for him.

"With the spirit of him who viewed our happy parents

in their new and blissful home, and planned their ruin, he cast an evil eye upon this youthful pair. No outward signs had yet been given that their affections were united, and even to themselves, it was unknown. He saw, or thought he saw, the growing union, and every selfish passion was aroused. A lovely being whom, for her own sake, he had never cared for, became to his covetous eye a prize of untold value, when likely to be wrested from his grasp. His plan was quickly laid. No compassion for one who had ever been to him as a friend, could stay for a moment the cursed design. A blasted reputation is a fair substitute for the assassin's dagger; and with all the hellish art of him he served, around this unsuspecting youth, he wove a net of cruel cords, and saw with all the coldness of an icy heart, his victim fall a prey. Gentlemen, I see you doubt the truth of what I tell you; you doubt that, in our midst, a being can be found, so like a demon of the pit. But stay your judgment; I have a sequel to relate—no fiction of the brain, no spurious child of an excited imagination—but truth in all its sad reality.

"There is now lying on a bed of death, in hourly expectation of the final summons, a lovely female, the ward of an honest and industrious mechanic, trained in principles of strictest virtue, and with a mind spotless as the purest of her sex. She was in the heyday of youth and health, and possessed of more than an ordinary share of personal attractions. This monster came across her humble path. He ingratiated himself into her favor by months and even years of attention. He won her heart, and then, when in all its honest purity, it rested on his honor, he mocked its sacred affections, laughed to scorn its virtue and its truth, and because he could not break through the strong barrier which these had built around her, left her—left her—with her young affections crushed and dead."

As the speaker uttered this last sentence, he fixed his flashing eye full upon Rudolph Hunt. Pale as though the life-blood had for ever fled, Rudolph started to his feet. A buzz of astonishment swept over the assembly, immediately followed by the hoarse voice of the high constable calling out,

"Silence in the court."

Turning his bright eye at once upon the jurors, and without in the least noticing the extraordinary movement on the part of Rudolph, Theodore continued in the same tone of voice. "Yes—crushed and broken-hearted, she now lies upon the bed of death; and do you now doubt, gentlemen, that he, who could thus trample on virtue and loveliness, in the purest and brightest form in which the eye of man can look upon it, would hesitate to blast the reputation of his fellow, when it should suit his ends?"

The speaker paused and fixed his eye a moment on the jury, and then sat down. He had not said all that he designed to say, and to the assembly it was doubtless matter of surprise that he had so abruptly ceased; but he knew that the only hope which remained for his friend was the creation of a serious doubt in the minds of the jury. He felt assured that such a crisis had occurred.

Scarcely had he taken his seat, when Mr. Catchem entered, pale as he could very well be, for he was just from a bed of sickness. As he opened the little gate into the arena of the bar, he turned and admitted two persons who had followed him through the court room, and gave them each a seat by the side of the witnesses. The female was young and not ill-looking; there was an agreeable expression to her countenance, although it was evident that she had either been confined by sickness in her own person, or from watching at the sick-bed of another. As the witnesses cast their eyes upon the strangers, Betty, involuntarily clasped her hands and rolled her eyes up; she would, undoubtedly, have made an exclamation, if the fear of the court had not been upon her. It was the young woman who once caused her so much uneasiness in her inquiries for Mr. Edwards. Sarah recognized her as Lydia, the friend of Gitty, and whose untiring attendance upon the dying one caused her present sickly appearance.

The man who took his seat near her, was also one whom we have seen before; but we should hardly recognize, in his Sunday suit, our friend the locksmith. This dress had no doubt once been in the fashion of its day, but what day it would be difficult to determine; probably he had worn it as his best, when a young man; it had much too youthful an appearance for its wearer now. As he sat down and cast

his eyes about, no one could well say to whom in particular they were directed; they took a wide range, and were in no wise dependent upon each other. One person, however, was conscious that a piercing gaze was occasionally fixed upon him, and whenever it was, he manifested signs of uneasiness.

As soon as Mr. Catchem had given seats to these two individuals, he walked up to the District Attorney and held converse with him; it seemed to be some matter of much importance, for the questions and answers which passed between them, were in tones and gestures of great earnestness.

"May it please the court, we have, indeed, rested our cause on the part of the prosecution, and perhaps sufficient testimony has already been adduced to prove the charge against the prisoner; but as satisfactory proof can now be given to identify the prisoner with a transaction that has immediate bearing upon the case, I ask leave of the court for further examination of witnesses."

"Why have not these witnesses been obtained at an earlier stage of the trial?"

"I will state the reasons, your Honor. The officer who arrested the prisoner, became possessed, a short time since, of some important information relative to this matter, and would immediately have made report thereof, that proper steps might in time have been taken to procure the necessary testimony, but having been seized with sudden illness, he has been unable to attend to business, and has only now arisen from a sick bed for this very purpose."

"What do you expect to prove, sir, by these witnesses?"

"I expect to prove, may it please your Honor, that just previous to the time when this robbery took place, the prisoner at the bar procured a key to be made of a very peculiar construction, and in a manner that excited the suspicion of him whom he employed to make it, and which induced him very particularly to mark the prisoner, whom he is now prepared to identify under oath; and I, also, by another person present, am prepared not only to confirm the testimony of the other witness as to the identity of the prisoner, she having seen him on two several occasions while he was procuring the manufacture of the key, but furthermore to testify against his character as base and worthless."

The counsel for the prisoner at once were engaged in

earnest converse with him, during which Edwards was evidently much agitated. The junior counsel then arose:

"May it please the court, we would make no objection to the introduction of these witnesses; singular and unexpected as are the circumstances, we do not object."

Theodore sat down and felt that all was lost.

"Let the witnesses be sworn." The old man arose and took the usual oath.

"He had been applied to about a month since to make a key of a particular construction, and all he had to make it from was a piece of dough; that some excuse was made why the key was needed, but he did not heed it; he thought like as not there was something wrong, but he did not know; he made a great many keys, sometimes they were made a good use of, and sometimes they warnt." The District Attorney then handed him the key of the chest.

"Is that the key you made?"

"The key I made will unlock the door that this key will unlock, but that is not the key I made. No, sir, I always put my mark on the keys I make."

"You are very sure, however, that it was of this pattern?"

"Sure, sir, very sure; but, sir, here is something which may throw some light on the matter. When the young man paid me for the job, he, by accident, left this knife upon my table. It has a name upon it."

The District Attorney took the knife, and the counsel for the prisoner immediately stepped forward; each one examined it.

The foreman of the jury requested the name should be read to them.

The District Attorney looked at the Judge.

"They are entitled to all the evidence bearing upon the case."

"The name on this knife, gentlemen, is—*James Edwards*."

A shudder passed through the whole assembly; Sarah leaned upon her uncle Augustus, who was trembling with the agitation which this new development had caused.

"Oh, God! be thou my refuge." It was only whispered in her heart. She began to taste the bitterness of that grief which knows no comforter.

The effect upon Edwards was very marked; his counte-

nance assumed an expression which was not usual to it, fierce passions seemed to be arousing. He spoke to Theodore in a strain of great earnestness, and was about to address the associate counsel, when the Judge, leaning forward, asked the witness,

"Can you identify the person who employed you to make that key?"

"I can, sir."

"Have you seen him since you have been within the court?"

"I have, sir."

"Is that the man who employed you to make this key?" pointing to the prisoner.

The stillness of death reigned throughout the vast room, as the witness, raising his hand and pointing it, spoke in a distinct and deliberate manner,

"Yes, sir, that is the man; I can swear to him."

An hysteric scream broke the solemn stillness, and Sarah was immediately carried by her friends, senseless, from the room.

"May it please the Court," said Theodore, rising and speaking with great energy, "there is some great mistake; the witness did not designate my client; he neither pointed to him nor looked at him."

A hum of voices now buzzed through the court, and for a moment the disturbance, caused by the removal of Sarah and the exit of her friends, made it impossible for the voice of the counsel to be heard.

"Silence, silence in the court," and the High Constable struck his staff upon the floor with some violence. "Officers, see that all are seated."

"If your Honor pleases, the witness did not point out my client as one whom he knew."

"Let the witness confront the prisoner."

"Do you recognize that person as the one who employed you to make the key?"

Again every breath was hushed. Edwards raised his keen bright eye, and fixed it firmly upon the witness. A moment the old man eyed the youth, and then, looking intently around upon the seat where the witnesses had been, appeared much confused.

"I saw him distinctly, your Honor, but a moment ago; that young man I have never seen before."

The audience could not be restrained; their feelings had become intensely excited, and a murmur of decided approbation filled the room. The Judge called, in his clear, calm voice,

"Let the court be cleared, officers; unless silence is observed."

"Silence in the court!" and again the officers were busy with their staves amid the crowd.

The senior counsel for Edwards now arose.

"May it please the Court, I rise to move an adjournment of this cause; circumstances have transpired since the commencement of this trial, which throw new light upon this hitherto mysterious affair; if time be allowed, my client can now, without doubt, produce testimony which will remove every shadow of suspicion from him. I, therefore, pray the Court to grant us an adjournment, but for another day."

For a few moments the District Attorney was in close converse with Mr. Catchem, who had retired with the witnesses when Sarah was carried from the room. He had not, from the first, appeared desirous of going further than the simple discharge of his official duty required, and as he now rose to address the Court, he was evidently as much gratified as though he had been acting for the prisoner.

"May it please your Honor, I have just learned that a full confession has been made by an individual who has left the court, which entirely clears the young man who has been before us, charged with the commission of this crime. I, therefore, relinquish the cause, and pray that a *nolle prosequi* be entered."

It would be in vain to attempt a description of the scene which followed.

The court immediately arose, and all within the bar was in confusion.

The friends of James at once surrounded him, each anxious to testify the warmth of their congratulations. Mr. Wharton seized his hand, while the big tears rolled down his venerable face.

"God be praised, God be praised," as the Judge recognized in Mr. Wharton an old friend; he approached him with much

cordiality, and their salutation was hearty and long continued. He then took the hand of Edwards.

"Most truly do I congratulate you, my dear sir. You have borne yourself like a true man."

James could not speak; his emotions were swelling at each moment, as wave after wave came rolling in from that ocean of love and interest in which his heart had once bathed with such delight, and from which, of late, only dark and forbidding clouds had swept upon him.

Theodore now advanced from the circle of lawyers, from whom he had been receiving high compliments for his maiden effort. The young men looked steadily at each other, as, with the warmth of friendship, now sealed for life, their hands were clasped. Tears glistened in their bright eyes, the only expression of volumes of thought, too big for utterance.

"Sarah! Theodore, where is she?" Without answering, Theodore took the arm of his friend, and accompanied by Mr. Wharton, they left the court, and entered an adjoining room within the building.

Sarah had fully recovered, and had just been informed of the result; as soon as she saw James, she arose, and he hastened towards her.

"James!"

"Sarah!" and he folded her to his bosom in a fond embrace.

No words passed between them. Words could not convey the fulness of their gushing hearts; it was the hour of love, in all its rich and trustful sweetness, without one alloy to taint its bliss.

Mr. Augustus Hunt and Betty were the only friends, besides those who had just entered, to witness the meeting. The old man was almost beside himself with joy; again and again he took the hand of James.

"It's the happiest day of my life—it's the happiest day of my life—rot the old chest; it has like to have been the death of me. Uncle Geordie's got all his money, too, and has gone home as happy as a lark."

Betty sat in one corner of the room, keeping a respectful distance, and wiping away the tears of joy that were running down her honest face. James did not forget her; he stepped up and took her hand.

"Well, Betty, things are brighter than when we last met."

"Oh! yes, dear sowl! I told you it would be so."

"Yes, you did, Betty; you had more confidence than any of us."

"And hadn't I good reason to be so, when that dear young leddy was prayin' and prayin', night and day, that ye might be delivered; sure was I, if help was to be had, ye would have it. But, oh, dear! Mr. James, it has like to have kilt me, and sich a lump as there is here, and go away it wont, do what I will; and that ould withered gowk, with his eyes seven ways for Sundays, blinking across the room, and sayin' he knew it to be yoursell. Odd, Mr. James, I could have shuck him till the breath was out of him, the old blind fule."

"Never mind, Betty, it is all over now."

And Betty pounded on her chest: "Oh, dear! oh, dear—this lump, this lump; it grows bigger and bigger."

CHAPTER XIX.

RUDOLPH had made a full confession of the vile attempt upon the character of James Edwards. A combination of circumstances had produced this result; it was not that his heart had become penitent and overcome by true contrition, but he was conscious of deep villainy. He had found, from the address which had been pointed at him in the court, that through all the specious covering which he had thrown over the exterior, his true character was discovered. He had learned also that the female witness, who was just ready to be sworn, had, ere she left her home, witnessed the death of that poor trusting girl, who had fallen a sacrifice to his faithlessness. Evils were gathering about him which he feared to meet, and by a sudden rush of feeling, he had been impelled to make a disclosure to his uncle, the elder Mr. Hunt, at the same time handing him back the money which he had taken from the chest, hoping, no doubt, that the gain of that lost treasure

would so mollify the feelings of his uncle as to enable him to obtain some advantage therefrom. But he had made a wrong calculation; his uncle Geordie was filled with rage, and it was only through the powerful intercession of Mr. Augustus Hunt that he was not at once delivered into the hands of the Sheriff; by his means he was immediately sent from the city, with, however, only a small supply of money, barely sufficient to carry him to the distant West.

James had not been without his suspicions of Rudolph's soundness of heart, and he had, at times, strong surmises that, in some way, Rudolph was concerned in bringing about the calamity which had come upon him; but our first impressions will cling to us, and have an influence over our feelings, even after we are sure that influence is wrong.

James had never forgotten the hour of his deep distress, when the urgent intercession of Rudolph had done much, as he afterwards learned, to procure him that situation which at once raised him from despair and ruin. Neither could he forget the many and repeated acts of generosity which Rudolph had manifested towards him, nor the uniform kindness with which he had treated him. These all together had thrown a chain around his heart, which even many circumstantial proofs of the obliquity of his feelings of late could not break; and it was not until the circumstance of the knife being brought into court, and thus used as a terrible witness against himself, that his mind was fully released from its shackles, and he resolved to forget all past obligations, and save himself from the fangs of a villain, while the means remained by which he could accomplish it. He had loaned Rudolph that knife on the very day that it had been thus left, as he now doubted not, by design, to entrap him, in case any suspicions should lead the locksmith to inform against him.

But the net was broken; the bird had escaped from the snare of the fowler; his mind, freed from the terrible pressure that had been crushing it, was now buoyant and happy; his enemy had fallen and was an outcast, skulking from the sight of those who had ever known him.

At once, his noble mind forgot the evil which Rudolph had designed, and thought only of the blasting which had come over the bright prospects of one with whom he had

long been a companion; and he resolved, if the thing could possibly be accomplished, to save him yet.

It was the hour of prosperity with James, and his heart, softened by its influence, was full of forgiveness and love. He wanted no revenge, and the thought was painful to him, that one human being within the circle of his interest should, on his account, be suffering the pangs of remorse and disappointed expectation. Under the influence of such feelings, and deeply pondering upon the course he should pursue, he entered his old home, the house of Mr. Geordie Hunt, accompanied by Sarah and her uncle Augustus. His reception was cordial as his heart could wish; not one but appeared to rejoice in the proof of his perfect innocence. Matters had scarcely subsided, after the deep excitement of the day, into the usual quiet of that domestic circle, when James was invited by Mr. Augustus Hunt to step with him into an adjoining room, that they might have a private interview. As they entered the apartment, Mr. Geordie was sitting quietly by the window, looking out at the passing multitude with rather an indifferent stare, as though it were little matter to him what was the absorbing interest that hurried each along, while his hands were busily employed twisting and turning his red silk pocket handkerchief into all kinds of shapes.

Mr. Augustus carefully closed the door, and taking a seat by his brother, motioned James to bring a chair and sit near to them.

"That's right, Master James; take a seat, take a seat. We want to talk a little; bless my soul! what a day this has been."

"It has been a bad business—bad business; but you've got all your money again, haven't you, brother?"

"Yes, yes, about all."

"Well, so far that's good; but it's been a narrow chance for Master James, here. What a villain he must be but he's gone, and that's an end to it."

"I hope so."

"Well, I guess it is, I don't think, brother, he will ever put foot in your sight after the dressing you gave him; he's got enough of Uncle Geordie, I guess. But now for this other matter; you see Mr. Edwards," and Mr. Augustus

turned his face full upon his brother, although his address was to James. "You see, Mr. Edwards, we have been talking over things a little, and I have been telling my brother some secrets of our family that perhaps I knew more about than he did." It would have been a curious sight just then to watch the contortions which the red handkerchief had to go through. "And we have been thinking, Master James, that this has like to have been a bad business for you, very bad indeed; you have run a very narrow chance."

"I know I have, sir; and I hope I shall ever remember the kind Providence by which I have been delivered."

"Yes, yes, that is all well enough so far as it goes; but I and my brother feel"—and he looked archly at his brother, while the handkerchief whirled round faster and faster—"I say, I and my brother feel that, seeing all this trouble has come upon you out of our family like, we ought to make you some compensation. You feel so, don't you, brother?" Mr. Geordie wriggled a little in his chair.

"Yes, yes; no doubt."

"Gentlemen, you are very kind thus to express yourselves; but it is compensation enough for me, to know that I am restored again to the good opinion of my friends."

"No doubt, no doubt; that may satisfy you well enough, Master James, but good opinion of friends won't make the pot boil, and as things are now between us, we want to make you a little amends for the trouble you have had, and to put you in a way to be doing for yourself. Now to cut the matter short, it is our wish, since our nephew has turned out as he has, just to put you into his place. Sit down, sit down, Master James," seeing James about to rise. "Keep your seat; I am not through yet, and there," handing James a paper, "is an order from me on our firm for six thousand dollars; you can pass that to your credit on our books to-morrow; it will be a nest-egg to begin with. Now don't say any thing," seeing James about to say a great deal, "don't say any thing; I know how you feel."

"May God reward you, Mr. Hunt, for all your noble, generous conduct towards me. And—"

"Hoot, toot, stop with it, James; are you not the same as one of the family now? and it is only taking out of one hand and putting it in the other; besides, remember

James, you have got a richer trust committed to your keeping, and one that I prize more, much more, than all the wealth which I have earned."

James grasped the hand of his benefactor; "and I prize that trust, sir, beyond all the wealth you can bestow."

"I believe you, James, and my brother has as strong belief in your truth and virtue as I have myself."

"We wish you well, we wish you well, Master James, for your own sake and Sally's too."

As Mr. Geordie said this, he arose and was about to depart.

"But, gentlemen, I have one request to make of you; can nothing be done for Rudolph, to snatch him from destruction? I will make any sacrifice myself if—"

"He's a villain!" said Mr. Geordie, "he's a great villain! I'll have nothing to do with him; he's a disgrace to the family."

"He has done a great wrong, sir, no doubt, or rather he has attempted it. But perhaps he deeply regrets it."

"Ay, ay. I tell you, James, neither you nor uncle Geordie know Rudolph as I do. He is a desperate villain. No, no, he has got enough to work his way off among the wild Indians, and there's the best place for him."

"But if he could be brought to see the error of the principles he has adopted, now, in the hour of his trouble, and when he has found to what they lead, to renounce them."

"Ay, if he will renounce them! but you might as well try to make an eel out of an adder, as to make Rudolph renounce his principles. No, no, I wouldn't trust him."

"But now is the hour of trial; he is in trouble; his bright prospects have vanished; like a mist his friends have melted away, and he is alone—an outcast; let me go to him as a messenger of hope; let me tell him that the past is forgiven, and although he may not return here, yet, in some distant place where he may settle, you will be his helpers."

"It's idle, James, it's idle talking; you are but a young man, and have not become acquainted with the dark side of human nature. Uncle Geordie and I have lived many years, and have seen all sides of things. When a young man with no motive, but such as the old Enemy himself possessed when he spoiled our first parents, does as Rudolph has done, de-

pend upon it, my young friend, he is a gone case—no help—no help."

Uncle Geordie shook his head.

"You're right, Gussy, you're right."

But the mind of James was fully determined, and although they warned him that it would be a useless task, yet to his urgent plea they yielded thus far—that, if Rudolph could send back a good account of himself, and assure them of his changed character, they would see what they could do, and that he might, at all events, have the balance due to him on their books.

Rudolph had left the city, but James ascertained that he had merely crossed the river, and would, probably, remain at the stage-house through the night; the conveyance, by which he was to start, would not leave until early in the morning; he determined to follow him then, and try his benevolent experiment.

The day was drawing to a close, and James felt that no time was to be lost; as he arose to depart, his two aged friends each took his hand, and again assured him how joyfully they hailed his deliverance, and how much pleasure they anticipated in numbering him as one of themselves.

"I feel twenty years younger, my dear fellow," said Mr. Augustus, as he put his hand affectionately upon his shoulder, "twenty years younger; it is the happiest day of my life."

In the adjoining room, Sarah was waiting to welcome him; she knew for what purpose he had been closeted with her uncles, and, as they entered, she came up to him with an animated smile lighting up her beautiful countenance with the brightness of her happiest days; her uncle Augustus took her hand, and placing it in that of the noble youth who stood beside him,

"There, James, I can give you nothing more; God bless you."

Sarah held the hand of her lover in a tight embrace, and, throwing her arm around the neck of her uncle,

"Oh, my dear, good uncle! how shall I ever repay you! All I can do is to pledge you, for myself and James, the obedience, the love of children."

"Well, well, Sally dear, that will do, that will do." And

the old man broke suddenly away; his generous spirit was on fire, and the big tears had started.

"But is it true," said Sarah, as she took the arm of him to whom her uncle had just then so solemnly committed her, "that you are designing a visit to Rudolph? it cannot surely be, James?"

"It is true, Sarah."

"Oh, James, you little know the bitterness that is in his heart against you."

"Perhaps not; but I go to him with a spirit of kindness, not to upbraid him for the past, but to give him hope for the future. He is now prostrate alone, friendless; he will, he must appreciate the motives which induce me, under all the circumstances, to seek him out and offer him encouragement."

"Ah, James! I fear it is a hopeless errand upon which you are intent; and not only hopeless, it is in my view fearfully dangerous."

"Why, I shall be obliged, no doubt, to cross the river in a small boat. I do not, however, apprehend much danger."

"It is not the danger of crossing the river, although the night is dark; that is not the evil which I dread; but would the man who has made such a deadly thrust at your reputation, hesitate to take your life? depend upon it, James, he would not."

"My dear Sarah! such fears are groundless, and should not be indulged; let us try to do our duty; or at least let me try to do mine. Think of my deliverance to-day! and should I allow an unmanly fear to deter me from the discharge of what appears a duty?"

"My dear James!" and Sarah looked up to him with her beautiful countenance glowing with emotion, "I hope I may never be a hinderance to you in the path of duty. But you have never known Rudolph as I have; he has never exposed to you the blackness of his heart."

"It pains me, Sarah, to do any thing which you do not approve."

"Oh! I do approve it," and she put her hand on his shoulder—"I do approve it—It is just what I should expect from you, James; but I have strange apprehensions, when I think of your encountering him alone—if any thing should

happen!" and she covered her face, as James pressed her to his bosom.

"Let us trust, Sarah, that in doing as our consciences dictate, there will be a hand to shield us in the hour of danger."

Sarah yielded, and would no longer persist in opposing his will. At her request, however, he took Jim along with him, but by no means did he think of allowing him to see Rudolph.

She parted from him, and retired to her room; an uncontrollable foreboding of evil oppressed her mind, and she could only obtain relief in committing him who was now dearer to her than life itself, to the care of her covenant God.

Mr. Wharton had been invited by Theodore Berry to accompany him to the house of his mother, where James was to meet them in the course of the evening. It was too late to think of returning to his home, or he would gladly have done so. He felt for those whom he had left, and could not endure the thought that they should be in suspense; suffering from the dread uncertainty which hung over the beloved one. He was just turning from the broad thoroughfare into one of the narrower streets which cross it, in the lower part of the city, when his arm was gently touched from behind; he stopped suddenly, and looking round,

"Mr. Tightbody!"

"It's me, sir," Mr. Tightbody could say no more; he had been walking very rapidly for some time, and espying Mr. Wharton, in his anxiety to overtake him, had, for a short distance, attempted to run; he was, moreover, under great excitement of mind. His countenance was much flushed and his breathing heavy.

Mr. Wharton looked at him with great earnestness for a moment, as though questioning with himself what could have brought the little man to the city; and also, what cause could be operating to produce the evident feeling under which he was laboring.

"Is it all over, sir? is the—is the—is the trial ended? and—"

"It is over, Mr. Tightbody, and our young friend cleared of every shadow of guilt."

"Blest be praised—blest be praised—good bye, sir; I'm off—I'm off, sir."

But Mr. Wharton had taken his hand, and retained it in a tight grasp.

"Off where, sir? you surely are not intending to return to night, Mr. Tightbody?"

"This very minute, sir; you see, Mr. Wharton," and he tried to raise himself on tiptoe, so as to reach the ear of the reverend gentleman, "I thought I would steal a march, sir, and so I came off unbeknown to any but my own folks; and now I am right back again; I must let them know the good news, this very night."

"But not, I hope, until you have supped with us—Mr. Berry, this is Mr. Tightbody, a neighbor of ours in the country." Theodore cordially embraced the little man.

"I trust, sir, you will do as Mr. Wharton suggests, and allow me to add, that as a friend to Mr. Edwards, I must insist upon your going in and taking a bite with us on this joyful occasion."

"It's too joyful, sir; it's too joyful; and can I be waiting here while that blessed mother and her daughters are sitting with sorrowful hearts, and watching through the long hours of the night?"

"I think, Mr. Tightbody, that if you will remain, both Mr. Edwards and myself will accompany you home; he is to be here this evening to make arrangements for an early start on the morrow."

The little man was much perplexed. He would have preferred being the bearer of the joyful intelligence alone; but he did not see how he could well oppose the suggestion of Mr. Wharton. He therefore bowed low, and merely replying, "At your service, gentlemen," entered the dwelling of Theodore, which was close at hand.

CHAPTER XX.

THE shades of night were just closing in, as Edwards and his attendant were landed on the opposite shore. The stage house stood upon the high ground, a little back from the

river, and could only be distinguished, through the large trees which surrounded it, by the light from two of its windows. He threaded his way along the winding path which led up to the house, followed at some distance by his attendant, whom he had previously instructed should not be seen by Rudolph, if it proved that he was still there.

James could not help feeling a little trepidation as he found himself drawing near the place where he had reason to suppose the unhappy young man then was. The opinion Mr. Augustus Hunt had expressed concerning him and the fears of Sarah, made an impression on his mind, in spite of all his efforts to believe that they were groundless, or, at least, greatly magnified by their imagination. The place and time were also calculated to add to any little feeling of gloom. The deep shadows of the large trees which lined the path he was treading, the stillness which reigned around were rendered more striking, in contrast with the din of the city he had just left. The waves gently breaking along the rocky shore, the distant hum that came softly over the waters, were the only sounds that broke the silence of this lonely spot. As he approached the building, a long, low house, he saw a light but from one end, which proved to be the bar-room. He entered without knocking. The bar-keeper was sitting before the fire, and two or three men, apparently stage drivers and ostlers, were resting on the benches in different parts of the room. The former at once turned towards him.

"Is there a young man here from the city, intending to take the stage in the morning?"

"There is a young man here who expects to take the early stage, but where he is from, I don't know."

"Is he about the house?"

"He has gone to his room; he asked for a light a few minutes since."

"Can you show me the room?"

The young man hesitated a moment.

"Why, yes; I can show you the room."

He took a light and led the way into a small passage, and from thence into what appeared to be the hall of the house. Several doors opened into it, to one of which James

was directed; he knocked gently, and a voice, which he recognized as Rudolph's called,

"Who's there?"

"A friend; James—James Edwards."

The door was immediately opened, and Rudolph stood before him; his brow was knit, and his whole countenance stern and cold.

"May I ask your special business in thus intruding upon me?"

"I come as a friend, Mr. Hunt."

"Indeed! then why so formal; Rudolph, you have always called me."

"Pardon that inadvertence, Rudolph, but believe me that as a friend I have sought you."

"Come in, then, and be seated."

James took a chair, and Rudolph, closing the door, locked it and put the key in his pocket. James noticed the act, and, for an instant, unpleasant thoughts rushed into his mind; but they could not rest there; strong in the consciousness of the purity of his intentions, his mind retained its firmness. Rudolph did not take a seat, but kept walking about the room, apparently attending to matters connected with his departure, for James heard him clasp the lock of his valise and fasten it; he, at length, walked up to where James was sitting.

"You say you have come as a friend; may I know what your friendly designs are?" As he said this, he did not look at Edwards, but kept his eye fixed upon a piece of paper which he was folding, evidently with no other design than that of affording a diversion to his sight from an object that was not agreeable to him. He shrunk from the clear, honest gaze of Edwards.

James arose and extended his hand, but Rudolph did not notice the act, or did not wish to commit himself.

"Believe me, Rudolph, I have no feelings towards you but those of perfect kindness, and my errand to you now is an errand of love."

"Edwards, I don't want any of your cant; it may answer for young girls and old women; but I tell you, candidly, I don't want to hear it; you have come here, I suppose, to condole with me, that through you I have become

an outcast from society." Rudolph's voice grew harsher and louder as he said this, and he turned his face full upon Edwards; a contemptuous sneer was visible, as well as fierce and deadly passion; his brow was knit, his eye distended, and his teeth compressed.

"What is there you can bring by way of consolation to me?"

"I bring you, Rudolph, my forgiveness, and you cannot but feel that you have endeavored to do me a dreadful evil; but I most heartily forgive it all; and I bring you a message from your uncles, that may give you hope for the future."

"You bring me forgiveness! And who asked your pardon? You tell me that my uncles may still aid me, and perhaps through your intercession? You who have wormed yourself into favor with those whose friendship was my birthright, and have now come to triumph in my misery."

"Rudolph, you do me great injustice, and you know you do. God is my witness that I have ever shunned to injure you, and my sole object here to-night is—"

"Edwards, your words are idle, they are wasted upon me; this world is not wide enough to contain us both; take that, and defend yourself," drawing a pistol from his breast and handing it to James, at the same instant cocking another and taking deadly aim. "I shall count five, and fire; so be quick."

James was horror stricken for a moment, but as Rudolph began to count, he threw the pistol which had been put into his hands, across the room, and rushed towards Rudolph to wrest the other from his murderous grasp. But Rudolph anticipated his attempt and fired. James fell to the floor; Rudolph sprang to the window, opened it, seized his valise, and was out in an instant.

The noise of the pistol soon brought the members of the family to the door; as it was locked, and no answer made to their call, it was burst open. James lay weltering in blood, and apparently dead or dying. They however raised him and placed him upon the bed, and by using what means they had on hand to revive him, he was enabled to give some directions; his attendant was dispatched to the city to inform

his friends and order medical aid, and an express was sent to bring his mother and sisters.

Mr. Tightbody was beginning to be very impatient, as the evening was wearing away, and James had not made his appearance, when a loud knock at the street door, and a hasty call for Mr. Wharton, as soon as the servant opened it, started the two gentlemen, who were deeply engaged in conversation. Theodore immediately stepped into the passage.

"The man wants the Rev. Mr. Wharton."

"Mr. Wharton is here, do you wish to see him?"

"He is wanted at Mr. Hunt's as soon as possible; there is some great trouble, and they wish him to come as quick as he can."

Mr. Timothy did not exactly understand the nature of the summons which Mr. Wharton had so suddenly received, but was glad of an opportunity to slip off, inwardly resolving that nothing should any longer impede his progress towards home. His mind was glowing with the glorious idea of being the first to communicate the good tidings. He had not relished the plan which Mr. Wharton had proposed, and would, in some way, have willingly declined it. He was not by nature or habit a waterman, and when he reached the ferry stairs, and saw how dark the night looked, and how very black was the water, except where the white caps occasionally glittered in the distance, giving tokens of a fresh breeze upon the open stream, he heartily wished that he had started earlier.

"Rather a fresh breeze to-night!" As he said this the boatmen were resting on their oars, and waiting for their passenger, the only one who was to cross.

"It's a gittin' late, and if all's ready, we're off."

Mr. Timothy sprang in, hastily took the seat assigned him, and putting one hand on each side of the boat, held on with a tight grasp.

"There seems to be considerable wind!"

"It's a freshenin' up some; there'll be more a stirrin' afore we get over."

And it was just as they said. Mr. Timothy was much tossed in spirit, although he made out to keep his body well fastened by the strong braces he had thrown out on each side.

There is a feeling of security, which one has when first treading on the solid ground after a little uncertain rolling and pitching upon the treacherous deep, that is truly delightful, and the more so, if there should have been any little misgivings as to the perfect safety of our situation. When Mr. Timothy got fairly out of the "cockle shell," as he was pleased to denominate the little craft which had borne him safely "o'er the ferry," and felt that he was in very deed upon something that could bear his weight without dodging and twisting under him, his spirits were so animated, he felt that he could even drive past the "Devil's Dancing Place" (a spot that he must pass on the road, which had ugly stories told about it), and fear nothing.

Mr. Timothy was a careful man, as well in the matter of expense as in regard to the safety of his person. It was the custom in those days, and it may be in these, but it was very much so then, for public houses to have sheds near their premises, appropriated to the use of such customers as preferred to carry their own provender for the beasts they drove, and as the care of such teams was not a matter of concern to the owner of the premises, the building was often at a little remove from the barns and sheds where every thing was under the keeping of the ostlers of the tavern.

Mr. Timothy usually carried his own provender; he had also, this day, thought best to bring with him that plague of his life, Pomp, and he did it, as he said, to "keep him out of mischief," although it might, perhaps, be as near the truth to say that he expected to ride home in the dark, and through places where a "black varmint" might be better company than one's own thoughts; at any rate, Pomp was brought along, and put in charge of the horses and the barouche attached under the shed, which happened, in the present instance, to be at some distance from the house, and at the corner of a road that ran directly to the ferry.

"And now do you mind, Pomp, and hear me! As the sun goes down, take the oats from the bag that lies there away under the fore seat, and divide it between them."

"Yes, massa, me will."

"And then, do you sit in the carriage, you hear!"

"Yes, massa, me hear ebory word."

"Do you sit in the carriage, and watch them till they are done, and no be scurrying round the neighborhood. I shall be back anon, and gin I catch you off the seat or hereabouts, won't I finger you!"

"Yes, massa, me hear 'em."

And thus Mr. Timothy left matters—Pomp making strong promises of obedience, and thinking the while what a nice time he should have in disposing of a little basket of sundries which Ma'am Bet had carefully put up for him.

It had become, to use Mr. Tightbody's own words, "exceeding dark," and the lights which shone from the house were not of much use beyond the line of trees which surrounded it, as only an occasional glimmer could be seen through the openings in the thick branches. They served, however, to give Mr. Timothy the bearing of the localities in the vicinity, and he walked bravely on, although, as the grounds were ascending, not at a very rapid rate. Soon he saw a dark object ahead, which he knew to be the goal at which he was aiming, and towards which, as the obstacle of the hill had been surmounted and the way was level, he progressed rapidly. All at once, however, he stopped, and if it could have been possible just then to take cognizance of the matter, it would have been seen that Mr. Timothy was very pale. His eyes had for some time been widely stretched, in order to take in all the rays of light that were to be had; but now he opened them, if possible, wider still; then he rubbed them, and peering into the mist before him, began to feel the cold chills creeping up his back, and the hat fairly moving on his head.

He would have spoken, but the creature was one of such a questionable appearance that he really felt unable to do so; and it was very near to him. Nothing separated them but the little ditch which ran by the side of the road, Mr. Timothy being in the middle of the road, and the object which thus alarmed him standing by the fence, and apparently holding fast to it. Mr. Timothy had never heard of black ghosts, but if there could be such things, he would have said that it was the spirit of Pomp. The same size, the same odd shape, only

it had a queer little white garment on, that was not at all fitted as a covering for daylight or decent company. The road near this struck off to the stage house, and Mr. Timothy, after standing a while and gazing at the spectre, his thoughts by no means becoming more reconciled to its appearance, very gently, and by almost an imperceptible movement, began to move towards the house. Could it be possible! was he correct!—was the thing really advancing towards him! He quickened his pace; but there it was, keeping about the same distance, and moving along after him with noiseless steps.

It was no time for trifling; he made more speed; skipped once or twice. The creature gained upon him; he started into a race, and just then a whisper came upon the cold night air, "Massa." Mr. Timothy fairly flew, and without stopping for leave or license, burst in all his trepidation straight into the bar-room.

The room was, by this time, well filled, for the report of the tragedy which had been enacted that evening had spread through the neighborhood.

"What the dickens is the matter now?" said a fat old gentleman, who started from his chair and held it up before him, while all were more or less agitated, and looked at the intruder in a very inquisitive manner.

Mr. Timothy was too much out of breath to do any thing in the way of explaining matters. He walked up to the bar, and then from that to the fire-place, and so around the room, until it became a matter of doubt with some whether he was not a subject for some lunatic asylum, and had just escaped. Presently he stopped near to the fat old gentleman, above mentioned, and they both looked at each other for some little time without speaking.

"You have ran hard, sir! Any thing happened?—been frightened?"

"Oh, no—oh, no, not at all."

"You came in such a kind of a hurry, neighbor, that I didn't know what was to pay; and seeing there's been such doings here a'ready to-night, it kind a startled me; one murder is enough for one night."

"What!—what is it you say? Murder!—was it a—black?"

"No, it isn't jist a murder yet, but p'rhaps it may turn out

something like it; aint you heered of the young man as was shot in this very house not an hour ago."

"Shot!"

"Yes, shot with a pistol, and the fellow's cleared out."

"Hulloa, hulloa, bring out a light here, some of you."

All rushed to the door, for the call was a very loud one, and the maker of it seemed to be alarmed.

"What is it, Bill?" called out one of the foremost.

"Bring a light here quick, will you; get out, you devil you," and the man, with his hat off, flew through the door, all making way for him, while just behind him, and clinging to his coat tail, was a small-sized negro, all head and legs, and no body; he was under bare poles, with no mortal covering but a white under garment.

There was great confusion in the bar-room, and some even went out at the first opening that presented itself. Mr Timothy was not lucky enough to get out, so he brought up in one corner, and there stood, casting a look of the most unreserved astonishment at the poor object that had thus pounced into the room.

The fat old gentleman who had been talking with Mr Timothy still kept fast hold of the chair, and as it happened that the black creature made towards him, and tried to get behind him, he raised his weapon aloft, and was going to make sad work with somebody's head, when his hand was arrested by Mr. Timothy.

"There's no danger, sir, no danger; I know him."

"You do, hey!"

"I do, sir; there is some great mistake. Pomp! how is this!—what do you mean, running round in this shape, and—and—alarming folks; where are your clothes, sir?"

"Golly massa, me don't know."

"Don't know! What business had you to strip yourself in this shape?"

"Me no do it, massa; him do it all; strip all clean off."

"Pomp don't lie, now; tell me the truth." Pomp had squatted down, and was trying to make the most of what little covering he had; he raised one hand.

"It's livin' trut, massa; he take 'em all off, and den he drive de carriage and horses. Whew! dey go spankin', just like de wind."

"My ——! Pomp! Gentlemen—a lamp—a lantern! Will any of you go with me? The carriage and horses gone! Where?—who took them?—you black scoundrel, tell me quick, or I'll take every bit of skin off you. Who took them?"

Mr. Timothy looked round for the man who had gone for a lantern.

"He's a coming, sir," said the fat gentleman, "but I think now, sir, I can unravel this whole mystery. You left a barouche and span of horses under the shed at the corner, in charge of this—this—boy, or man, I don't know which; he looks like a little of both; didn't you, sir?"

"I did, sir, and a fine span it is too."

"Exactly so; that fellow who shot the man in this house has, no doubt, taken the liberty to take a ride with that same span; they will help him on his way pretty considerable fast; now, that is my guess."

Mr. Timothy seized the lantern, and bestowing his overcoat upon Pomp, went forth to see what was to be seen.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. EDWARDS and her two daughters had passed a day of mental agony; they could do nothing to aid him on whom their earthly hopes rested, and could only wait with patience the result, whatever it might be.

When the noble ship is caught by the mighty tempest, and the waves are tossing in their fury, and the winds howl through the thick cordage, tear the strong sails from their fastenings, and snap the towering masts, it fills the soul with admiration to behold the fearless crew, far off on the bare spars, clinging to the flying ropes, and rocking aloft through the driving storm as the swaying masts careen far over the boiling sea.

But not less of mortal daring and true manly courage does it require, to keep the steady watch far down in the

depths of the heaving ship, to feel the heavy plunge, and hear, far up, the roaring of the mighty tumult.

That widow had, long since, learned to nestle within the covert of that Rock, which shelters from the cruel storm and the scorching heat.

Through the long hours of that day, her spirit raised its trembling eye above. Earth had no resting place for her hope. Its enjoyments for the future were all trembling on the poise; and so she looked away from them; high to the throne above she lifted her strong desires; and, at times she almost thought her humbled heart was ready for the deadliest blow. But as the shades of evening gathered, and the night came on; as the hour approached when, possibly, tidings might come—tidings, whose thrilling notes must pierce the very depths of her soul, the mother was again alive within, and her yearning spirit swayed to and fro, through the long sweep that separates hope and despair.

It was at the dead hour of midnight, when her watching ear heard the distant rumbling of a carriage. Nearer and nearer it approached; her very heart rested its beat; it stopped at the gate, and in an instant more, a loud knocking at the door aroused each inmate of the little family.

"Does Mrs. Edwards live here?" said a young man to the widow herself, who had gone calmly forward to meet the messenger of weal or woe.

"She does; I am Mrs. Edwards." The face of the youth paled as he looked into her beautiful, yet sorrow-stricken countenance.

"Your son, madam, has sent for you to come to him immediately; he has been severely injured, and may not recover."

"Injured! How? By what means? Tell me—tell me quick."

"Indeed, madam, I can tell you but little about it; I was sent off in great haste. He has been shot by some person, and is now lying very low at the stage house, near the ferry, opposite New-York."

"How has the trial terminated? Can you tell me?"

"I know nothing about it, madam."

To describe the conflict of contending thoughts and feelings, is not within the power of a common pen. The effect

produced, was that which often fills the soul, when amid the war of elements, an awe pervades it that hushes all other feelings into quiet. God, in his terrible might, seems near, and man must be still.

The mother and sisters looked at each other in calm, mute agony, and at once prepared to go on their sad journey.

Mr. Wharton, accompanied by Theodore, was soon at the mansion of Mr. Hunt; a carriage was in waiting at the door, and there was an appearance of confusion in the passage as though persons were preparing to depart.

As they entered the dwelling, Sarah flew to Mr. Wharton.

"Oh, Mr. Wharton! James!—James!" She almost fell into his arms, and her feelings broke forth in sobs and tears.

Mr. Augustus Hunt saw the agonized look of Mr. Wharton, and immediately led him one side, and in a few words communicated the heart-rending intelligence.

"The Lord's will be done." He stepped up to Sarah, and affectionately embracing her, "Let us be still, my child; this last evil is not worse than the first. We can better afford to lose our dear James, than to see him an outcast with a stain of deep disgrace on his character for life; better death than an ignominious doom. But let us hasten to him."

"My dear uncle, I must go; you will not refuse me!"

"You shall go, my darling."

They were soon at the ferry; the night was dark, and the heavy waves rolled along by the sea-breeze, which was now quite fresh, dashed against the long piers, as their little boat shot into the open stream; not a word was passed from one of the little company; thoughts too engrossing held each bosom in close communion with itself. The rough water upon which they tossed, and the spray that occasionally flew over them, they heeded not, but it seemed a long, long time before the rowers raised their oars, and moored on the opposite shore.

As they entered the dwelling, the first inquiry was,

"Is the young man alive?"

"He is."

The surgeon, accompanied by his assistant, immediately repaired to the room where James was still lying.

Mr. Wharton, Mr. Augustus Hunt, Sarah, and Theodore retired to await the professional report.

How much of life is sometimes compressed within a short half hour! What thrilling anxieties work up the very depths of the soul! raising the excited feelings, now upon the pinnacle of hope, and now plunging it down—down to darkness and gloom, like the shadows of the grave!

At length the foot of the surgeon was heard approaching the room. Every eye was fixed with eloquent intensity upon him as he opened the door; but not a sign could they read upon his calm, cold countenance.

"He has had a narrow escape!"

"Then you think he can possibly recover, Doctor!" said Mr. Wharton, stepping up to him.

"Yes, sir; I think he will undoubtedly recover, but he must be kept quiet; he has lost much blood."

Mr. Wharton and Sarah were first permitted to enter the sick chamber.

The door was opened by the attendant, and they stood by the side of him they loved so much, and looked upon his pallid countenance, almost marked with the lineaments of death. No word was spoken. He looked up at Sarah and smiled. She stooped over him, and kissed his fair forehead, and then whispered in his ear,

"I shall stay with you, James."

It was ascertained that the express which had been sent for Mrs. Edwards and her daughters, would probably arrive by nine o'clock the next morning, and Mr. Wharton, anxious to relieve their troubled minds, resolved upon an early start, that he might meet them on their way.

That morning broke in all the beauty of a clear, bright sky and bracing air; as the yellow streaks of light were shooting up from the east, this true-hearted friend stepped forth to go on his errand of love. James had slept well; he was much refreshed, and all danger was felt to be past; the joyful hope that filled the breast of Mr. Wharton, inspired him with the elasticity of youth, and five miles were soon passed over, and he had reached the tavern where he designed to await the little company of mourners. A car

riage, driven rapidly, was soon descried, and he advanced beyond the premises, as he wished not to expose to the public gaze the intense emotions of that agonized group. As the vehicle approached, he motioned the driver to stop. His cheerful countenance at once inspired their hopes.

"Oh, Mr. Wharton! Mr. Wharton! James lives?"

"Yes; he lives and will no doubt recover. All is well, praise God, my dear madam, your son is cleared from every blot upon his name, and his body, we trust, will soon be healed of the injury he has received."

Silently the mother's heart sent forth its gushing notes of praise to Him whose power and presence she had so long, so ardently implored, and then its fulness was poured out in tears of holy joy; fondly the lovely sisters clasped their mother in their arms, and mingled the overflowing of their happy hearts with hers.

Soon was the distance passed that separated them from the spot towards which their yearnings would have hastened the speed of an angel's wing.

As they entered the hall of the house, Sarah was there with her bright smile to meet the new friends of her heart.

Mary hastened towards her.

"Is this Sarah?"

"And is this Mary?"

And they were clasped together in a fond embrace.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Edwards, as she folded the happy, noble girl to her heart, "may heaven's best blessings rest upon your noble conduct to my dear James."

CHAPTER XXII.

It cannot be denied that the great city has enlarged itself during the last forty years, and that great changes have taken place in the character of its buildings, and the style of living among its inhabitants.

Whether these changes are upon the whole for the best, it is scarcely worth the trouble to inquire; because all the

reasoning of philosophers will not avail to place things as they have been.

But with those who remember the city forty years since, there must remain an impression of substantial comfort, of good home-living, which does not strike the mind from the establishments of the present day. There was then a very pleasant and convenient agreement between the place of business and the house. It was often but a flight of stairs, or the turning of one or two corners, and the cold details of the counting-house were exchanged for the smiles and heart-enticing scenes of the domestic fire-side.

There had been considerable "fixing" to do about a plain, but substantial-looking house, in one of the lower streets. I do not mean by this that the front was taken down, and a new one, ornamented with sculptured stone, run up in its place. But the wooden stoop was taken away, and some stone steps with a plain iron railing, substituted; the broken brick pavement was removed and replaced with brown flagging. Outside as well as inside, carpenters and painters were busy putting a new face upon things, until the dusky appearance of the premises had vanished, and a light and cheerful aspect was thrown over all its parts; and as the passer by would cast a glance through the long entry to the snug back building, that rested so quietly in the large and shaded yard, and then into the spacious rooms, shining in their new dress, and showing, with all the freshness of their first days, the ornamental carvings that ran over the folding-door and above the fire-place, an impression was at once received, that it was a very comfortable place for any one to make a home in.

This work had been going on during the month of April, and by the first of May, I do not mean the first day of May, but early in that month, there were, for several days, occasional loads of furniture deposited at the door and carried off into the interior of the building. A few females and an elderly gentleman could be clearly seen arranging things in the different rooms; until, finally, every thing seemed to be completed, for the dust was swept out of the front door, down the steps (there were only two of them), and finally out into the gutter. The pavement was then washed off,

and the whole place looked as though it was in readiness to receive company.

May is, in general, a beautiful month; it has its squalls, and showers, and sometimes its chilly days; but it has bright suns that send their gladdening warmth not only upon the opening flower, but even to the very heart of man. It has sparkling days, such as inspire hope, and love, and kindly feeling; they thaw away the frosts of winter, and free nature from her icy chain. Few can feel gloomy on a bright, warm May day.

It was on one of these days, the brightest that *some* ever remember to have seen, about nine o'clock in the morning, two carriages filled with smiling faces stopped at the door of the said house, and more than one neighbor stepped to their window to see what was going on.

From the first carriage an elderly gentleman alighted; the same who had been seen superintending the repairs, &c.; he was easily recognized, for he had a remarkably round face, and his eyes twinkled very fast; any one who had once seen the face, would be apt to remember it. But he was now arrayed in quite a gala dress, for he had on a blue coat and brass buttons, drab cassimer small-clothes, and white top boots. He sprang in a lively manner from the carriage and gave his hand to a beautiful girl; she needed, however, but little assistance, for she came forth with the grace of a fawn, and bounded up the steps and into the house as though the very stones had each a spring to send her forward.

And next, he handed forth a lady of more advanced years, although from the ease and elasticity of her step, she might, doubtless, have equalled the younger in rapidity of movement. But her demeanor was staid, elegant, and in perfect keeping with the manners of one who might have reached the age of forty.

Taking his hat, which was a broad-brimmed beaver, from his head, the elderly gentleman gave his arm to this last-described lady, and she ascended with him into the house.

The second carriage now drove up, and a young man, well dressed, stepped out, and gave his hand to the lady who had been sitting beside him. He certainly seemed proud as she took his arm and entered the house, and well he might

be, for a lovelier girl of nineteen could not have been found in many an assemblage of earth's beautiful ones.

And from that same carriage, there then came forth another young man of fair form and manly look. His countenance was rather pale, but it may have appeared so in contrast with his hair which was so very black, and his eye, so keen and vivid. He gave his hand to another fair one by whom he had been seated; but in an instant the elderly gentleman was by the carriage.

"Sally, dear, lean on my arm; James must not exert himself."

"Oh! I do not lean on him, uncle; see, I help support him, although he will not acknowledge that he needs any assistance."

The young man smiled at the dear one who clung to his arm, and who evidently was not an oppressive burden to it, as they ascended the steps.

As the last pair entered the house, the old gentleman closed the door and the carriages drove off.

For a short time there was a going about by all the parties from room to room, and from one nook and corner to another, until the whole had been surveyed; when the two young persons who had entered the house last, and for whom all this preparation had been made, came up, walking arm-in-arm, to the old gentleman as he stood reclining against the mantel shelf, and looking about with a very happy and contented air.

The young man put forth his hand, and it was grasped in a very friendly manner, while the lovely fair one by his side threw both her arms around the neck of the old man, silently weeping tears of happiness.

"Mr. Hunt, I know not what to say, nor how to express the emotions which fill my heart; your kindness has followed me so long, has been manifested in so many ways, and especially in this last token of it—this beautiful house, which you have fitted up with so much care."

"Not a word, James, not a word, you will be good children to me; I have no fear of it."

"We have now, my dear sir, but one more wish, to make our happiness complete; and it is this, that you will conclude to make this house your home; Sarah and I pledge

to you all that two faithful children can do, to make you happy."

A moment he wiped away the tears which had started freely as James spoke.

"I have made up my mind so to do; here, I wish to live and die; but every thing here is yours, and at your disposal. You and Sarah are sole master and mistress. God bless you."

The little party that witnessed this scene of domestic interest, was each one a deeply concerned spectator.

It was the bridal party of James Edwards and his beloved Sarah. They had been married the previous evening at the house of Mr. Geordie Hunt, and were now taking possession of their new home.

Mrs. Edwards and her two daughters, Theodore Berry and Mr. Augustus Hunt, had accompanied the happy bride and groom.

Theodore Berry and Mary Edwards had been special attendants upon the wedding ceremony, and there is every reason to believe that, before long, some kind friends will be invited to perform the same happy office for them.

Mrs. Edwards will remain a few days with the happy pair, and then return with her daughters to take possession of the white cottage, which James has purchased for her as a permanent home.

The first happy day had been passed; cheerful lights were throwing their radiance through the ample parlors; Mrs. Edwards and her daughters were seated together upon the sofa, while James and Sarah were walking to and fro recounting some of the scenes upon which their memories loved to dwell.

"Well, my son! I think that I and your sisters can say you have fully redeemed your pledge; faithfully have you provided for us when your means were very small, and now, in your abundance, you have made us rich partakers. That home, which you have purchased for us, will be precious, a thousand fold precious beyond its moneyed value."

"My dear mother, I beg you to make no mention of what I have done; I promised a great deal, and have had a disposition to do as I engaged; but my own agency has been

very trifling. The Lord has brought about all this, and I have been but a mere instrument in his hand."

"Yes, James, that is all true. The Lord has raised you up friends, and shielded you from enemies. He has blessed you as few young men are blessed; you have the present comforts of life and the prospect of future wealth. But I wish your dear Sarah joy in the husband she has chosen, more from what I know of your devotion as a son, than for all your other bright prospects."

"And, my dear mother," said Sarah, as she took the hand of Mrs. Edwards, and looked up with all her lovely spirit beaming from her bright countenance, "I value him more on that account, than for all the wealth we have in prospect; it was the support of my confidence in my darkest day, and it was the foundation of my joy when, last evening, I united myself for ever to him."

THE MINISTER'S STORY.

PREFACE.

SOME years since it was my privilege to be for a few weeks the guest of one of our old-fashioned pastors; one of a race that seems to be fast passing out of existence. The place where he lived was one of the towns in the old aristocratic State of New Jersey—a farming community in general; but there were a few wealthy families among them who had inherited their property from original proprietors, and always maintained a standing to which the more common inhabitants looked up with a certain kind of deference; with much outward respect. Some of these families were still possessed of large landed property; but others, although still dwelling in substantial edifices and with the signs of wealth about them and the bearing of men of substance, were materially cramped in means and obliged to submit to the degradation of borrowing on the security of mortgage in order to maintain the style of living to which from childhood they had been accustomed. The circle in which they moved was confined to those of their own class, or to such professional men as might be located in the vicinity. The minister, of course, whether of the Episcopal or Presbyterian order, was always included, although, for the most part, they belonged to the former, or as it was then called, the English Church. As they were not, on the whole, lavish in their expenditure for religious services, it often happened that for some years at a time there would be no settled rector over their small church, and the Rev. Mr. R., of the Presbyterian order, was often called upon for such services as might be required at a sick or dying bed.

Mr. R., or rather Dr. R.—for he had received that title from his old Alma Mater at Princeton, and well did he deserve the honor—had been for nearly forty years settled over the people of his charge, and was, at the time of my visit, probably in his seventieth year, a hale and almost robust man; his size a little above the medium; his frame well proportioned; his countenance fresh, and with scarcely a wrinkle on his full open forehead; his hair may have been sprinkled with grey, but as he followed the fashion of his early day for men of his years, the white powder concealed that fact and added materially to the dignity of his appearance. His dress was truly ministerial, of the old style, but always in perfect trim. His gait, whether in his own neat home or when walking through the town, was staid and regular—in keeping with the gravity of his countenance and with the serious work which he was called to perform. Naturally of a genial turn of mind, he would, most likely, in any other calling, have been distinguished for liveliness of manner—for the sharp repartee or the laughter-provoking joke; but all this had, no doubt, been brought under wholesome restraint, and his whole deportment, whether at home or among his people, was in keeping with his responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel. There seemed to be a strong attachment, and mutual, between himself and his flock; at least there was manifest, on the part of the latter, the most profound respect. It was a very pleasant sight to me, as I accompanied him and his lovely partner on the few Sabbaths I spent there to the House of God, to witness the manner in which they were received on their approach to the door of the sanctuary. As is very common in the country, there were always quite a number of persons collected outside, who, no doubt, were indulging the natural propensity to social converse, either about the common news of the town or the state and prospects of their crops. The moment the pastor and his lady entered the little gate that opened into the enclosure which surrounded the House of God, every tongue would be hushed—the way cleared for their approach, and every hat on each side of the path removed, a

gentle obeisance given by those nearest to them, acknowledged and returned by the pastor, and then, with noiseless steps, all followed to their seats in the sanctuary.

During my stay there it was my privilege to accompany him on some of his rides in visiting the people, and occasionally he made a call upon some of the families already mentioned, who were not under his immediate charge. Our reception was very cordial; the Doctor was evidently a favorite visitor, and one whom they felt bound to honor with their best courtesies.

"Do these persons attend your ministrations from the pulpit?" I asked, after having left a family that appeared extremely desirous of tendering the hospitalities of their noble mansion.

"No, sir. They would, I believe, if it could be so that I could officiate in their pulpit, have no hesitation in listening to me; but their sensibilities would be seriously affected by coming to our place of worship and finding themselves seated, perhaps, by the man who had been employed to do work on their farms. But we must not judge them too severely upon this account. Great allowance must be made for the force of education; many of them have great reverence for divine things, and it is this principle which troubles such in regard to our worship—to them it does not seem sufficiently ceremonious; in other words, not so respectful to the Divine Being as it ought to be; and while I am not disposed to allow that their views about such matters are altogether correct, yet it does not surprise me that persons educated to the beautiful ritual of the English Church should very much object to our bare nakedness."

After riding a mile or two from the last-mentioned place, I observed some noble trees apparently lining an avenue, and although the grounds seemed to be entirely neglected, yet the situation was commanding; it embraced an extended sweep of country, very picturesque, if not decidedly beautiful.

"Is there a dwelling on those premises?" I asked.

"Yes, but no inhabitant; there may, indeed, be some poor

family occupying a part of it that is habitable, but it is almost a perfect ruin. Once, and within my recollection, it was one of the grand old buildings which our wealthy progenitors erected, no doubt, with the idea naturally imbibed from the mother country, that it, with its immense domain, would descend for many, many generations to those of their own loins who should come after them. We must pass through the gate, however, before we can have a view of the house; the trees and shrubs have grown so luxuriantly, with no owner to care for them, that they altogether shut in the house, and I sometimes imagine that nature wished to cover from public view a place where her laws were so grossly violated. I wish you to see the place, for the reason that I design to give you a sketch which I made some years since of the inhabitants of this mansion, and of scenes, some of which I was a witness to. I think, as you are engaged more or less with your pen in catering for the public, you might probably make use of it, which I shall never do."

After thanking him most cordially for the intended gift, he went on to say:

"A minister has an opportunity to make sketches of interest from real life which few in other professions are allowed. I acknowledge that, in general, the pastor should be a faithful 'father confessor,' and bury within his own bosom the secrets revealed to him; but there are events transpiring within the circle of his intimacies which are not positively secrets. They are known to the community, only he may have been admitted to a knowledge of transactions which no other outsiders enjoyed, and I can see no harm, if he goes not into improper details, why the results of his acquaintance with peculiar scenes should not be used by him as illustrations of divine truth. I have never yet made any further than a very general use of such materials, but I have kept records of many things I have witnessed during my ministry, and, in some cases, have written out at length, in the form of a story, the most striking ones. Perhaps," turning his fine countenance, brightened by a smile,

"I may put a few of them into your hands. There, now, you have a fair view of the premises."

So absorbed was I at the time by the offer he was making to me, which I considered a real God-send, that I had not noticed that we had passed all obstructions and the house was full before us.

It was, indeed, as he had said, almost a ruin; and a ruin of what had once been a noble edifice. It was a solid brick building of large dimensions, and well proportioned—the walls apparently as firm as ever, the woodwork alone having suffered from decay, and part of it from the effect of fire.

"Was," I asked, "fire the cause of its injuries?"

"The first cause, no doubt; but the damage done in that way could have been soon repaired had there been any one who cared enough about the place to have done so; the fire opened a passage for the other elements, and they have about completed the wreck.

"What a noble portico that must have been in its prime! and that heavily-moulded cornice! Part of it, I see, hangs yet to the eaves. I can well realize the effect of the whole to give an air substantial and agreeable to the eye; it was not showy—rather plain and rich."

"Just so; it made that impression upon me whenever I looked at it; and the same idea was conveyed as I entered the house or walked through any part of it. These old English friends of ours, of which this was an imitation, had more just ideas of permanent beauty in house-building than I see displayed in our country at the present day. I wish you now to look upon the house and all its surroundings; yonder are the ruins of its noble barns; the fire which injured the dwelling originated there, completely destroying all but the foundations, and sweeping numberless outhouses out of existence. I wish you to take in the whole scene, that you may be thoroughly impressed by the idea of blasting and curse which, to my mind, it presents. I sometimes think of the passage in Proverbs descriptive of the scene which the vineyard of the sluggard and

the man void of understanding presented to the writer; but it is not strictly applicable in this case; it is more like the effect of God's wrath upon guilty Babylon. Look upon it, however, and consider it well; when you read its history, you will be at no loss to account for its present condition."

That evening, for I was to depart on the morrow, the kind-hearted gentleman handed me quite a bundle of manuscripts; and I imagine he must have been not a little amused with my manifestations of gratitude for the gift. I felt as if a treasure of untold value had been showered upon me. I was but a young writer then, and with little experience of that mighty bugbear, the great public. I have grown wiser since, and less confident; and yet, from a careful perusal of those manuscripts, I cannot but think that, to many readers, they will prove acceptable—at least they will feel that their time was not altogether thrown away in the perusal.

"You will, of course," said my friend, as he took my hand to say "good-bye," "transcribe these writings and put them in your own dress—I merely offer them to you as texts."

THE MINISTER'S STORY.

CHAPTER I.

Nor long after my settlement in the town of ———, I was one day interrupted in the midst of sermon-writing by the entrance of my aged housekeeper in great haste into my study (I was not then married). As I was just about to finish a sentence, I did not immediately look up, and the good woman, perhaps fearing she had done wrong in not giving the proper token in a knock, stood in the open door-way and said nothing. Having fastened the thoughts which were then upon my mind so they could not give me the slip, I laid down my pen, saying:

"What is it, Jane?"

"Oh! I ask pardon for not knocking; but I was in such haste!"

"Has anything happened, Jane?"

"Nothing much, sir; but the coach that belongs to the great folks, the Stanleys, has driven up, and the gentleman is coming in; and I thought maybe you would like to be a little trim, and put on your best; you know they are our great quality folks—there he is a knocking now!"

"Well, Jane, please ask him into the parlor; and if he wishes to see me, let me know."

Jane soon returned, quite out of breath.

"It is—it is the Squire himself, and he says he would be

happy to see the Rev. Mr. R——, if he was in. I told him yes, you was in, and I would let you know."

"Please say to him, Jane, I will wait upon him immediately."

"I will, sir; but you will put on your best; can't I help in no way?"

"No, I thank you, Jane; I shall only need to change my dressing-gown for my coat. I think I can do that without help." But I doubt whether the good old soul thought so; for she still lingered, fearing no doubt that I should appear before the great man not in just the right trim. I did not sympathize very decidedly in the feeling which Jane manifested, and cared little about how I appeared in the gentleman's presence beyond that of the poorest of my parishioners. I had laid it down as one of my rules that, as a minister of the Gospel, my personal appearance in the matter of dress should always be that of respectability, whether in the presence of the poor or the rich, and as carefully so for the former as the latter.

On entering the room, a portly gentleman arose, and, bowing quite stiffly, announced himself as Mr. Stanley. I received him with as much grace as I was at the time able to manifest toward one who seemed by no means ready for anything beyond a mere civility. I begged him to be seated, and took the same liberty for myself; and, as it was very evident that his call was not one of a social character, I awaited patiently his revelation of the business "which had induced so rich and distinguished an individual to enter the plain domicile of a poor minister;" for his whole bearing evidently led to such a construction. He was, as I have said, a portly gentleman; although, in the matter of height, I had somewhat the advantage of him; and being at the time in full health, and with no burden of care to press down the natural elasticity of youth, I could not but imagine that my appearance took him by surprise; he, as I thought, having never before seen me, anticipated meeting a poor worn-out student, with "woe-begone" written on his coun-

tenance, and humbled enough by straitened circumstances to be immensely flattered by his call, and but too ready to do him homage. Thus I judged at the time, and acted accordingly; and future experience has convinced me that my course and conduct then was the best I could have adopted, had I wished to have gained his respect and consideration—of which, at the time, I was perfectly indifferent.

It was some seconds, at least, that we thus sat in silence together, when the unpleasant situation of affairs was dissipated by his asking me, in rather an abrupt manner:

"You have received, I presume, sir, a classical education?"

"I have, sir."

"From what College did you take your diploma?"

"Nassau Hall, at Princeton."

"I presume, then, you are quite familiar with the classics?"

"I believe I have, sir, a fair acquaintance with them; sufficient, at least, as a foundation for future study."

"You know enough about them to be able to teach them; that is the amount of information I wish to obtain?"

"No doubt I could, if necessary, teach those who have not yet advanced as far as I have."

"You could teach two boys who are just beginning to read Cæsar?"

"I believe my ability would be equal to such a task as that, sir," and in saying this, it is not at all improbable that a slight smile, just then, passed over my features.

"I am not doubting your ability, Rev. sir, nor can I well see how my question deserves a sneer."

"Pardon me, sir, it was not my intent to treat your question with disrespect, but will you allow me, in turn, to ask the reason why the questions you have asked have been put to me at all?"

"The reason, sir, is a very simple one. I am in want of an instructor for my two younger boys—the last minister of our church attended to them, and has led them as far as the first book of Cæsar—but we have no one, at present, officiating in

our Church, and as I have heard your abilities well spoken of, I have taken the liberty of calling and making a proposition to you for that object. The minister has, as I have said, carried them along through the rudiments of Latin, and a little in Greek Grammar; attended upon them at my house twice a week, and spent nearly one-half of each day; he dined with us, of course, and the allowance to him I meant to be liberal, and I believe so he considered it; I gave him one hundred dollars a year for his services, and I am ready, sir, to make the same arrangement with you."

As the manner of the gentleman and the tone of his voice had very materially changed for the better, during this recital of his errand, I, accordingly, felt inclined to meet him, at least, half way, I therefore answered:—

"I thank you, sir, for the proposition you have made; because I not only think the compensation liberal, but I believe you would not desire my services unless you had confidence in my abilities, and would my other duties allow, should take pleasure in the work, but it is out of my power, sir, to meet your wishes."

I saw, at once, that my visitor was not only surprised but disappointed. He coughed a little, and to cloak his embarrassment, took out his gold snuff-box and handed it to me, after helping himself; at the time I had not then learned to use the very common luxury of that day, yet willing to meet every act of civility, on his part, with graciousness, I took a pinch of the finely perfumed article.

"You somewhat surprise me, I must say, sir, by your apparently positive refusal. As I have said, I supposed the compensation was a liberal one, but if you do not think so, fix your own terms, I shall not stand about a trifle."

"I can think of no terms, sir, that would induce me to undertake the task. You must know, sir, that I am but lately settled in the ministry; I have studies to pursue; I have preparations to make for the pulpit; I have a large congregation to visit; at least, my people are scattered through several miles

circuit. What time I have to spare from my study ought to be "consecrated to my calls upon them."

"I thought, sir—you will please pardon the suggestion—that as your salary is but small, it might have been quite an object for you to have some addition to it in this way."

"I have no doubt, sir, that my salary, as a support, may appear small to those who, like yourself, sir, have been accustomed to a large income; but I thought, when I accepted the terms proposed for my settlement, that I could live from them, and I mean to do so. I have, after mature consideration, devoted myself to the work of preaching the Gospel, and in order to do that acceptably to my own conscience, I do not intend to be turned aside from that by any consideration, and I much prefer that my people should pay me a small salary than a large one. The amount they now have to tax themselves for is a mere trifle for each of them. I do not wish them to feel that the Gospel is a burden to them; and as I do not intend to ask favors from them, shall feel at liberty to preach the plain truths of the Gospel, in an independent manner."

"Well, sir, I have nothing further to say, although our short interview has, I must say, much increased my desire that an arrangement, such as I have named, could have been acceptable to you; the fact is, sir, Mrs. Stanley is very much opposed to sending our two younger boys from home, for certain reasons, not worth while now to mention."

As I supposed I knew at the time the reasons for this reluctance on the part of his lady, and perceiving that the gentleman seemed somewhat chagrined at his disappointment, I thought that in order to show my willingness, so far as possible, to gratify him, a compromise might be made that would not materially interfere with my duties, so I, at once, mentioned it. He had just, then, risen to take his departure.

"I am truly sorry, sir, that I cannot, consistently with other engagements, comply with your request; but to show you that I am quite willing to do what I can to suit your wish, I will undertake to hear your sons' recitations twice a week provided

they can come to my house. An hour at a time I can spare without detriment; but I shall hope the young gentlemen will so prepare themselves, that little will be required beyond such assistance as all learners must of necessity receive, and as to compensation, I should prefer not to name it."

"Thank you, sir; I thank you heartily, and am ready to acknowledge that the offer I consider as a favor. To suit your wishes, I will say nothing about compensation, but your services shall not go unrewarded; and now, sir, may I hope soon to have the favor of a visit from you?"

"I believe, sir, according to etiquette, I ought, as a stranger in the place, to receive that favor first from one who is an old resident; did you belong to my parish, the case, of course, would be altered."

"Ay, ay, I see, you are not to be thrown off your independent stand. Well, well, we will let this call of mine pass as a business matter. I acknowledge, sir, that it bears that character, and yet I am glad I made it; you shall be gratified with one of a more friendly nature, and that very soon."

Our parting was very different from that of our meeting, and I had reason to believe that the stand I took was the right one; for, I may as well say it here, during the many after years in which I was, at times, brought into relation with this gentleman, and through scenes of a trying nature, trying to him and to me, he ever treated me with respect, and, I believe, had unbounded confidence in my sincerity.

In a few days after this interview, the gentleman called and introduced his sons, and after examining slightly in what they had learned, I felt rather encouraged that they would prove to be fair scholars, and that I should have but little trouble with the task I had undertaken.

And now, before I enter upon the more stirring events of this narrative, I must give a short account of the Stanley family which will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

As I am not writing a history of myself or family, it will suffice to say that some few years after my settlement I married, and when my wife was brought to the parsonage, there was of course a general calling upon us, not only by the families under my particular charge, but also by all those beyond that circle, who desired to be on visiting terms with us; and among the first was the Stanley family. The result of my attempt to teach the two boys was not as favorable as I could have wished; they were by no means fond of study, and neither of them appeared to me possessed of active minds. To fit them for college with the limited time I could spare for that purpose, I soon saw would be a hopeless undertaking; and I took the occasion afforded by one of the calls made upon me by their father to state candidly what I thought. I knew it was an ungracious task to attempt to convince a father of the disability of his children to pursue a course of study; and I therefore endeavored to persuade the gentleman that it would be much better for the boys to be in some public school, where they could have the stimulus necessary for all young persons, arising from emulation with those of their own age. He no doubt rightly interpreted my advice, for without hesitation he relieved me of the task. His boys, however, I believe were not sent from home. The fact was, they seemed to be devoid of all moral principle; their propensities were low and base; and their taste led them to prefer the company of such as would offer no restraint to their vulgar passions. It was a great

relief to me when freed from all responsibility concerning them.

In many ways, without making efforts, I became in the course of time acquainted with the general character and circumstances of the family. They were wealthy, but it was said that the father of Mr. Stanley had obtained the greater part of his estate by a gross fraud, and that the widow of the person whom he wronged had been reduced to poverty.

The present Mr. Stanley married a lady quite respectably connected, and possessed of wealth, but of a most penurious disposition; although fond of making occasional display, she was also high tempered and at times gave way to fits of passion that bordered upon insanity.

I also learned that the boys who had been under my care, after they became of age, refused to be directed by their father, and in all contests between the two parents—for there were constant rumors of such unnatural events—they always sided with their mother without regard to right or wrong.

Those particulars I mention as preliminary to some events that I had more or less to do with.

They had three sons and two daughters. The young ladies called upon us in company with their mother, and I was never more surprised than when introduced to the younger of the two, a perfect contrast she presented to all the family. One of them only I had not seen, the eldest; and I believe few persons in the town had ever been thus privileged; he for some reason not generally known, although there were many surmises in reference to the matter, kept himself secluded from observation. The family were certainly not gifted with even good looks; the father with his portly form and proud bearing, and always well dressed, might pass with a casual observer without special notice; but with his features at rest and any subject up that might not be perfectly agreeable, its aspect was very severe. Mrs. Stanley might have been different when young, although she never could have been handsome; but when I knew her, there were such marks of evil passions that her smile was an offence

to me; it seemed to disturb the whole face, as though a token of pleasantness was perfectly unnatural. The elder daughter bore a strong resemblance to the mother, but of course in a modified degree; she was yet in the heyday of life.

The younger daughter, however, was to my view surpassingly beautiful, with the most feminine delicacy and grace of manner, as well as form—again and again have I looked at her to see if I could discover in feature, or manner, or tone of voice, any resemblance to her kindred, but in vain; and I soon found she was as unlike them in her mental and moral qualities as in her physical conformation.

For peculiar reasons I did not think it best for either Mrs. R. or myself to be on intimate terms with the family; we had our own people to visit; and as none of the Stanleys ever attended upon my ministry, even occasionally, they of course could have no special claim upon our notice, but there seemed to be on the part of Lilian, the younger daughter, a desire to be friendly. At times when we were riding out, and met the carriage of the Stanleys, if Lilian were within, she would be sure to ask the coachman to stop, and would alight and have a few pleasant words to say to us. And presents of choice plants of her own rearing, and bouquets of beautiful flowers were sent to Mrs. R., with a short note to say that they were from her own stores. She knew that Mrs. R. was peculiarly fond of flowers. Of course we could not repress or even attempt to repress the feelings she manifested by any apparent indifference; her flowers were received, and pleasantly acknowledged, and whenever she called upon us we received her with all cordiality. It was impossible to do otherwise, there was such kindness of heart, such pure sincerity, beaming from her lovely countenance, such a confiding manner, such exquisite sensibility that we could not help being charmed to the yielding of our sympathy and love in return.

I had been out one afternoon visiting two of my parishioners in distant parts of the town, who were confined by sickness, and did not reach home until the edge of evening. As I entered my dwelling my former housekeeper, Jane, who now lived with

us as an upper servant, met me in the hall, and putting up her hands, exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. R., how glad I am that you have come!"

"What is the matter, Jane? and where is Mrs. R.? not sick, hope."

"Oh no, sir, not sick, but I've been most afraid she would be. We have had such a time with that dear young lady."

Jane spoke scarcely above a whisper, and was so excited that she seemed to want breath enough to bring out the sentence.

"Come in here, Jane," I said, entering our sitting-room. "Come in and tell me what young lady you mean, and what is the matter with her."

"Oh dear, it's that sweet, pretty creature, that Mrs. R. thinks so much of. She has walked all the way from her home. She came afoot, only to think of it," and again Jane had to catch her breath.

"Do you mean Miss Lilian Stanley?"

"It is herself, and only to think of it," and the good-hearted woman burst into tears.

"Where is Mrs. R., Jane?"

"She is up in the spare room. She has got the dear child to rest on the bed, and I 'most hope she's to sleep. We must keep as still as we can. She's been 'most raving."

"Have you been in the room with her, Jane?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I daren't leave Mrs. R. alone, for she was so 'fected with the distress of the poor young thing, that I feared she would be took with 'stericks or something too, so I had to be there."

"Could you not take Mrs. R.'s place, and relieve her a little while? I wish, if possible, to see her."

"I don't know but I can. May be she is asleep. I'll go and see."

It was not long before my wife came down, and entering the room, as soon as she saw me, came up, and throwing her arms around my neck.

"Oh, my dear husband, let us thank God for his mercies, for our loving hearts, for our peaceful home, for ——" She then burst into a flood of weeping. I pressed her to my bosom, and did most truly send up my thanks to our Heavenly Father, for not only my peaceful home, but for her my dearer self, the crowning gift of my life.

From the few items I had gathered of Jane, I supposed she had been through some trying scene in which her sympathies had been deeply excited; and had no doubt the tears she was shedding would prove the best relief. A few moments I held her in this fond embrace, and then led her to the sofa and tried to persuade her to repose upon it for a little and try to calm her feelings.

"Oh, my dear husband, I do not need repose, I shall soon get over my excitement, but I never before had such a sense of the inestimable value of true love, of a sympathizing heart, of domestic peace. I have always had them, but oh how unmindful I have been!" and then turning her lovely eye full upon me, "and you too have been given to me—a heart I can confide in—a hand to protect me—a bosom I can lean upon and feel at rest—may I ever prove to you as rich a blessing as I now feel that you are to me."

I never had a doubt of our devoted love, but the look of confidence which now beamed from her sparkling eye was to me as rich a feast of love as I ever enjoyed. But enough of myself.

A few moments I spent in recounting the mercies of God to us, individually, in answer to the outburst of affection on the part of my dear wife, and then introduced the subject which had been opened to me by Jane.

"So Lilian Stanley is here."

"Yes, she has fallen asleep, and I think she will be refreshed by it; but oh, what the dear girl has suffered! has Jane told you about it?"

"No particulars, only that she was here, and in some great trouble."

"Not long after you went away, I was lying on the settee in our room partly asleep, when Jane came to me saying that Miss Stanley was below and wished to see me.

"Which Miss Stanley?" I asked, for if it were the elder one I should have excused myself from going down. I had such an unsatisfactory call from her not long since that I do not desire any intimacy. I look upon her not only as a tale bearer, but maliciously disposed. Therefore my question to Jane.

"Oh no, Mrs. R., it is the pretty one, the youngest, and I do believe, Mrs. R., she has walked all the way, and I'm thinking she is in some trouble, by her looks."

"I lost no time, on hearing this, in fixing myself to go down. As I came into the room, and went up to embrace her with a hearty welcome as I always do, she kissed me, and then throwing her arms about my neck, began to weep. I did my best to soothe her, and succeeded in part, but I saw that she was greatly excited, for when she embraced me I could feel her frame quiver as in an ague."

"Oh," said she—"I want a friend—I want a protector—I want a home—I am very miserable."

"Dear Lilian," I replied, "the first want I can supply. If what you need is a sympathizing heart, a friend to love you, I do love you, I have unbounded confidence in you."

"And, my dear husband, I could not help saying so. I know you have cautioned me against the family, but Lilian is perfectly unlike any of the others I have seen. I do believe she is without guile, a sweet, simple-hearted, sensitive being, and warm affections that crave a resting-place."

"I agree with you," I answered; "I have the same opinion of her—I am glad you gave her the offer of your love and confidence."

"And then I said to her, 'As to protection and a home, you surely are not in want for either so long as your parents and—'

"Oh, stop," she said, "you do not know. I will do my best to be calm; and since you accept my confidence, I will tell you all."

"And such a state of things as she described to me, dear husband, I never heard of in a civilized community, and among such as move in the higher circles of life! It seems the apparent source of trouble is property, although I feel very sure there must be something back of that; there must be a great deficiency in their moral culture—there must be a perfect lack of what we call natural affection, or the mere desire for property could never set parents and children, brothers and sisters, in such hostile array against each other."

"Lilian has told me things that made me shudder. To think that such a sensitive person as she is should have been exposed to them. But I do not wish to pain you with the recital of particulars, only this I will say, and you can judge: both father and mother, unhappily as they live with one another, are, at times, afraid of their lives. Not only have they been obliged to secrete themselves from the rage of their oldest son, who sought for them with a loaded gun in his hand; but James, one of those who was under your instruction, has, it appears, been married for these six months, without the knowledge of the family. Yesterday he brought his wife home and introduced her. Of course, an excitement was created throughout the family, and scenes of violence occurred that so alarmed poor Lilian that she fled from the house, first hiding herself in the barn; but knowing that she could not long remain there unnoticed, she concluded to seek refuge with us: not daring to take the highway she fled across the woods and gained the cross-road, and thus, in a round-about way, walking nearly six miles—her mind all the time in a state of intense excitement, not only from the scenes she had witnessed at her own home, but fearing we might not be willing, under the circumstances, to harbor her—she finally got here; but how the dear girl was able, unused as she has been to any such exertion of strength, to accomplish what she has, is wonderful."

"I am rejoiced you received her so cordially; it is more wonderful to me that she has retained her reason."

"But I have not told you, my dear, how very much excited

she has been. Somehow she commanded her feelings until near the close of her explanations, when her nerves gave way, and then she broke forth into such bitter crying, almost screaming in her agony, that I was myself, for a time, nearly paralysed; and if it had not been for our good Jane, I know not what I should have done. But, oh, I must say again, what an untold blessing is a peaceful home!"

"She must be kept perfectly quiet, and we must put on a cheerful face before her, and let her know that our hearts and our home are open to her; nor will it be best to say any thing to her about the past, nor even to let her know that I am acquainted with any of the sad particulars. Indeed, you have not told me, and, for many reasons, I prefer not to know them."

It was about an hour, I think, after the conversation as above recorded, Mrs. R. had gone to watch by the bedside of the still sleeping Lilian, when I heard a carriage approach and stop at my door. It was just light enough to enable me to distinguish objects at the distance of our front gate, and it was the Stanley carriage, and I observed the gentleman himself opening the gate. Never do I remember having felt such a shock to my nerves. I knew he had a violent temper, and paid no respect to persons when in a fit of passion. I anticipated a stormy scene, but a consciousness of rectitude, so far as I or my family were concerned, somewhat strengthened me; not that I feared personally, but I am constitutionally averse to contention. However, I at once forgot myself in the fear what the effect might be on Lilian, wrought up as her nerves had been to such an intensity. The mind works rapidly when under excitement, and before the gentleman had reached the stoop I had resolved upon my course of conduct.

Fearing the noise of the knocker might awake and alarm Lilian, I hastened to the door and was ready to receive him as he reached the platform of the stoop. I met him with more cordiality in my manner than usual, and it somewhat took him by surprise; so I imagined, for he looked at me a moment

very earnestly, offering his hand but saying nothing. He entered at my request, and as soon as we were within the room I closed the door, thankful that his voice could not now be heard by Lilian, who I knew was in the further part of the house.

"I wish to know, sir, whether you have seen or heard of my daughter Lilian; is she here, sir?" this he said immediately on entering the room, and in a tone of voice hard and tremulous. He was either alarmed or angry, I could not decide which, but surmised the latter.

Without at once answering his query, I handed him a chair

"Please be seated, Mr. Stanley." I spoke in as pleasant a manner as possible.

"No, sir; not until you answer my question. Is my daughter here?" The tone of his voice was decidedly loud.

"Your daughter, sir, is here; but please be seated, Mr. Stanley."

"I have no time to stop, sir; I thank you for your politeness. I wish my daughter called immediately; it is getting dark; it is time we were home."

"I must still beg you to be seated, my dear sir, and I will do your bidding in reference to your daughter after a moment's explanation—"

"I wish no explanation, sir; but must insist at once that you call my daughter or allow me to see her. I believe I have that right without any explanation being necessary."

"Mr. Stanley, I have no disposition to dispute the right of your demand; but before I comply with it I insist, as *my* right, under present circumstances, that you hear first what I have to say."

The decided manner in which I said this had the effect of inducing the gentleman to be seated.

"Your daughter Lilian is here, Mr. Stanley; but she is at present asleep, and it is absolutely necessary that she should have that rest which sleep only can give her. She has been highly excited from some cause, and I assure you, as a friend,

that any disturbance of her mind at present might be attended with most serious consequences."

The gentleman did not immediately answer me; he seemed to be in doubt what to say or do, and his eye, which had been fixed upon me hitherto, was now turned away. After a few moments of silence, he asked:

"Can I not see her?"

"That is a very natural request," I said, "and under other circumstances I should not offer the least objection. But, my dear sir, I speak in all sincerity as a friend to yourself and to your child, I beg you will not insist upon it at present. I am not acquainted with the particulars of the case, but you are; and the scene of trial to which she has been exposed has come very near depriving her of reason."

"How did she get here, and why should she have come here?"

"She came here on foot, which, of course, you know, must have been quite a trial of her strength. The reason why she came to my house, I believe, is that she felt a confidence in Mrs. R. and myself that she does not feel in others."

"A pretty 'how-do-ye-do,' that she should run tramping through the town like a gipsy, and tattling about every little squabble that happens; let me see her, sir, instantly, and I will teach her better manners in future. Let me see her, sir, instant!"

He rose as he said this—of which I give the substance only—he was shockingly profane.

I at once arose and looked him full and firmly in the eye.

"Mr. Stanley, you must restrain your profanity until you are beyond my premises. These walls are not used to be thus polluted. You are under my roof, sir, at present, and I am master here. As a gentleman I have treated you, and I demand gentlemanly treatment in return, or our conference shall end at once."

"Call my daughter, then, or lead me to her."

"Not in your present state of mind, sir, will I do either."

"You will not!"

"No, sir, I will not."

"How will you hinder me, sir, if I choose to search for her?"

"I have no fear, sir, that you will so far forget what is due to a gentleman in his own house as to make any such attempt."

"You seem to stand so much upon your rights as a gentleman, sir, I wish to know whether as a gentleman you cannot exercise complaisance enough to let a father see his own daughter."

"You place the matter now, sir, on a very different ground. I do not deny your right, but knowing what I do, I have, as a friend to you both, merely asked that for her sake you would waive the demand. You must be convinced, Mr. Stanley, that it is for no personal interest of my own that I do this. If, however, sir, you still insist upon seeing her, I will ascertain from Mrs. R. whether she thinks you might safely do so. I have not yet seen your daughter, nor can I tell what her feelings are. It is possible she may wish it."

"I have no objection, sir, to your proposition, and will abide by whatever decision Mrs. R. may make."

"Please be seated then, sir, until I do the errand."

"I will, sir, but first let me ask your pardon for my hasty and improper expressions. I have many troubles, sir, unbeknown to you, and sometimes my feelings, sore and distracted, get the better of my judgment and sense of propriety."

This was quite unexpected, and I put forth my hand, and he grasped it firmly.

"Say nothing further, Mr. Stanley. I most heartily sympathize in whatever may be your trouble, and if you will allow me to act the part of a friend, you shall find me ever ready to do what in me lies to relieve you."

"I believe you, sir,—I believe you."

I left the room with comparatively a light heart, and soon found Mrs. R. Lillian, she said, was awake, and seemed much more composed, and had asked for me.

"Do you think she would wish to go home! Her father has come for her."

"Oh, my dear husband, do persuade him to let her remain for the present. Is he displeased at her for coming here?"

"I really cannot say whether he is or not. At first I thought so, but it would not surprise me to find after all that he should be willing to do as we advise, but we must act with caution. Shall I see Lilian or will you? Let her know that her father is here, and tell her to make her own choice, to go or to stay."

"I think *you* had better see her, she has expressed some fears that you might not be pleased at her taking the step she has."

Following my wife, we entered the room, where Lilian at once arose to meet me.

"I am glad to see you so much better, dear Lilian, and I thank you for the confidence you have shown towards Mrs. R. and myself, in coming to us in a time of trouble."

"I almost feared," she said, looking up to me with an expression of sadness on her beautiful countenance, "that you might think I had done wrong in leaving my home; but I could not stay—Oh, I could not."

"And you do not feel quite ready to go back?"

She looked somewhat surprised, and I saw that the question had disturbed her. She answered, but in very trembling tones.

"If *you* say so."

"But I do not say so, Lilian; it would be against my judgment; very much I assure you—against my feelings. Would you not be willing, if I can get your father's consent, to remain with us a few days at least?"

"Oh, gladly would I; but is my father here?"

"He is."

She sank down on the chair beside her.

"Does he wish me to go home with him?"

"He came for that purpose; but I think it not improbable

that I might persuade him to let you remain; or perhaps you might have more influence than I could have. Would you like to see him?"

"I have no objection to see my father. But oh, to go back! to go home! Oh, if you knew, Mr. R——." And she covered her face. Fearing she might become unduly excited by a subject which had caused her so much bitter feeling, I said,

"I think your father will, if you desire it, not object to your remaining a few days with us; at least until you get a little stronger than you are, especially if he hears from your own lips that you desire it. Shall I ask him up here, or do you feel able to go down with me, and converse with him?"

"I think I had better go down with you, Mr. R——."

She leaned upon my arm, for she was still suffering from the effect of the violent strain her nerves had endured. As we entered the parlor she at once released her hold upon me; and as her father rose to meet her, threw her arms around his neck.

"Oh, my father—my dear father!"

Nothing more was said. I saw the muscles of the father's face moving, and presently the big tear started, and rolled silently down, and dropped upon the auburn ringlets of the weeping girl.

"Do not blame me, my dear father; do not blame me. Oh, you know how unhappy I have been. My sister hates me; my brothers care nothing for me; my mother! Oh, father, how can I say it! you know it all. I dread, oh, I dread to go home; but if you say so, I will go."

"Hush, hush, Lillie; I know, I know; say no more. Stay to-night, and we will see how things turn. Be quiet now; calm yourself; I will call here in a day or two. But I am very sorry that those good people should be thus disturbed by our misunderstandings."

I stepped up to Mr. Stanley, and taking the hand of Lilian and his too—

"Believe me, my dear sir, I have the most friendly feeling for you both; if you will intrust this dear girl to our care for

a few days, we will do our best to make our home agreeable to her; and, sir, if in any way I can serve you, call upon me, day or night, and rely upon my assurance, that every thing between us shall be held by my wife and myself in the strictest confidence."

"Thank you, sir; it may be I shall yet need counsel—if so, I shall come to you as one upon whose generosity and Christian charity I can rely."

This interview with Mr. Stanley gave me a new insight to his character. As generally estimated, he was a hard, proud, passionate, unfeeling man; and hitherto I must say my own opinion coincided with that of the public. I learned, however, in this instance, a lesson which has been confirmed by my larger experience, that in almost all persons there are qualities both good and evil hidden from general view. No man is so bad that there may not, under certain circumstances, be elicited feelings, which had they been cherished by himself, or brought out by judicious treatment on the part of others, might have elevated him in the moral scale, and been the means of his salvation. And no man is so good that he should for a moment venture to relax the reins of moral discipline.

Mr. Stanley was in many respects all that the public thought him to be. But there was still a soft place in his heart. That daughter upon whose fair form I saw his big tears drop, had a power over his affections which could waken them into life. She had never been rude or disrespectful, nor wanting in devoted love. On the other members of the family her mild and affectionate demeanor had no effect, unless that of steeling their hearts against her. Her bright light but threw a glare upon their darkness which they could not abide. Her character was misunderstood; her soft and gentle manners were to them hypocrisy; and her obedience and love to her parents was only a guise to win favor for some selfish end. But her father was not so lost to all goodness that he could not feel and appreciate the ready manifestation of filial and sisterly love that flowed from her in rays of perennial beauty. I thought

at the time, and I have learned from his own lips since, that much of the passionate feeling he manifested in the scene described above, was excited by the fear that she had probably in a state of great excitement done some violence to herself—for he knew that she was peculiarly sensitive—and before he missed her he had noticed that she seemed almost wild with terror. The course he likewise took in reference to her, although it subjected him to violent storms of reproach at home, showed that he had firmness enough to hold on to what he thought right, let the consequences be what they might. He became convinced that Lilian could not be happy at home, and as we seemed willing, and more than willing, to keep her with us, he made arrangements for her permanent stay, or at least until something should occur to make her own home more desirable.

Not long after Lilian had thus become a member of our family, upon one of the calls which her father made to see her, she came into my study and asked—

"Would you have any objection, Mr. R——, that I should bring my father up here; he wishes to see you."

"By no means," I replied; "but I will not trouble him to come up here; I will at once go down and see him in the parlor."

"He would like to see you in your study; he wishes to see you on some particular business, and thinks there would be less danger from interruption here."

"Oh, then by all means let him come; you can show him the way."

I felt almost sorry that I had not insisted upon going down; for as he entered my room I noticed that he seemed troubled for breath; the exertion of mounting the stairs, although but a short flight, appeared to have given him much distress. I gave him my easy chair, and made some remark in reference to his health, when he said—

"It will be over pretty soon; but this will answer as an introduction to what I have to say to you."

I did not reply, but tried to imagine what his errand was and as he seemed so excited, I feared it might be something of a very unpleasant nature. It took some little time before his agitation ceased, and I asked—

"Are you often thus troubled, Mr. Stanley?"

"Occasionally, occasionally, not always so bad as at present; but it is an unmistakable warning. I see now, sir, what is meant by the 'wheel broken at the cistern;' I think there will not be many mourners going about the streets, though. When the news is carried round that old Joe Stanley is dead, not many to mourn, sir."

Without taking notice of his last remark, I asked,

"Have you been afflicted in this way for any length of time?"

"Not long, sir, not long; but I feel that it is high time I made what preparation I can make—for—for there is no knowing how soon my chance to do what has to be done in this world will be over. You see, my dear sir, I have felt this coming on for a long time, although I have never, until of late, had any serious attacks."

"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Stanley, that you are afflicted with what you think to be an incurable disease, and I cannot but hope your fears may not be realized; and yet I am glad to hear you say that you wish to set your house in order; no one of us can tell how soon our race may be run."

"As to setting my house in order, I fear that is now out of the question; so far as my family is concerned, they are past all regulating on my part. Ah, sir, my life has been a great mistake, and I only wish that I had been acquainted with you, or some one like you, earlier in life—it would have been better for me. Christians and Christian ministers have a great responsibility resting upon them."

"Doubtless they have, my dear sir, but it will not avail any of us who neglect the great salvation to charge the fault either to those who profess to believe in it, or who attempt to preach it. The word of God we must be judged by, and stand or fall by its testimony for or against us."

"I suppose you are right, sir, it is as well perhaps to let the past go. What I especially want of you, sir, is to put me in the right way—as to my worldly matters, I have arranged them by the help of my lawyer. And now I have come to you as the most suitable person I can think of, to assist me in arranging my spiritual concerns. I find *that* a more difficult as well as a more important matter than the other. I am, sir, like a blind man who wishes to find a certain place, but needs some one to lead him. I want you, in other words, to undertake the task of preparing me for death. You now understand me, sir."

"I believe I do, sir, but I fear you are laying more stress on what I can do in such a case than my ability will meet. The great work, my dear sir, must be done by yourself. Repentance and faith are the two great essentials, and no human being can exercise them for another; they must be the exercise of your own mind and heart. What I can do to explain and unfold to you the qualities of those necessary exercises, I am most heartily ready to do."

"May I ask you to explain to me the way in which I am to arrive at these two essentials? I know in general what is meant, or I suppose I do, by these terms. Repentance, I know, means turning from an evil course to a right one—does it not, sir?"

"You have stated its general meaning rightly, but scripture repentance implies something more; there must be a turning not only from all sin, with a genuine sorrow on account of our past transgressions, but also a turning of the heart with true contrition unto God."

"But, sir, in my case that seems an utter impossibility. I can think how, if I were a drunkard, I might abstain from liquor, and become a sober man. And so of any other evil course. I might leave it, and pursue a better way; but if I understand you aright, I must have real sorrow of heart, because I have been addicted to such evil habits. Now, sir, *there* is the great difficulty; a man may know he has been wrong, and resolve to do better, but to be heartily sorry because of his wrong life, is another thing."

"I perceive, my dear sir, that you have a right understanding of the difficulty, and you can see, therefore, that repentance is but another term for a change of heart, a change from the love of sin to the love of holiness. Repentance is love grieving for having offended God."

"I see, sir, I see, sir, but oh, dear me! I am at an infinite distance from such a state of mind, and I greatly fear shall never possess it."

"My dear sir, we are all poor helpless sinners, of ourselves lost, undone for ever, but God has laid help on one who is mighty to save; to that helper we must all go, we must ask Him to save us. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. By His blood He makes atonement for them. By His Spirit He converts them; and by His word he teaches them. 'Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'"

"Ah, my dear sir, that is all very well. But you cannot know how hard it is for one whose life has been passed a stranger to all religious feeling, whose mind has been occupied with the things of this world exclusively, sir—exclusively; and whose habits of thought and feeling have become like a coat of mail around his heart, shutting out the things that belong to the other world, and holding him as in chains of adamant; a miracle, I see, alone can break my bonds, and set me free."

"My dear sir, every conversion is a miracle in the true acceptation of the term."

"But why should a miracle be wrought for such a one as I am? Such a one as I have been?"

"That same question, my dear sir, is asked by every child of God who has ever been redeemed; the why is known only to Him whose power accomplishes the mighty work; the glorious fact is only known to us; sure as the stability of His eternal throne that *'whosoever cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out.'* My dear sir, you must go to Jesus Christ, just as you might go to Him were He now on the earth to heal your

body, or your mind, of an infirmity that had baffled all the skill of physicians. So you must go to Him now for help to enable you to break these fetters of sin, to give you light, to give you love to God, and to save you through His own infinite merits, and for them alone. Your salvation is in the hands of Christ. The best, the worst, the weakest, and the strongest, have all one way; it is the only way. You must go to Jesus."

He made no reply to these remarks, and seemed deeply absorbed in thought. I felt that I had said enough for the present, and perhaps more than was necessary for that time. For a little space nothing was said by either of us; he at length broke the silence.

"I think," he said, "I see a little more clearly what you mean; I think I comprehend. I must cry out like a drowning man for help, and cry to Him who alone can help. I will try, sir, but it will be a strange act for one who has never prayed before. Oh, sir, you are a minister of the gospel. I warn you to do your best to persuade the young to learn the way of life, before years come on, and habits are fixed, and the world gets coiled about their hearts, and impenetrable darkness hides all views of eternal things; do try, sir."

The earnest manner in which he thus spoke deeply affected me, and I trust was not lost upon the future course of my ministry. On attending Mr. Stanley from my study, Lilian met us in the hall below. She seemed somewhat disturbed at the long conference we had been holding; she came up to her father, and putting her hand on his shoulder, said to him in a low voice—

"Anything the matter, dear father—any trouble at home?"

He took her hand, and placing it in mine, looked earnestly at me.

"You will remember, my dear sir, the last words I said to you."

"I will, sir, and I shall act upon them more faithfully, I hope, than I have ever done before."

Lilian turned her large bright eye up towards me with such a speaking look, I at once answered to what I knew was its meaning

"I will tell you, Lilian, at some future time. Your father has your happiness, your best interests at heart."

She then put her arms around his neck, and for the first time I saw him clasp her in a warm embrace.

"Father, I fear that something is the matter—shall I not go home with you? I will do anything you say; I am willing to suffer anything if I can comfort you."

"Not best now, my dear, not best now. Hear this good friend—heed his counsel. When I think it best you should come home, he will tell you, and remember what I now say. When I—whenever—when you cannot have my directions or counsel on an emergency, do as he tells you; that will be satisfactory to me, you understand."

Lilian did not comprehend the full meaning of her father's words, but I felt them with intense interest—it was a dying father's legacy to me, and as I took his hand at parting the warm grasp which each of us gave was a token that we comprehended the trust imposed and accepted.

I had not as yet said anything to Lilian on the subject of religion. She of course attended family worship, and went to our house of worship with us, and did so in preference to that of her own church, in which at that time there was service every other sabbath. The minister who officiated, being in charge of two parishes, about four miles apart, could only give one-half of his time to each. Lilian knew well that I had the most kindly feeling both to the gentleman himself and to the Episcopal Church in general, so that her attendance on our services was her own free will. I had noticed, too, that whenever conversation turned upon religious topics, although she took no part in it, yet she seemed to be peculiarly attentive. This did not surprise me. She doubtless wished to show all respect to us as friends.

Mrs. R. once asked me the question, "What do you think of Lilian. She is so faultless in her demeanor; so free from guile and all such passions as from her training she would be likely to indulge—such as jealousy pride, malice revenge, and all un-

charitableness—that I know not how to account for her character—certainly a Christian could not present to my mind a purer example.

"You state a problem that I must say has somewhat puzzled me; she has very strong feelings; she is full of sensibility; she has a keen perception of right and wrong; she has a fine flow of animal spirits; she feels deeply mortified on account of the notoriety of the family difficulties, and she has been treated in the most heartless manner by those who should have cherished and loved her; but I have never heard her use a railing word against any of them. Have you?"

"Never. She has of course in her confidence told me some particulars, as a burdened heart would very naturally unfold to one whose sympathy it craved; but grief, bitter grief, was the only manifestation she made—not a word of blame—her heart was full of sorrow. She seems to love them all still."

"It only shows how near sometimes the natural disposition may approach the heavenly character. To our eyes she appears very pure and lovely; but we know that there may be much that looks beautiful to us, and within the heart no love to God."

Lilian I knew was very desirous of some revelation from me, in reference to the interview which I had with her father, and I embraced the first opportunity of leisure to gratify her wishes; this, however, did not occur for some days, as my time was very much occupied in visits to the sick; there being an unusual number of my people at that time prostrated by disease.

I was myself equally solicitous with Lilian for a private interview, for I intended to embrace such a favorable opportunity to urge upon her the necessity for immediate attention to the subject of religion, to which I believed she was in great measure a stranger.

"And now, Lilian," I said to her as she was coming in from stroll through the garden, "if you will step with me into my study we will have the little talk together I have promised you."

As soon as we were seated, I asked,—

"Have you been at all aware that your father was not in as good health as he has been?"

"I have had my fears, sir. I have noticed before I left home that there were times when he seemed to suffer from want of breath, but I supposed the difficulty was brought on by the excitement to which he was so subject, and that it was probably a nervous affection and not dangerous. But the last time he was here, he appeared to have altered much—do you think, sir, he is seriously ill?"

"It is impossible to say—it may be, as you have supposed, merely a nervous affection of which by care he may get the better; but he himself apprehends danger, and feels it to be highly necessary to be making such preparation as becomes us all to make, from our earliest days, but which we are too apt to put off until we think we are approaching the grave."

I saw that Lilian was much affected; she sat indeed perfectly still, and did not seem disposed to speak; her face was turned aside, and her eye drooped, but the tears had started and were stealing from her long lashes and dropping on her fair cheek. I supposed of course her feelings were affected by the tidings I communicated, in reference to her father's illness. In order to allay her anxiety, I said:—

"It may not after all be so serious as your father apprehends; he appears to me to have a strong constitution, which may overcome the difficulty."

"I believe he has naturally a strong hold on life, but few constitutions can stand such troubles as he has been and is still exposed to; he may live for many years yet, or he may not, but to think that he has indeed serious thoughts of eternity! and feels the necessity of making preparation, is such joyful tidings!" She could command her feelings no longer; she covered her face and wept freely.

I was taken by surprise, but felt that the way was open for a free conversation.

"Your expression of joy, my dear Lilian, at the announcement

that your father's thoughts are directed towards the all important work of making his peace with God, leads me to suppose that you yourself think that subject of great moment."

"I do indeed, sir."

"And do you feel that in your own case that preparation has been made?"

"I cannot say, sir, that I have thought much of making special preparation for death—my greatest anxiety has been to live a righteous and godly life."

"Right, my dear Lilian; you have answered my question in the best way you could have answered it—a righteous and godly life is the surest preparation for a peaceful and happy death. Do you feel assured then that you have been born again?"

"I do not know, sir, that I have ever thought of that."

"You believe that our corrupt nature needs to be regenerated; so entirely changed as to be, as it were, brought into a new life!"

"And is that new life a sinless life?"

"By no means; sinful propensities still cling to us, and sometimes we may be overcome by them, but the truly regenerate are brought to a lively sense of their errors, and are filled with penitence on account thereof—they are not left entirely to forsake God."

"That is the view I have always had of the Christian life."

I was silent for a few moments—I knew not what to make of my catechumen—did she comprehend what the new life meant, but with no knowledge of the new birth? I wished to question her further.

"You remember, I suppose, dear Lilian, some particular period in your life when your views and feelings became changed; when old things seemed to have passed away, and all things became new."

"I cannot say that I do, sir."

"You must, however, remember a time when you did not love God—when you did not pray—when you were not troubled on account of sin—when you did not feel the preciousness of

the Saviour—when, in fact, you did not think much, nor care much about the subject of religion.”

“No doubt when I was quite young my mind was not so much engaged on any subject, especially more serious things—is not that the way, sir, with all children? trifles are of more consequence to them than things of moment.”

“Have you always prayed, Lilian?”

“I began, I believe, very early to say my prayers. An old woman who was a nurse in our family, first taught me to say my prayers, and I presume I always continued the practice. When I was old enough to use the prayer-book—*that*, you know, sir, has prayers for every day, night and morning, and for special occasions,—I believe I have seldom neglected to use it; not at least since I have been old enough to comprehend the excellence of its services.”

“And you now feel assured of your interest in Christ, and that you look to Him alone for salvation.”

“To whom else, sir, can we look! Our own works can never make us acceptable, or work out our justification before God. We must be saved alone through the infinite merits of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

“And you do not doubt that you look to him by faith, and feel assured of the forgiveness of sins by virtue of your union to Him?”

“I feel assured that He is a merciful Saviour, that He came into the world to save sinners, and that He will save unto eternal life all such as do unfeignedly repent and believe on His name. I believe these two lines fully express my views and feelings—

“In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.”

“My dear Lilian, you fill me with most unfeigned joy by these answers to my questions. You will pardon me for thus catechising you. It has been done for the purpose of ascertaining your religious views. May God give you grace to go on

your way, and enable you, as you say you are trying to do, to live a righteous and godly life.”

“But, sir, I shall be most happy to have you catechise me often, and teach me, too; for I fear, in many things, I am very ignorant. You know, sir, I have not had the advantage of much religious teaching. My prayer-book has been my guide, for the most part. I have seldom been to church. Some stimulus was given to mind on this subject by a very good minister whom my father engaged, a few years since, to teach my brothers. He was a very good man, I am sure, although his preaching was not much thought of; but he used to say things to me that I have laid up, and the older I grew the more I thought of them.”

There was a simplicity, an honest fearlessness, an outspoken sincerity in her manner, that completely charmed me. Her beautiful eye was fixed full upon me. There was nothing of that bashfulness so common in young persons on being approached, for the first time, on the subject of their religious experience; what she believed, she believed firmly. She had accepted the great articles of faith as truths upon which she could rely, and there she rested. Blessed child-like confidence! Worth all the mere knowledge that the most favored intellects can ever accumulate. To look simply to the cross as our hope, to receive the Saviour's words as our guide, is the secret of the purest and most permanent happiness even here.

CHAPTER III.

THE more I saw of Lilian, the more strange and even unaccountable was the strong contrast, both as to her personal appearance and the qualities of her mind and heart to those of all the rest of her family.

The change of heart, which I had no doubt she had experienced, although she herself was not aware of it, might, indeed, account for a part of this; but I have always noticed that individual characteristics are not in general obliterated or merged in the new creation. If there are strong passions, they may be kept under control, in a great measure; but features of what is termed "the old man" will be manifest even in an undoubted state of grace, so that in thinking of the loveliness of her disposition, the truthful simplicity of her whole character, and entire freedom from these manifestations of evil propensities so notorious in her relatives, I came to the conclusion that she was one of those anomalies to the general laws of nature, that "like produce like." She certainly was not morally born in the likeness of either parent, nor any of her kindred of whom I had any knowledge.

Nor was I less at a loss how to account for her physical development. There was not the least resemblance in any feature of her countenance to the Stanley family. Their complexions were dark, their physiognomies unpleasant. There was a stare in their eye, a coarseness of the mouth, an unusual thickness of the nose that marked them all; while her complexion was a perfect blonde, her hair a light auburn, her eye of the

hazel cast, and peculiarly soft, and its expression at times most touching; her other features of the most chaste and delicate mould, and her form airy and attractive, with grace in every movement, while her sister and brothers were what might be called "ungain" in both particulars.

That her family, with the exception of her father, should have manifested indifference, and even dislike towards her, was not to me so remarkable, as I became more and more acquainted with their peculiarities. She was too unlike them to be congenial to their tastes; and their unkindness to her had very effectively destroyed affection for them. I soon found that out. To her father she was true. She loved him, and for his sake, if necessary, would have borne with their harshness. But towards the others, although never railing at them, nor magnifying their faults, I perceived her heart had become completely weaned.

A month had perhaps expired since the interview with Mr. Stanley which I have recorded in the last chapter. I had met him once or twice while riding out. He was in his carriage, and a few words had passed between us, but no opportunity was afforded for any revelation of the state of his feelings. Upon enquiring about his health, his answer was—"Pretty much the same."

But I plainly saw that he was failing. His eyes were marked with a blood-shot appearance, and there was a livid hue to his countenance, which assured me that the strong hand was upon him, from whose grasp I feared there would be no release.

As it was understood between us, that when he wished another interview, he would either call for me or send for me, I had no alternative but to wait his pleasure, although extremely anxious to know more about his state of mind, for my own gratification, as I had become interested in him; and more particularly for that of Lilian, who I knew to be very solicitous on his account. My wish, however, was about to be accomplished.

The principal physician of the place, on his return home near the close of the day, stopped at my gate as he saw me seated on my stoop, and beckoning to me, I went immediately to him.

"You will excuse me, Mr. R.," he said, "for calling you to come to me, rather than getting out of my gig and coming to you; for I saw Miss Lilian sitting by the window, and as I have a message from her father, it might disturb her, and perhaps alarm her unnecessarily."

"Is Mr. Stanley worse, doctor?"

"He is no doubt worse in one sense of the word—his disease is becoming more fully developed, and must finally result fatally. No human power, as I view it, can save him."

"He has really then an affection of the heart—some organic disease there! I thought, possibly, it might be some derangement of the digestive organs, and that his heart was affected merely by sympathy."

"Something more serious than that, sir; but he is anxious to see you, and as you, of course, know something of the peculiarities of his family, you can understand why he does not send a message for you by his servant or some member of his own family. The fact is, Mr. R——, and it may be better for you to know it, that you may be on your guard and act accordingly—they have, I mean all but Stanley himself, become exceedingly alarmed on account of the intimacy that has sprung up of late between Mr. S—— and yourself."

"It has been none of my seeking, doctor."

"That makes no difference, my dear sir, the fact is all sufficient; motives, and reasons, and all such considerations, they make no account of, further than construing those of others to suit their own views. They have got an idea into their head that the old man is frightened about himself; and between you and me, I think they fear that he is getting somewhat conscientious, and that he may, in order to quiet his mind, do something or other—what, I do not know—that may militate against their worldly interests, and you know *that* fear would arouse such persons mightily. They would much rather th-

the old man should take his chance for the next world, with a burden upon his conscience, than get rid of it to their disadvantage here; but this is merely a surmise on my part. But Stanley desired me to say to you that he wished you would make him a call as soon as you conveniently could; but he would not wish you to bring Lilian with you at this time; and I don't know that you are aware of the fact, but in consequence of the difficulty he has in going up a flight of steps, he has removed his bed to a room in the north wing of his house."

"Where his office was formerly?"

"The same, sir, and you know there is immediate access to that without going into the main building. If I were you, I should just drive up there."

The next morning, without saying anything to Lilian as to whither I was going, I proceeded to comply with the request of her father. I passed the main entrance to the house and stopped at the door of the office. Mr. Stanley was ready to receive me, but appeared quite weak, and I saw clearly enough that he was making rapid strides towards the grave.

As soon as I entered, he locked the door of the room communicating with the small entry and hall of the building, as well as another door that opened into the mansion itself. We were thus alone and all others shut out.

"You may think it strange, my dear sir," he said, "that I take this precaution, but I do not wish to be disturbed during our interview, and I have things to talk about that may not be well for others to learn; not just yet."

For a few moments he rested himself after this exertion, and as I was there at his special request, and did not wish to prolong my visit by introducing any unnecessary subject, I waited patiently for him to make known his wishes in sending for me. At length, with something of an agitated manner, he began:

"I have thought most seriously, my dear sir, of the teachings I received from you at the interview we had at your house. I believe I can comprehend the terms you stated by which alone a sinful creature can hope to stand before his Judge at the la-

day. He must repent sincerely of all his sins—of every sin, and look to Jesus Christ to be his atoning sacrifice.”

“You have rightly understood me, sir.”

“And this repentance must be attended by proper fruits thereof—that is, if in my sinning against the Almighty, I have at the same time committed a trespass against my fellow man, I must repair the evil—make restitution, so far as in my power lieth, or I cannot hope that the sin will be forgiven?”

“Of course, sir, that is implied.”

“And if I did not accomplish the wrong myself, but have been cognizant of the fact that a great wrong has been done, and am reaping a benefit from what I feel assured was an injustice, I am in the place of the guilty one; am I not?”

“So far, sir, as you have it in your power to make reparation and refrain from doing it, I should say you were responsible.”

“Mr. R——, I must have your help, if you can afford time for the purpose, to do as you say, and as my own sense of right says, in enabling me to repair a great injury and restore to rightful owners an inheritance wrested from them and kept from them by injustice. This great house, sir, was erected by my father from the wages of iniquity, and, I believe, every brick and stone of which it is composed is laden with a curse that follows him who oppresses the fatherless and the widow. To me it has been a hell rather than a home. I speak now, sir, with no irreverent or profane feeling; it has been a hell, for peace has never dwelt here, nor love, nor kindness, nor any other of those graces that make a home; but discord, envy, hatred, malice, and a spirit of revenge. It does not in justice belong to me, or mine; and if you can help me, my dear sir, to find an owner, it shall be restored, let the consequences be what they may. My life has been passed under a curse, but I do not mean to die with its weight upon me, if aught that my hand can do may throw it off.”

I was much surprised—not so much at the revelation, for I had heard whisperings of some wrong having been accomplish-

ed by the father or grandfather of Mr. Stanley, it was not known by which—but that he should be ready, at the risk of losing the very house under whose roof he had always lived, to make restitution—told emphatically that he was in earnest in the work of preparation. I had not looked for such evidence of sincerity.

“In what way, Mr. Stanley, can I be of any service to you in this matter?”

“I will tell you, sir. In the first place I can confide in you to retain within your own heart what I have said; therefore, I have told you rather than my lawyer. He must, no doubt, be called in if anything is accomplished; but should any thing leak out as to my design, some step would be taken, no matter what, to frustrate it—even my poor life would not be safe.”

“You may depend, sir, on the most inviolable secrecy, so far as that may assist you in accomplishing your just design.”

“But, sir, my greatest difficulty will be to find an owner. The widow who was wronged out of this property died and left no heir. She had a child, an infant, that died a few days after its birth. Her husband died some months previous to her decease; whether she had sisters, or brothers, or other kindred, I know not.”

Mr. Stanley was so affected by shortness of breath, that he was obliged to pause until the spasm occasioned by his excitement had time to subside. I asked,

“Where did she reside? In this place?”

“Oh! no—oh! no—in the town of ——, and there some one must go to make the necessary enquiries. Would it be too much to ask you, sir, to undertake the task? I know it is a long distance, but let me tell you first, that although she did not reside here, yet she died but a few miles from this place. The fact is, sir, the poor woman was on her way, so I have been told, to see me, but was taken in labor when about three miles from here, and was obliged to stop at the house of a good woman, who was at the time taking care of our little Lilian. Mrs. Stanley was so ill at the birth of Lilian that we were ob-

liged to let the nurse, who was with her at her confinement, take it home with her. She was deranged, perfectly wild and frantic, and the child had to be brought up by hand. It happened that this widow I speak of was, as I have said, delivered of a child, a little girl, at the house of this nurse, where she and the infant died within a few days of each other."

"Perhaps, sir, this woman—is she living yet?"

"Yes, she is living yet, but is now quite aged."

"But, Mr. Stanley, I do not quite comprehend you;" in fact I began to fear that his mind, over-wrought by anxiety, and his system so weakened by disease, was not just in its right state. "You speak of this widow being the one who had been so wronged. How could that have been? I thought the wrong, whatever it was, was accomplished by your father many years ago."

"That is true, sir; but this widow, of whom I have spoken, was the direct lineal heir to this estate. I spoke of her as being wronged, I suppose, because the suffering of this one being, as it were, under my own eye, it has always affected me. It has seemed to me at times that she was sent so near me to suffer and die, as a dispensation of the Almighty. Sure I am, I never go near that house but most terrible sensations oppress me. I believe a sight of it now would kill me at once."

"If, as you say, sir, this aged woman, of whom you speak, lives but a few miles from here——"

"Pardon me, sir, did I say so? I was wrong then. She did live but a few miles from here at the time I have alluded to, but she now lives in the adjacent town, perhaps some ten miles off. I can, however, give you directions for finding her, and I think it not improbable that she may have some clue by which a trace of the family I wish to find may be discovered."

Not wishing to prolong my visit, I arose to depart, when Mr. Stanley seized my hand:

"I trust, my dear sir, that I can see a little light. I am a poor sinner, and have spent a useless, a wicked life; I have no excuse to make; I can only lie down before the Cross, and look

I hardly dare ask for mercy; but it is somewhat of a comfort to look at the dying one. One thing I know, that what I can do to make amends to my fellow creatures, I am ready and anxious to do; if I perish, I must perish; I richly deserve it. Make what haste you can."

Thus I left him, and was in hope that my departure would be unnoticed by the rest of the family; but in this I was disappointed. For, on getting into my carriage, I was met by their servant, with a polite request that I would favor Mrs. Stanley with a call, as she wished much to see me. Fearing their suspicions might be aroused if I did not obey the summons, I followed the servant, who led me into their best parlor, where the lady, quite splendidly dressed, awaited my presence. As I entered she rose to receive me, and endeavored to put on a pleasant countenance; but, as I have said before, her attempt at a smile gave rather a ghastly than agreeable aspect to her countenance. I did my best, however, to pay my respects to her in a manner as free from restraint as possible.

"You have been to see Mr. Stanley? It is very kind in you thus to call. Not being members of your society we do not feel entitled to such consideration. You must have but little time to devote to us outsiders, as your own charge is so large; you are very kind indeed."

It was impossible for me to say whether this was delivered ironically or with an attempt to appear gratified. I answered—

"I called, madam, at the request of Mr. Stanley; he is aware that disease is upon him, and it may prove a fatal one. It would be well for us all so to live, that we may be prepared for our summons to the bar of God at any time; but if we have, unhappily, put off such preparation until near our end, it becomes us, at least, to do then what we may to meet our God in peace."

"Ah, then it was as a spiritual adviser that you were sent for! I almost wonder that Mr. Stanley should have put you to that trouble—we belong, you know, to the church, and as we have at present a very able Rector, methinks it would have been more proper to have sent for him."

"I presume, madam, Mr. Stanley had his own reasons for the choice, and certainly, to me it is no unpleasant duty. I am glad to assist as I can all persons, of whatever denomination, when my services are requested."

"Oh, no doubt—I am sorry, however, that Mr. Stanley seems so troubled about matters; and I think it only aggravates his disorder, to have him disturbed by such considerations. It seems highly necessary that he should be kept perfectly quiet. I know some people think it of no consequence how much one who is near his end is wrought upon by talking to him of death, and judgment, and hell, and all such subjects; but I think many are frightened when in a state of weakness, even to the hastening of them out of the world—and after all what good can it do? We shall be judged by our life."

"But suppose, madam, our life has been such that one dare not trust to it as a passport to the judgment-seat?"

"God is very merciful—more merciful than men are to one another, and besides a great many who make great pretensions to religion, I find to be no better than others that do not say so much about it—but I want to ask you, sir, did Mr. Stanley say anything about his temporal affairs?"

"Of course, madam, our temporal matters have a material bearing upon our spiritual concerns; our relations in time affect our interests in eternity."

"Has Mr. Stanley, then, been so weak as to tell every little thing which may have happened in the course of his life; he is very weak-minded, that you must know; and I do not think it right for a minister, or any one else, to take advantage of a poor sick man, and make him babble about things that are nobody's business but his own; and I wish to say to you, Mr. R., that we do not approve of such meddling, and we do not mean to allow it."

I at once arose to depart.

"I am not a father confessor, Mrs. Stanley, and am not in the habit of prying into the private affairs of the dying or living. Good morning, madam."

The lady tried to detain me by asking a string of questions; but I stood upon my right to be offended by her remarks, and would make no reply—glad of the opportunity thus afforded to make my retreat.

As the revelation which Mr. Stanley had made inspired me with zeal to accomplish what seemed so necessary to his peace of mind, and also with a laudable desire to have justice done to those who had suffered through the means of him and his progenitor, I made immediate preparation for departure. I made no communication to any of my family, not even to Mrs. R.; for, although in general I considered my wife and myself as one in all matters of private interest, and, in most cases, of secrets committed to me beyond our home circle; yet in this case I preferred to keep silence in regard to what had been revealed to me.

I had no difficulty in finding the woman to whom Mr. Stanley referred me, as she seemed to be generally known through the town. She was indeed far advanced in life, being, I should judge, not far from four score years. She was, however, quite active, had a sprightly look and a firm voice. Her house was small and plain, but everything within as neat as possible. A well worn Bible lay on a stand near where she was sitting, and the room had an air of comfort that affected me pleasantly. I had little doubt, before I had asked a single question, that she was one who feared and loved God, and I will now give, as far as I can remember, the questions and answers that passed between us.

"You are acquainted, I believe, madam, with the Stanley family of —."

"I am, sir, or I was once, quite well known there. I lived some years in the family—I suppose you mean the family of Jos. Stanley?"

"I do, madam, and Mr. Stanley has directed me to you as the person most likely to give me information concerning a widow Granger, who died at your house some twenty years since."

As I said this she took off her spectacles and laid the work she was busy upon on the table beside her. I thought she did it in order to save time for making a reply. She then fixed her eye upon me.

"Are you, sir, a relative of Mr. Stanley's?"

"No, madam, and your question reminds me of the propriety of introducing myself, as I have no one present to perform that duty. I am the minister of the Presbyterian church at —; my name is R——."

"Oh, la, sir, I ought to have remembered your countenance; you have preached for us here more than once, I think, but I do not see very distinctly at a distance now. The fact is, sir, I feel free to speak now, because I know to whom I am speaking; but to tell the truth, sir, and I am not afraid to say it, Joseph Stanley and his family, with the exception of one of its members, are not such people as I care to have much to do with. And when you said Mr. Stanley sent you, I began to fear mischief; you will excuse me, sir, for feeling so. I wish to live with charity in my heart towards all men; but that does not forbid us to be on our guard when coming in contact with those whom we know to be crooked."

"By no means, madam; but in the present case, although my enquiries are on behalf of Mr. Stanley, there can be no possible harm in your giving me all the information you possess in reference to this Mrs. Granger. Mr. Stanley is at present in poor health; he cannot, in all probability, long survive, and what he wishes to know from you is whether you can direct in any way to what members of her family may yet be living; it will be greatly for their benefit."

"Is Jos. Stanley, you think, about to die?"

"I think so, madam, and so does his physician, and what is more to the purpose, he himself thinks so; and like many others, he feels that he has neglected the great work of life, and is anxious to make what preparation is in his power now to make for his latter end."

"Joseph Stanley making preparation for death." This was

said in a slow and measured manner, with her eye bent downwards and as though speaking to herself; then looking up at me—

"He has a great deal to do, then, sir."

"He is aware of that, madam; and I do believe he is very anxious to do all that in him lies to redress all such wrongs as he may have done himself or had the benefit of from the evil conduct of others."

"Is it so, indeed? Than a power mightier than man has laid hold upon him. But, sir, I do from my heart believe that if justice should be done, the very house that covers them and the greater part of all they've got would be taken, and then all the evil could not be made good."

I could not but notice that the old lady seemed unwilling, for some cause, to meet in a direct way the question I put in reference to this Mrs. Granger. I was obliged again to repeat it, and tried to put it in as concise and direct form as possible:

"I truly believe, madam, that Mr. Stanley intends to make full reparation for any injury which may have been done by his progenitor or himself; for this purpose I have come here; and what I wish to know is simply this: Can you direct me to any person who ought rightfully to possess this property which Mr. Stanley is willing to give up? Had that Mrs. Granger any children besides the one which died, as I am told, at your house? or do you know whether she has any kindred living?"

The old Lady seemed to be deeply agitated; if it had been a case in which there was a possibility of her being criminally implicated, she could scarcely have manifested more feeling. It was some time before she would make any reply. She put her hand over her eyes and leaned her arm upon the table, and sat meditating and talking to herself; her lips moved, but there was nothing audible.

At length, having apparently made up her mind as to what course she should pursue, she replied:

"I do, sir, know of an heir—a rightful heir. I am not prepared, just now, to say who it is. There are two persons whom

"I must first see. I can possibly get them here in two hours, & you can call in that time, an answer will be given to your request."

In two hours I was again at the house. There were present an elderly woman, somewhat younger than the lady of the house, and a gentleman whom I knew well by report, but whom I had never before been introduced to, Tomlinson by name, a lawyer of good standing. To him I was at once referred, as able to answer my questions, and the following strange intelligence was unfolded:

"The widow Granger was the daughter of Cyrenius Ford, of ———. She married early in life a Mr. Granger of the same town. Her father was an inheritor of a large estate through his wife. He had himself been a man of wealth, but, by unfortunate speculations, lost the greater part of it; and was, by endorsements for friends, further involved at the time his wife's property came into his hands. He was not insolvent; and, as it afterwards proved, had enough, and barely enough, at his death to pay his debts. There was nothing left worth mentioning. At the time his wife's property came into their possession, not willing to have it involved in his own concerns, and feeling that it rightly belonged to her, and wishing in some way to secure it to her, he was induced to make it over to a mutual friend in whom he had unbounded confidence. It was so made over by a warrantee deed, and without any consideration. It was done by the consent, and by the signature and seal of the wife, but not without remonstrance on her part. Her judgment was overruled, however, by the advice of well-meaning but injudicious friends, and the deed was done. The friend who received this property thus by deed was Stanworth Stanley, the father of the present Joseph Stanley, of ———. As I have said, the utmost confidence was reposed in him by Mr. Ford and his friends. It was an unwise act, as the event proved. He abused his trust, and seized the estate as his own. Ford died not long after the deed had been given, and the widow was reduced to absolute poverty. Their daughter and only

child married, as I have said, a gentleman of their town by the name of Granger—a man of great respectability and of a finely cultivated mind; and both he and his wife were distinguished for personal beauty and for refined and gentle manners. He was the son of a landed proprietor, and an only child; but at the death of his father, it was found that the estate he was to inherit was absorbed by mortgages and other obligations. He did not long survive his father; and left his widow, as it proved, penniless. They had, previous to his death, two children, who died also. The mother was about to be confined with another, when she, in a state of desperation, resolved to go in her then present condition, and see if she could not, by her prayers and tears, move the possessor of property rightly hers to bestow upon her some small income that might enable her and her expected infant to meet the bare necessities of life. She reached within a few miles of the house of Mr. Stanley, when she was taken ill, and was obliged to be left at the nearest house, which very providentially, as I view it, happened to be the then home of this aged lady; and there, on her bed of pain and sorrow, she died and left a living child."

The gentleman here paused, and I almost immediately answered:

"And in a few days the child died."

"The rest of the story must be told you by the lady herself; all I would add is—that the truth of what she says cannot be doubted; it can be confirmed by a witness as honest as herself."

In a few moments the old lady began:

"At the time of this poor lady's stopping at my house, I had in charge an infant of a few days old, the child of Mrs. Stanley. I had been with her at her confinement; she was very ill, and became raving crazy. The child could not be nursed and it was put into my hands to take care of. As I could not remain there, and as it could be fed by hand as well anywhere else as there, and as the house was in a state of uproar and confusion, Mr. Stanley was glad to have me take

it away, and promised to reward me well; and it is but justice to say he was up to his word.

"The very day I went home with this child came the poor lady I have spoken of. I did what I could for her, for my heart was drawn towards her, she was so gentle, and such a pleasing, pretty face. Her babe was born in my hands, and all appeared to be doing well; but three days after the birth a change took place. She began to fail; I sent for the doctor, but it was too late, she soon dropped off. The next day the child which I was nursing for Jos. Stanley was taken with a cramp or colic, and it went into convulsions and died in my arms.

"My cousin, here," pointing to the woman who, as I have mentioned, made one of the company, "was with me at the time. We both had listened to the story the poor dying woman told us, and we both felt that as she had been wronged out of her rights, and her baby was left destitute, it would be no more than justice to give the little thing a chance to be taken care of, and may be a chance, if she should live, to get back part of her property again; at any rate, as one of the heirs of Joseph Stanley. It was a smarter, prettier child than the Stanley baby, and we had no doubt of as good blood and better, and we did not think there could be much wrong in just letting the dead child pass for that of the poor woman. We knew the Stanleys could never tell the difference, for none of them had hardly looked at it, all were taken up with the mother, who was raving crazy. Whether we did right or wrong, I have never been able to make up my mind; but the thing was done, and it can't be helped now. None of the Stanley folks ever suspected that they were bringing up one that was not their own—that I *know*, for I lived in the family two years after that, and Lillian, they called her by that name, was quite a little girl, able to say her prayers, which I taught her myself, when I left them and moved to this place."

I could remain silent no longer; my feelings had been

highly agitated during the recital, not knowing to what possible climax it would reach, but anticipating, I must say, something extraordinary from the preliminary narrative.

"Then," I exclaimed, "Lilian is not the child of Joseph Stanley—she is the rightful heir, though, of the greater part of his estate."

The gentleman turned towards me and tapping me on the shoulder:

"That this whole narrative is true, Mr. R., I have no more doubt, sir, than that you and I are sitting here. This good woman committed her secret to me at the time. I should not have dared, I must say, to have made the venture she did; but it was done, and being myself perfectly assured of the villany of old Stanworth Stanley, I was willing to let the matter go on and see how it would result. But, my dear sir, what if she is, as we believe, the proper owner of the property, how is she to reclaim it? No case can possibly be made out that any judge would listen to for a moment."

"I cannot say, esquire, what the result may be. I have strong hope that justice may be done. You know, sir, that we cannot get away from the controlling power of divine Providence; and although this is not a state of retribution, and many deeds of iniquity go unpunished here, yet there are instances where the conscience, by the touch of the Almighty, becomes aroused; and individuals are compelled, by its severe lashings, to do what no power of man could induce them to do. I have strong hope, sir, that in this case right may yet triumph."

"I hope so; but can you tell me, sir, has this child—she must be a young lady now—grown up, under the influence of this family, to be like the rest of them?"

"As unlike, sir, as it is possible to conceive. There is not the least resemblance in person, mind, or heart. She is as beautiful, lovely, and good as they are perverse; and, sir, until this matter has been thus unfolded, I have sought in vain for a

sufficient reason to account for the perfect contrast. She is now at my house by her father's consent, and I have become intimately acquainted with the qualities of her mind; and here I would say to this aged lady: it was you, madam, that first instructed her young mind to fear God and pray to Him."

"Oh, well, sir; it was little such as I could do; but I knew I did, in my poor way, try to tell the dear little thing about God, and taught her a short prayer; for, you see, I felt a kind of interest for her, knowing, as I did, all about her, and feeling a sort of responsibility from having done as I did; but it was very little I could do."

"That little, however, my dear madam, has, I have reason to know, accomplished a great work. Lillian has told me that her first instructions in religion were received from an old nurse that once took care of her; that she taught her to say her prayers; and then, when she was old enough, to understand the prayer-book she used; and God has blessed the instructions of that excellent work to a clear and heart-felt comprehension of the way in which we poor sinners are saved. I believe her to be a genuine, humble Christian. So you see, my dear madam, the little seed you have planted has not been lost."

The old lady seemed deeply affected; and although tears do not gather fast nor easily in advanced life, yet they were coursing down her furrowed cheeks.

"The Lord be praised! the Lord be praised!" It was all she could say.

"I say Amen to that with all my heart."

As I was about to take my leave, I said:

"I believe it will be of the utmost consequence that what has transpired here to-day should be known to no one beyond this circle; it might frustrate all good intentions on the part of Mr. Stanley, and defeat our present object."

"Of that, sir," replied Mr. Tomlinson, "we cannot but be aware; and that you may rest assured of our ability to keep a secret, what we have told you has rested in our own bosoms for

now nearly twenty years, I believe it is. I have never even told my wife; for we know not what persecution and distress might come upon these good women who acted, I believe, at the time with the best intentions. Of course the thing must come out in time, at least if anything material is effected. And I shall see to it, that these two good friends here are not without a defender, if they should need one. There will be a great uproar, if my knowledge of the family is correct, when the intelligence reaches them that they have been nurturing a bird of another feather."

"That is what I anticipate; and shall not be disappointed if I have to encounter an unpleasant storm; but the part I have taken has been thrust upon me; and I shall not shrink from a little trouble, or even danger, in carrying it through."

My ride home was accomplished in a much shorter time, to my apprehension, than I ever went over the same distance before; my mind was so fully occupied with the intelligence I had received, and what might be the possible result to myself as well as others.

The conclusion to which I arrived at length was, that it would never answer for me to take the whole responsibility upon myself. I resolved, therefore, without consulting with Mr. Stanley, to go at once to his lawyer, whom I knew to be an honorable man, as well as keen in his profession. He was a member of my congregation, and a gentleman with whom I had always enjoyed a pleasant intimacy. But the recital of my interview with him, and its results, must be left for another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

It had been my determination, when I entered the ministry, that my sole business should be to preach the Gospel; and that I would permit no circumstances to lead me into any side-issues that were not in strict consonance with that single work; and also, when I was settled, I again reiterated to myself this resolution:

"I will not, in any way, mingle my labors as a Christian minister with the temporal concerns of my people; nor interfere with their local or national politics. My duty is to endeavor to build them up in the most holy faith, and to win souls to the Saviour."

This resolve, I have no doubt, was a good one; but I found out by experience that a minister, from his very position, is obliged in many ways to depart, in some measure, from such a decided stand; temporal concerns and spiritual interests are often so blended that one is very materially affected by the other; and both need to be regulated in a proper manner before there can be real progress in either. I was often called upon to settle difficulties, not only between neighbors, but between such near relations as husband and wife. I have had to decide cases of morality in the transactions of not only members of my congregation, but even between the members of my church; for, so blinding is the power of self-interest, that even those who, in general, wished to do right, become obtuse to the real merits of a question of wrong when it is on their own side; and it has required all my wisdom to enable me to de-

cide according to equity, and yet maintain my influence as a preacher of eternal realities.

As to the case in which I was involved, it seemed impossible for me to have pursued a course that would have saved me from its difficulties. If I had not been a minister, I might have refused to have any intercourse with a family like the Stanleys, who were notorious for their meddlesome tendencies, and their disposition to create discord and discussion, not merely among themselves, but with those who became on terms of intimacy with them. My duty was, "to do good unto all men as I had opportunity." I had not courted my present intimate relations with Mr. Stanley; but I could not well see how I could have avoided them.

That I was like to be led into a vortex of perplexity and discomfort was very certain. The end in view—Mr. Stanley's peace of mind and an act of justice—might, indeed, be accomplished; but how would the family be affected thereby? Like a bear robbed of her whelps, they would have their ferocious passions aroused against all aiders and abettors of their father in accomplishing the deed. They were fond of contests at law; and, for mere trifles, would engage in a suit without regard to cost. They were revengeful—(I speak now of all but the father)—and, no doubt, would hesitate from no act of secret injury to satiate their passion. And yet I could not see how I could pause in my undertaking and satisfy the demands of my conscience either as a minister of the Gospel or as a man. There appeared but one course. I must go forward, and, using my best judgment, act as circumstances might demand, and leave results to the disposal of the great Keeper.

On the morning after my return from my visit to the town of ———, I called upon the gentleman whom I have already mentioned as the confidential adviser of Mr. Stanley. I have also said that our relations were of a friendly character; and I had great confidence, not only in his legal attainments, but also in his honor.

I need not recount the minutiae of the events, and peculiari-

ties of my situation in regard to them, for which I had the need of his counsel. He listened to my recital with intense interest, and never interposed a question until I had concluded my narrative. As soon as I had finished, he said :

"You say, Mr. R——, that Esquire Tomlinson assured you, of his own knowledge, that the statement made to you was true."

"He did so, and with much emphasis."

"I have the utmost confidence in Tomlinson ; he is a man of sound judgment and great discretion. It is a very singular occurrence—a strange turn in the dispensations of Divine Providence—for I cannot but look at it as something above the mere ruling of the hand of man."

"You look at it, sir, in the same light in which I view it."

"You astonish me, however, more by what you say of the state of mind which Mr. Stanley manifests than with all else you have told me. It is more like a miracle than anything that has come under my observation for a long time, if ever ; and I have seen some strange things too in the course of my professional life. Why, sir, it is not long since I drew up his will. I saw then that he was alarmed about his condition ; but he manifested as much interest in the adjustment of what could only take effect after all his concern in worldly matters should have ceased as if his spirit would still take delight in knowing that his life-business was going on by his own direction."

"He told me that fact, sir ; he said in the beginning of our interview, incidentally as it were, that his lawyer had arranged his worldly matters, and that he had now come to me to settle his spiritual concerns and help him to make preparation for another state of existence."

"Yours was the more difficult task of the two, as I take it ; and I only wonder how you have been enabled to bring him to the state of mind you say he seems now to exhibit."

"That, sir, has been done, if really done, by a power which you nor I possess. Conscience, when aroused by a touch from above, will soon bring us poor mortals on our knees and in the

dust. It is, I have no doubt, the commencement of the 'gnawing of the worm that never dies.'"

"True, sir, a stricken conscience drags many a fellow to the gallows of his own account. But to our subject. This, Mr. R——, is a very serious matter, and needs to be handled with a great deal of care. As things now stand, Miss Lilian will share with the rest, and a little better. She seems to be his favorite, and no wonder. She is the only one of his family that appears to have any respect or regard for him, and I fear, when he comes to learn the truth, it will be a severe stroke. I think it will be the drop to overflow his cup of bitterness. It would not be a very agreeable task to make the truth known."

"I have thought of that, sir, and must confess I shrink from doing it."

"And yet you are the most suitable person to break the intelligence. He has great respect for your character, and great confidence in your kind feelings towards him. But, sir, as I was saying—Lilian is now provided for. Should the fact be known that she is not his child, it would, of course, arouse the other heirs to contest her right, and there is no telling, as the will is now made, what the result would be. She is named in the bequest as his daughter Lilian. You see the danger, sir."

"I do certainly ; and she might be cast off without a cent, and no chance for ever gaining her rights as the lineal heir of her mother and grandfather."

"There could be no possible hope of that, sir. Our courts set their faces against all attempts to go behind the plain face of a deed, signed and sealed, and all that—there could be no hope from any such source."

"It would almost seem, so far as her interest alone is concerned, that it would be better nothing should be revealed ; and yet, the truth has a right which we are not always justified in concealing."

"Right, sir—you are correct there ; it is safer in general to go by the line of truth, the simple truth, than by any crook, or by path of our own devising. In what I said of a provision be-

ing now made for her, I was merely stating the case—that we might look at it in all its bearings—but your suggestion in reference to the demands of truth is well put, sir, and I think must not be overlooked.”

“And then, again, it is my firm belief if no rightful heir can be presented whose claims will satisfy Mr. Stanley, that he will make some disposition of so much of his estate as he feels has been wrongfully in his possession, which may deprive the right owner of any part thereof; to my mind, he seems resolved not to venture his leap into eternity with that weight upon his conscience.”

“You really think so?”

“I do, sir, most truly.”

“You have had opportunity for making up a judgment in reference to that matter, which, of course, I have not. He is a singular man; but there is one quality of mind he possesses, which, if you are right in your judgment of his present feelings, will be in favor of what both you and I think ought to be done. He is obstinate to a degree; if his mind is truly set on any course, he will pursue it to the death. I know not, Mr. R., upon reflection, but the best and only way is for you or some one else—although I think, all things considered, you are the proper person to do it—to go to him, and, in the best way you can, state the result of your inquiries, and let the consequences take care of themselves. But, sir, I was going to suggest, although I do not covet the undertaking, that I go with you.”

“You relieve my mind greatly, sir, by your kind proposal. It is a case of great difficulty, and great tact and delicacy will be required in breaking the matter to him; and, moreover, you have been longer acquainted with Mr. Stanley, and no doubt are familiar with peculiarities which I may have overlooked. I thank you, sir, much for the suggestion. And there is another difficulty which has just occurred to me: I have reason to believe, from what occurred at my last visit, that it is very doubtful whether I should be permitted to see him at all, at

least if he should be unhappily confined to his bed, as I fear may be the case. Mrs. Stanley seemed highly displeased at what she termed ‘troubling a sick man about things which were of no consequence,’ and even suggested that I had endeavored to act the part of a father confessor.”

“So, so; then I see trouble ahead. That is bad; we may be balked after all. She is a very tigress when she has a mind to be, and she has two or three young cubs ready to back her in anything, and a she cub more fierce than any of them. But stay, sir, now I think of it, I have a little commission to attend to for Mr. Stanley, and at his request I am to call and arrange the affair with him. It is his domicile yet—that is, if he is living; and if so, I will see him, if I have to take the high sheriff of the county with me to clear the road. Perhaps, sir, the best plan we can adopt in this new emergency is, for me to go first; they will have no suspicions that I shall disturb him by any meddling with his spiritual matters, and after I shall have access to him, say in half an hour, do you drive up. I will be on hand should any attempt be made to hinder your seeing him, and I think you had better take Miss Lilian with you; it is but natural and right that she should wish to see her father. Does she know or suspect anything of what you have told me?”

“Not a word; indeed, I should feel it a severe trial to tell her. She is very fond of her father—we may as well style him so at present.”

“By all means; then take her with you; something may turn up to make it highly proper for her to be there; and in reference to my presence, the more I think of it the more persuaded I feel that it would be best. If any thing is to be done, it must be done legally and at once, you see, sir.”

“I do, sir. But do you not think the communication can be more cautiously and effectually made by yourself, in my presence, than it would be in my power to do. As you say, it will require great tact and prudence in opening the matter. I have but little skill in such delicate work as I see this will be.”

"If you say so, sir, I will. I know you ought not to be troubled with such affairs, but as it is, you cannot well rid yourself entirely of the trial. I will do the best I can."

Lilian was too anxious to see her father not to be perfectly ready for the ride there; and at the hour agreed upon by the legal gentleman and myself I drove up to the mansion of Mr. Stanley.

Lilian, of course, entered without knocking, and I followed her into the front parlor; as no one appeared, in a few moments she left the room. I was somewhat surprised at the stillness which pervaded the dwelling, and began to think that possibly death had entered and hushed the household into that subdued repose which usually takes place when the great destroyer manifests his presence. I knew that my companion in the work must be there, for his gig stood by the door. In a short time Lilian returned, and I saw that she had been weeping.

"Is your father not living?" I asked in haste.

"He is living; but oh, dear Mr. R., there has been dreadful doings around his dying bed. One of the servants has just told me. Oh, sir, there will some terrible judgment come upon us all, I fear!"

"What has taken place, Lilian?"

"Oh, I cannot tell you, sir. I do not know the whole of the difficulty: but yesterday he felt much worse, and feared he was about to die; in his distress he called for my mother and for the children; it was something he wished them to promise him to do if he should die before you got back. It seems his mind is terribly troubled about some wrong which he says has been done to some poor people. Perhaps you know about it. But my mother and sister and the boys were dreadfully enraged. He told them that their abuse should not prevent his doing justice, and the moment he should be able to put his pen to paper he would relieve himself from the guilt, if it took everything he had—and then Joseph, my oldest brother, caught him by the throat. Oh, Mr. R., dear Mr. R., will not God's curse come upon us all—we are such a dreadful family!"

"Not upon you, I trust, dear Lilian; you are not to blame; but did not the others interfere?"

"My mother did, but in some way she was pushed down so violently that her hip has been sprained and she is confined to her bed. Thomas, too, interfered, for he thought my father would die before Joseph would release his grasp; and then Thomas and James had a dreadful scuffle; at length the men servants were called, and they with great difficulty released my father and put them all out of the room, and they have allowed no one to enter it since. And now Mr. Sandford is there, and he has sent for the sheriff to come and take Joseph into custody. But had you not better go away, Mr. R., they are dreadfully enraged against you."

"Do not fear for me, Lilian; I am in the discharge of my duty. I have come to see your father on very important business; can I be admitted to his room?"

"I will show you the way, sir."

I followed her at once, although I must confess I had serious apprehensions for my own safety. Sons that would attack their parents and do violence to them, I knew would not hesitate at any act their passions might dictate, although hitherto the young men who had been under my care had always treated me with respect. The oldest son I had never seen, but I was to be favored with the sight sooner than I expected, and much sooner than I wished.

I have said I at once followed Lilian. She passed through the parlor, and opening a door that led into another room of the same size, from which a door opened, as I afterwards learned, into an entry that led into the bedroom of her father, she had just entered the room adjoining the one she had been in, and I was about to pass through the door, when I heard footsteps behind me approaching in great haste. As was natural, I turned and paused a moment, when a man rushed by me, elbowing my person rudely, caught hold of the door, and pulling it to with violence, turned the key and drew it from the lock. I might, perhaps, have escaped through the door which led into the

hall of the house, but not wishing to manifest fear, or that I supposed any violence was intended, I remained stationary. Immediately on securing the key from the door he had locked, he hastened to close the other opening, and, pushing a catch which fastened it, stood before it. He was to me then a hideous object. His countenance was disfigured with marks of violence; his eyes blood-shot; his hair long and matted, and in all particulars bore the nearest resemblance to a maniac that I could conceive; in fact I took him to be one and determined to govern myself accordingly. I saw clearly that if he had the purpose of violence in his mind, I could have no assistance from without. The doors themselves were of such massive structure that it would require great force to break through them should that be necessary. I was in a den with a lion and must do the best I could. I kept my eye firmly fixed upon him, and at first he seemed to quail before my steady gaze.

"I wish to inquire, sir," I said, "why is this? and to whom am I indebted for this unusual treatment?"

"If you don't know me, I can tell you who I am. My name is Joseph Stanley, and you will find out before you get through, that you are not dealing with old Joe Stanley by a ———."

"You have answered one of my questions, sir; may I have an answer to the other—for what reason am I insulted by such unusual treatment?"

"I will answer that when you tell me what you are here for."

"I am here to see your father, and at his request."

"You won't see him, make up your mind for that; he don't want any priests mumming around him, and you have got to tell me what business you went about the other day—the old f—l blabbed out—"

"Hush, sir, hush; how dare you use such language; it is enough to bring the immediate judgment of God upon you."

"I ain't afraid of any of your judgments; you just take care or yourself—and answer my question."

"I shall answer no questions, sir, put to me under present circumstances."

"You won't, ha! then I'll make you. Now, sir, tell me what business you went upon for Joseph Stanley, and what you have got to say to him about it, and tell me quick."

He spoke this in a slow determined tone of voice, his eye flashing, his fist clenched and raised, and advanced a step or two from the door nearer to my person.

I looked firmly at him, measuring as well as I could the strength of my opponent; for I had no doubt he designed an attack. I was taller, and more robust in form, and I knew that I possessed a good share of muscular power, although never yet tested by an encounter with my fellow-man. I was, to be sure, a minister of peace and good will, but I was also a man, and I knew of no command that would prevent me from securing myself from the attack of a wild beast or a mad man.

I was enabled, I believe, to meet his passionate manœuvre with an unblanched check and a fearless attitude.

"Young man, I warn you against an attempt at violence, I am the stronger of the two—but I wish not to inquire you. In yonder room lies your dying father. I beg of you to consider the unjust and useless conduct you are now indulging. I am here at that father's request, and here I will remain in spite of threats or violence until I have seen him and delivered my message."

"That message, then—that message; out with it—tell me or you shall never leave this room alive."

"Is that your purpose, then? That threat may cause you serious trouble, and there is one," pointing at the moment towards the window, "who will be ready on my complaint to take you into safe keeping."

He turned a look as I spoke, and saw the sheriff of the county drive up. In an instant he was ghastly pale, and quick as thought unlatched the door and fled.

I learned soon after that when Mr. Sandford had called that morning, he came by virtue of a message from Mr. Stanley, and

had been some two hours there before I arrived; he was sent for by the head of the family for the purpose of advising what steps could be taken to protect him from the violence of his sons, and the surest way, he thought, was for Mr. Stanley to enter a complaint, and put the matter into the hands of the sheriff. This son had heard that this officer had been summoned, but did not believe the report until, very opportunely for me, I was able to point him out at this very door. He fled not only from the room, but from the house, and nothing was heard from him, until some days after the death of his father, and after the funeral solemnities were over. I shall have occasion again to revert to him in the course of this narrative.

I must say I breathed more freely when the presence of this madman no longer demanded my attention. I knew not to what length he might go, he seemed so desperate, so furious, so utterly devoid of moral sensibility; he was more like a beast of prey than a human being.

This scene lasted but a few minutes—much less time than it has taken me to describe it; during its progress Lilian had entered the room where her father was confined, had spoken to Mr. Sandford, and told him what had occurred, and begged that gentleman to go to me, for she feared I would get into trouble, and he at once started to do so, but seeing the carriage of the sheriff approaching as he was coming through the hall, ran out to meet him, and was by the gate when that gentleman drove up.

As I immediately left the room after the sudden departure of young Stanley, I meet them both as they entered the house. Mr. Sandford asked:

"Where is Joe Stanley?—in the parlor?"

"No, sir, he was there a moment since, but he left it very suddenly. I believe, the sight of this gentleman alarmed him,"—and I pointed towards the officer.

"Which way did he go?" the latter asked.

"I cannot say, sir, but I presume in an opposite direction from the one in which you were coming."

"How did he appear?"

"As nearly like a person bereft of reason as any thing else; the appearance of Mr. Sheriff alone saved me, as I think, from serious trouble with him."

After some little urging on the part of the officer it was ascertained that he had left the house, for he was seen entering the woods not far from the house, and going into them with great haste; no pursuit was instituted, but the sheriff was to remain in the house through the day and night as a guard against any recurrence of scenes such as had transpired the night before.

"I wish to see you," said Mr. Sandford, taking me by the arm, and leading me back into the room which I had just left. "I wish to say a few words to you before you see Mr. Stanley; please be seated."

He drew his chair up before me, and laying his hand on my knee—

"The business, sir, which you and I have had so much at heart, and which has caused me no little anxiety, as no doubt it has you, is accomplished!"

"You do not mean that Mr. Stanley has been informed that Lilian is not his child?"

"I have told him the whole story. You see, my dear sir, there has been a terrible state of things here the past night; it is too sad to repeat. I do not wish to trouble you with a detail of scenes that will give you a worse idea of human nature than you have in your daily experience; but all human nature, bad as it is, does not quite come up or rather come down to so low a mark as this family exhibits. There is more of the evil one in some of them than was ever in those who hid themselves among the tombs. But let that pass. Mr. Stanley sent for me early this morning—in fact just after you left my office. I came at once, and I have got sheriff Potts here, and I mean to keep him here until the scene closes and the old father can be no more disturbed by his godless family. Well, sir, I had, you see, a good chance to bring this strange matter up

and, as I said, thinking you would be glad to have the thing over and done, I told the whole story."

"How did he receive it?"

"Mr. Stanley's mind has undergone a most wonderful transformation. Your opinion on that point is most correct; my own ears could, I do believe, alone have convinced me of it; it is most surprising! as great a miracle, almost, as raising the dead! Why, sir, of course it was a shock to him—he loves that child—loves her with an ardor I did not suppose him capable of feeling for any human being. But, sir, it struck him at once as an act of God, said he."

"It is the doing of the Almighty, it is the hand of God, I submit—"

"And you found him ready to set things right?"

"Perfectly so; anxious to do it, and it is done."

"Done!"

"Done sir."

"In what way?"

"The very best way possible; a deed has been drawn and signed in favor of Lilian for the whole of that property which belonged to her grandmother, and the old will committed to the flames. It was of little use, you see; for pretty much all the property Mr. Stanley could dispose of was that which now goes to Lilian."

"Mrs. Stanley, I believe, has quite an estate in her own name."

"She has, and the children and she can quarrel over that to their hearts' content—no one will care."

"Lilian, of course, knows nothing of all this; I know not how she will feel—she loves him."

"She, of course, knows nothing; and Mr. Stanley does not wish she should so long as he lives; he does not care to have the relation they have sustained towards each other disturbed during the few days or hours he may be here; and now, sir, my work here is done. I have the deed in my possession, and shall immediately have it put upon record, for fear of any afterclaps.

Wills may be destroyed, but a deed on record is a fixture. I hope you will remain with Mr. Stanley as long as you can; he has an almost childlike confidence in you; no disturbance need be feared so long as Potts is around, and he will be on hand through the day and night at least."

Lilian now entered the room, and said her father wished to see me, if I could be spared, and as Mr. Sandford was about to depart I once more followed her to the room.

I saw that a great change had taken place in the poor sufferer, he was pale, and breathed short, and there was a strained appearance in the eye as though from extreme effort. Two days had brought him much nearer the grave than I had thought possible.

As I entered the room and came up to his bedside he turned his face with almost a smile upon it; he took my hand in both of his, but said nothing; that his mind was now at rest, I felt well assured; for some moments I could not speak, my feelings were excited almost beyond control. I had seen him in the hour of his pride, the stern, haughty man. I had seen him under the pressure of alarm for his eternal state. I had witnessed his struggle with an unsatisfied conscience; and now the struggle was over, the sting of the inward monitor was withdrawn, and the proud and haughty spirit was changed into that of the little child meekly submitting to the will of God. Never before did I have such humbling views of myself, and such a glorious apprehension of Almighty power and love.

I took a seat by his bed-side with my hand still clasped in his; that silent embrace told all I wished to know. I had been his spiritual adviser, and here my earnest though feeble efforts for his good were thus acknowledged—not to the exalting of my pride, but to the glory of divine grace for I felt how powerless was any skill of mine to have accomplished such a blessed result.

I thought, too, of all he must have endured from the revelation which had been made to him of his changed relationship to that dear girl who was standing by my side and looking at him with the warmest filial love beaming from her

beautiful countenance. I saw his eye fix upon her with intense interest. She was no longer his; no tie of blood bound them together; but was she not a messenger from heaven, a token of past unworthiness, and to be hereafter a witness for his sincere repentance, a shield to his memory from reproach on earth, and one whom he could hope to rejoice with in the better world.

Thinking that he might converse more freely with me if Lilian were not by, I asked her if she would leave us for a little while.

As soon as she had retired, Mr. Stanley spoke.

"The ways of God are far above our comprehension."

"You feel, my dear sir, that God is wise as well as good."

"Ah, yes, wise and good—ah, how good! how full of mercy!"

"And you can trust in Him?"

"The cross! the cross! that blood which dropped on Calvary! that precious blood! There rests my hope."

This was said with such a burst of feeling, that my whole being was thrilled as with an electric shock. I had to cover my face, and let my feelings have their way.

"I am glad you asked Lilian to retire. I want to speak of her—of her future. You know all; it is a sad blow to my heart, for I did love her. I do love her now. It would have been some consolation to know that there would have been one that bore my name—that had something good—something that others could love. But that cannot now be. My name will be made an offence and a byword in the earth, through those I leave after me. Oh, what a great mistake my life has been! But it is past; the record is made. As a father, I have been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

"The grace of God, my dear sir, can reach your family as it has reached you."

"I know—it is all-powerful; but it is not often that a miracle is wrought such as has been wrought for me. But, in regard to my family, may I ask you to do what you can? It may be your words will have some effect; there is no telling. I must leave them in the hands of God."

"I assure you, sir, what I can ever do to win them to the right way, shall be done. I only fear their prejudices may be so strong against me as to forbid all opportunity."

"I understand; but as to Lilian—she will be now without a protector."

"Never, while I live."

"You will take her, then, and guard her as your own?"

"With all my heart."

"Those, that burden is taken off—I can rest on that; but it is my wish that she remain my child for the few hours or days I may live—it is so good to feel that I have the love of one pure heart, although I know it is not mine. Say nothing to her on that one subject until I am gone."

"Your wish shall be gratified, my dear sir, in that or anything else in my power to accomplish."

"That is enough; but I should like to see Lilian."

I soon was able to gratify his wish. As she came up with me to his bedside, he took her hand and placed it in mine:

"He will be your father, Lilian. Heed my words: go by his counsel, listen to his teachings, and may the blessing of Heaven rest upon you!"

Lilian was overcome. Mr. Stanley had never been an affectionate father; he had not, in general, treated her unkindly—but seldom with any manifestation of tender paternal love. All his conduct of late had been altered, and her affectionate heart felt most deeply every token she received of his fatherly love. This last expression of his care, reaching beyond his own ability to do for her, was unexpected as it was touching. She threw herself upon her knees, and clasping his hand, pressed it to her lips and bathed it with her tears.

"Oh, my father! my father! must it be so? Must I lose you now, just when I am beginning to realize how sweet it is to have a father's love?"

Mr. Stanley was greatly agitated; the muscles of his face were moved as in the commencement of a convulsion. A whole life was in that throb of feeling—a life lost to love and fond

endearment—with but a taste of happiness he might have had—of that pure bliss which man, even in his lost estate, has yet remaining to him—parental affection, bathing in the crystal fountain of filial love—giving and receiving, but never impoverished nor ever cloyed.

Fearing the effect upon the sufferer, if the scene should be prolonged, I raised the weeping girl and led her to a seat, whispering to her that she must endeavor for his sake to command her feelings, as too much excitement might hasten his end.

It was about midnight when I was aroused by a rap at my room door. I had remained at Mr. Stanley's at his particular request, and late in the evening left him for a little repose. I saw that the end was approaching, but did not imagine it was so very near. I answered the call at once, and was in a few moments by the dying man. The last touch of the Destroyer was visibly upon him. The physician was in the room, and Lilian entered just after me.

"Where are the children?" I said; "they should be called at once." Mrs. Stanley, I knew, was confined in another room, and unable to be there. "Lilian, you had better call the children at once—lose no time."

In a few moments the two younger brothers, with their elder sister, came in. I had not seen them since I had been in the house. The reasons for their excluding themselves from sight were evident in their disfigured faces. I made way for them, and beckoned them to approach the bed. The sister and Lilian stood side by side—the former weeping, but the latter, with her hands clasped, seemed absorbed in some thought too mighty for tears. She was evidently at prayer—trying in that way, doubtless, to aid the fluttering spirit through the parting struggle.

I watched the countenances of the young men, but no special mark of feeling could I discover. One of them but barely took

a view of the pale sleeper, and then turned away and walked to the other end of the room; the other soon followed. Their father was just breathing his last; he had lost all consciousness of things here, and was doubtless entering the unknown, untried country; and now the flickering breath had ceased to go and come, the chest heaves no more, and all is still. I stepped up to James Stanley:

"Your elder brother is not here; it is therefore your privilege to close the eyes of your deceased father; he has breathed his last."

"Let Tom do it; I don't like to touch dead folks."

The other brother was near at hand, and heard the answer which James had given, and looked towards him. He made no reply, but immediately left the room, followed by his sister and brother. Lilian alone remained. I stepped up to her:

"My dear Lilian, it is for you now to perform the last sad office."

She understood my meaning, and at once took that place which should have been supplied by others. Then, when she had quietly laid her hands upon the yielding lids, and closed them for their long sleep, she turned towards me a look I long remembered:

"He is at last in a world of peace."

CHAPTER V.

It was three days after the funeral solemnities had been performed, and the body of Joseph Stanley deposited in the family vault, when one of my neighbors called upon me, quite early in the morning:

"Sad doings last night, Mr. R——."

"What has happened?" I asked.

"Well, the Stanley place is pretty nigh all destroyed."

"Destroyed! how? by fire!"

"Yes, sir; they say the barns are all burnt clean to the ground; and the house, part of it, is gone; it is pretty much ruined."

"How did it happen?"

"That is the question, sir; and nobody seems to know how to answer it. Some think one of the boys has done it out of spite. You know, sir, it has all come out about there being no will, and most the whole estate deeded outright to the youngest daughter; and it is supposed, seeing the deed covers the ground where the house stands, although it makes no mention of the house, that they were so stirred up about it, that seeing as they were not likely to have any good of it themselves, they didn't mean any body else should."

Not caring to encourage conversation on the subject, I asked no further questions, resolved to go there myself and learn the truth about the disaster.

As I drew near the mansion, I perceived a dense smoke arising from the ruins, and a large number of people gathered about the place.

The fire, I found, was nearly extinguished; in fact, there was nothing to burn outside the building; every barn and out-building lay in ashes. The roof of the house was nearly consumed; of the building attached to it and forming one of the wings, nothing was left but the foundation of the chimney. Perceiving, among the various carriages attached to the trees and fences, that of Esquire Sandford, I made inquiry for him, and was told that he was in some of the lower rooms of the house. On entering, I found him engaged in securing valuable articles of furniture, and bestowing them in a portion of the building where they would be protected from the weather.

"Well, Mr. R——," he said, as he gave me his hand, "I had thought, when poor Stanley was laid to rest, you and I would have but little occasion to do any more work here; but I have been here since midnight, and such a scene as I have witnessed I do not care to go through with very often."

"Where is the family?"

"That is more than I can tell you; that is, Mrs. Stanley and her daughter are at my house, but the young men are nowhere to be found. One of them, we have reason to believe, has met his death in a horrible manner. I did not get here until the fire had been raging for an hour or more, but those who got here first, told me that terrible screams were heard coming from the blazing pile of barns. It was out of the power of man to get into them, or afford any help."

"What reason have you to suppose it was one of the sons?"

"My reason for it is this. Joe, you know, has not been seen for some days; he was not at the funeral, and has not been at the house; but old Peterson, the blacksmith, was coming across the woods near dusk last evening, and says he saw Joe Stanley come out of the woods, cross the lane back of the barns, and was going towards them, he did not go into the house."

"Could he have fired the buildings?"

"Not very likely, not at least to run any risk of consuming himself; no, sir, my idea is, that it was done by one of the other brothers, probably Jim—he has a satanic temper—and finding

out how his father had disposed of things, was resolved to be revenged on somebody. It was but yesterday that they learned the matter; they could find no will among their father's papers, and so they called upon me; no doubt supposing I knew about it. I did know about it, and I told them the true state of the case, and directed them to the town clerk's office, where they would find out what disposition their father had made of his property. Well, sir, last evening, so the servants say, there was a great disturbance among them. They were, no doubt, greatly enraged, and, like as not, went to abusing one another, as well as all the rest of the world; and Amanda, their sister, says, she heard Jim say, "if other folks are to have the property, they must build a new house to live in."

"Mrs. Stanley and her daughter are at your house, then?"

"There was no other place I could think of. The poor woman seems entirely broken down; she suffers much from her hip, and she feels the death of Stanley more than I anticipated. She finds now that she has been rearing up serpents that may sting her to death. They feared their father, although they did not love him—now *that* restraint is wanting, I find she dreads the life that is before her."

"And well she may; she has 'sown the wind, and she must reap the whirlwind.' We cannot but pity her, for all that. Would it be of any use for me to see her? or do you think she would be unwilling to see me?"

"I cannot say, but it might be well for you to make the attempt."

"I pledged myself to her husband to do what I could for the rescue of his family from what he feared would be their course."

"Well, sir, my opinion is that you might as well try to tame wild cats, as to reclaim those boys—they are not like most bad men—there is a perversity in them, an obtuseness of moral sensibility I never witnessed in any human beings it has yet been my fortune to meet; there is terribly bad blood in them. As to the old lady, as I have said, she seems much cast down; it may be she will listen to good teaching now, but whether she will profit by it is another question."

"Has she any knowledge of what part I have taken in her husband's affairs?"

"I think she knows nothing certainly, but I should not be surprised if she has strong suspicions that we both had a hand in it. But she may not manifest any repugnance on that account. She can control her feelings when she wishes. You must, however, not lay too much stress on what she says; she can say one thing and mean another with the best grace possible."

Not very much encouraged by this revelation, I determined, however, to make an attempt. I had done nothing that under the circumstances I could avoid doing, and therefore felt a certain confidence in the purity of motives that gave me resolution.

It was, however, not until the next day that I made the intended call. Mr. Sandford was at home, and at my request he asked, "whether it would be agreeable to her that I should see her, as I had called for that purpose." Her consent, quite unexpectedly to us both, was readily obtained.

There was nothing of that bitterness in her countenance that was so manifest as I parted from her at our last interview, although her expression was stern and cold. Her daughter was in the room, and remained during the short time I was there.

"I am very sorry, madam, to see you thus prostrated."

She made no reply, but turned her eye upon me with a peculiar expression, and from the slight motion at the corners of her lips, I could not help drawing the conclusion that she rather received my condolence as a jest than meaning any thing real.

"Do you suffer much pain from your injury?"

"My injury! oh, you mean the slight fall I had. Who told you I was injured?"

"Oh, I believe, madam, it is generally understood that you were somewhat disabled by a fall, but I am glad to know that it was not attended with inconvenience. My object this morning in calling upon you is to express my sympathy in the trials you have passed through of late, and the hope that you may receive them as from the hand of God. His dispensations are designed for our spiritual good."

"I don't know what they are designed for, if other people do; one thing I know, if folks would mind their own affairs, and see to their own families, and let others take care of themselves, there would be less trouble in the world than there is."

"No doubt, Mrs. Stanley, you are correct about that matter; there is more or less officiousness in the world that causes at times unnecessary annoyance; but as we are all more or less dependent upon one another, and at times need each other's assistance, it will not do to isolate ourselves too much, and turn away from those who may mean well, although their offer of aid or sympathy be not essential to our comfort."

"It is hard to tell when people mean well; some have a very smooth face and a very crooked heart."

It was impossible for me to say at the time whether this expression of distrust in mankind was meant "in general" or designed for me in particular; but I was not long to be in doubt; for the daughter left the seat she was occupying at the farther end of the room and drawing near the bed—

"Do, mamma, say what you know you mean. Where is the use of being so 'mealy-mouthed'—why not tell the gentleman at once that you do not want any of his sympathy? He has done enough with his talk to father—poor weak man that he was—to upset his reason, and make a fool of himself and of all the rest of us. Why don't you say to him, at once, that his presence is not agreeable?"

For a moment I thought I saw the slightest tinge of a blush on the face of the mother, as this fiery missile was hissing its way from the lips of the daughter; but it was only a tinge, and it might have been my imagination after all; sure I am that I felt the blood mantling my cheeks, not in anger but shame on her account. I did not look at the young lady, nor did I otherwise manifest any disturbance.

"Hush, hush, Amanda; you forget that Mr. R. is a minister, and you know we ought to exercise charity towards all men, and more especially to a minister of the gospel. I know you

have great reason to be excited—robbed, as you have been, of your just rights; but perhaps the gentleman could not help doing as he did; he was, no doubt, foreordained to it."

"Mrs. Stanley" (I spoke with some warmth), "I am, as you say, a minister of the gospel—and as such, and as a friend to your late husband, I have sought this interview for your good, and not for my own pleasure. The hand of God has been laid heavily upon you: your husband has been taken away by death, your dwelling has been destroyed by fire, and you laid helpless upon your bed in the house of a stranger. I feel for your condition; I compassionate your misfortunes; I would alleviate them if I could, by urging upon you a due consideration of all these providences, that they may tend to your spiritual good. You may despise me and my offices, but I entreat you to remember that God is mightier than man, and his judgments may not be disregarded—lest some more terrible thing come upon you."

"Don't believe it, mamma—don't mind a word of it; he don't know any more about God's judgments than I do. A pretty story, indeed, to charge to the Almighty what has been brought about by his own sly manœuvring! If he had not have frightened father out of his reason, he would never have done as he did: nor do I believe he would have died, either; he was frightened to death with all this foolish talk about judgment, and hell, and damnation, and all such stuff; and if you cannot be left in quiet, I shall ask Mr. Sandford if he sent Parson R. here to abuse you."

I still made no reply to the infuriated lady; and feeling that under present circumstances my services could be of no avail, I said to Mrs. Stanley:

"I fear, madam, my intentions in coming here are misunderstood by you, and therefore all I could say will be likewise misunderstood. I will not intrude upon you further."

So, bidding her "good morning," I left the room; but could hear, as I descended the stairs, the loud laughter of the daughter; whether joined in it by the mother, I could not sav.

Mr. Sandford followed me to my carriage, and when I was about to get in, he asked :

"What kind of a time have you had? Anything satisfactory? Your visit was rather short."

"I fear, my dear sir," I replied, "that everything good, or even decent, about the family was gone when the spirit of the father and husband left the world."

"You are right, there, sir; they seem to be totally, irredeemably corrupt, vicious, ill-tempered—devilish, if I may be allowed the expression. But, sir, you and I will not long be annoyed by them; they are going away just as soon as the old lady can be moved. She has a large estate in the western part of New York; they will remove to that, and I shall feel that a dark cloud has been lifted off from our town, when the whole tribe is out of the way. But since I have seen you, the idea which I suggested, that Joe Stanley was consumed in that burning barn, has turned out to be a fact."

"Is it possible?"

"It is true, sir, without a doubt. In looking among the rubbish, in one of the bags, there were found not only human bones, but among them the remains of a watch which he was known to have possessed, with the seal having his initials on it; and, sir, that miserable man met his death, there can be no doubt, by the hand of his own brother or brothers, we know not which—for they have both fled, and no one knows whither, and no one cares enough about the matter to try to find them."

"Well, sir, my words have been verified sooner than I anticipated, when, in his rage, in my presence, he called his father *an old fool*."

"It cannot be! the miserable wretch!"

"I tried to stop the utterance of such profanity, by telling him that it was enough to bring the immediate judgment of Heaven upon him; and it has come, sure enough."

"It looks like it—very much like it; but I have no doubt, sir, it was not the first time he used such language, and to the old man's face, too."

"Well, sir, you and I have had a practical illustration of what is meant by this passage of Scripture: 'Cursed is he that setteth light by his father and his mother.'"

"Yes, sir, and of another passage equally important: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE Stanley family very soon removed to their new home not long after the scenes recorded in the last chapter; they never again were seen in the vicinity of their former residence.

After some years, tidings came of the death of one of the brothers by the accidental discharge of a gun in the hands of the other—many, to this day, believe it was no chance shot. The other lived to be the torment of his mother and wife from intemperate habits. The daughter married, but was soon separated from her husband, and whether the old lady ever profited by the repeated judgments upon her, I have never heard, but hope that her last days were better than her life had been.

And here, properly, the story of this family closes; but as Lilian was so long identified as a member of it, I must occupy a few pages more in sketching some scenes in her life which had a bearing upon my own history, and must therefore glance at my past years for a full understanding of the narrative.

My parents died when I was about sixteen years of age, leaving me a sister a year or two older than myself, with a small patrimony. Divided between us, it was enough to support her comfortably, as a single lady—as living was then. My own portion I determined to use in getting an education. Julia, my sister, was engaged to be married before the death of our parents, and in a few months after that event became the wife of a very worthy young man. They lived but a few years together, when her husband deceased, leaving a little boy about four years

of age. As the husband of my sister had a salaried office, there was nothing left to her but the patrimony received from her father. That had never been encroached upon. The boy was a great favorite with us all, and as my sister and myself had grown up in the exercise of the most tender and affectionate feelings towards each other, it was continued after her marriage, and little Tom taught by both parents to regard me with peculiar respect and love. He was a beautiful boy, and manifested a most affectionate disposition. I became, as was very natural, fond of the child, and one of my most agreeable relaxations from study, was to go to their home, and have a good romp with my pet, as I then called him. As my sister could not, on her limited income, keep house, she was invited to take up her abode with some relatives of her deceased husband, where she could be of assistance to them, and in that way eke out a comfortable living on what little property she had. I had become very much attached to the little fellow, and could not bear the thought of being deprived of his company. So, on hearing the proposition which had been made to her, I said:

"Julia, I want you to give Tom to me—not that you shall lose any interest in him, or that you shall not always have the direction of him, and care over him; he is yours, and I shall always teach him to love and respect you. But what I want is, that you should let me have him with me, and I will provide for him in every way."

She at first smiled at the proposal as if she thought I was in jest, and answered:

"Why, what could you do with him?"

"I have thought of the matter seriously," I answered, "and have all my plans arranged. I am not joking, I assure you."

Seeing that I was in earnest, she said:

"Why, my dear brother, you will find it a heavier burden than you imagine. Your means are limited, you are just about to enter college, your expenses there will be great; and you would find such a boy no little incumbrance."

"I know my means are not very large, but I have not yet

encroached upon my principal. I have economized so that I have got through my preparatory studies by living on my income, and have even saved something out of it. I have engaged board for myself with an excellent family where there are no children, and they have agreed to let the little fellow come with me for a mere trifling addition to my board. You are going where there are a number of children, and your time will be much occupied with domestic duties; at any rate, let me try the experiment."

It was not a very easy matter, but I did at last succeed in persuading her to agree to my wishes. She knew my partiality for the boy, and she knew that he loved me and was very obedient to my requests; and she had confidence in my affection for her, and I believe was glad afterwards that Tom was under my care.

It was my design to instruct him myself, and in the course of time prepare him for college and help him through.

When I finished my collegiate course, I entered upon my studies for the ministry, after spending a year or two previously in teaching. Tom was fourteen years of age when I received my call to my present charge. He was a bright, manly boy, but not inclined to study. I soon saw that to endeavor to force him to be a scholar would not, I feared, in the end be successful. I therefore instructed him in such branches as would be most useful for him in some active business, and at fourteen he was pretty well acquainted with figures, and could write a decent, fair hand; he had also gathered, in various ways, a smattering of many things that would, if followed up in after life, be useful as a foundation.

Although not given to study, he was by no means stupid; but he evidently disliked a sedentary life; he had a social disposition, and was "hail fellow" with every one, black or white, rich or poor—and all liked him. He was also handy at doing anything that required mechanical skill; and I found had become acquainted with almost all kinds of work, and had a more general knowledge of what was going on around him and in the

living world in general than I myself—confined, as I had been for some years, to close study. There was nothing malicious in his disposition, although ever ready for mischief, or fun, as he termed it; yet I never knew of his being engaged in any affair that manifested a desire for the real injury of another. He was a real boy—more ready for play than work—but with an active mind, and an ability to do almost anything he was put to.

As I was about to settle in the ministry and engage in a new and arduous business, and one in which I might not be able to take that supervision of one of his age and character—with his consent, I applied to some friends of mine, in the city of New York, and a place was found with a well-established house in the importing business; and to them he was bound by indentures—such being the custom of that day—until he should be twenty-one.

After I was settled, once a year, and sometimes oftener, he was permitted to visit me, for a few days at a time. His employers seemed well pleased with him, and my mind was relieved from anxiety on his account.

The years which elapsed between his first apprenticeship and his twenty-first birth-day soon passed off. At the time he should reach his majority, he was to have some weeks' holiday, and we anticipated his arrival with much pleasure—for my wife appeared to be as much attached to him as I was. His fine appearance, his open, frank, joyous disposition, and his kind and respectful treatment of us both whenever with us, had made him an especial favorite with his aunt, and was the means of his very frequently receiving stores of good things, which ladies know so well how to prepare for pet sons or nephews.

A few days before the expected arrival of our boy, as we called him—for we had no children of our own—I received a letter from the head of the concern, of which the following is a copy:

"REV. AND DEAR SIR—In a few days your nephew, Thomas Leslie, will be twenty-one years of age, and his own master"

and as I have a great regard for him, as well as for yourself, I feel bound to say a few things to you (*sub rosa*); and I write thus before he shall be with you (for we are perfectly willing that he should have a good long holiday), that he may not have his curiosity excited by your receiving a letter from me.

"We are perfectly satisfied with him in all business matters; he is faithful, prompt, and efficient—and it is our wish and intention, after he shall have been with us a year or two longer as a hired clerk, to give him a share of our business; and it is my deep interest in him that induces me to say to you what I am now going to say.

"You know, probably, that he has a very social turn of mind; he has a genial heart, and is ever ready to make acquaintances. Our city, like all other large cities, has of course a variety of characters, and there are on every hand temptations to allure the young and heedless. Of course, as your nephew has advanced in years, I have not been able very well to keep so strict a watch over him, nor regulate as to the society he should keep; and I am at times afraid, from the open and unsuspicious character of his mind, he may be induced to form acquaintances not of the right kind, and be led by them astray. I do not know of a certainty that such has been the case as yet, although I have had some intelligence that has led me to *fear*. Now, my dear sir, as he has a sincere respect and love for you, it might be well, in a proper way, to give him such counsel as you may think best suited to his disposition, and which may prevent the danger I fear.

"Yours, very respectfully,

"G. H. DEMING."

This letter, when first read, had a tendency to depress my spirits, but upon a second perusal it did not seem quite so alarming, and after a while I came to the conclusion that I would seek an opportunity to draw the whole truth from Tom. He never had been afraid to let me know anything he did, even although he might have reason to fear it would be displeasing to

me. I had trained him to a perfect freedom and confidence, and had never yet found him afraid to tell the whole truth. I had seen, as I thought, some real evils arising from too taut a rein over a young and active mind, and believed I could have a stronger hold over him, or any other young person who had any moral sensibility, by manifesting a perfect trust in their veracity and honor, than by endeavoring to exercise a strict espionage over their youthful delinquencies.

Two days after receiving the above letter, the stage-driver drove up, and both myself and wife hastened to the gate to receive and welcome, not "our boy," as formerly, but our young man; and perhaps it would be truth to confess that we both felt some little pride as we gave him our fond embrace.

He had grown much since we last saw him. Not quite my own height, well proportioned—his fine, fresh face glowing with all the ardor of youth—his hazel eye sparkling with happiness—he seemed to me then the handsomest man, of his years, I had ever seen. Life and energy were in every motion, his voice manly and musical, and his free, hearty laugh catching to all within its sound.

It wanted an hour or two before tea-time, and after a little chat with his aunt and myself, he arose, saying:

"I must go and take a little stroll, and see how things look."

Not far from our house there ran a brook through the back meadows, part of its course lined with trees, and a favorite stream for young fishers to try their luck at catching sun-fish; especially in one spot, where through an obstruction in the make of the ground quite a little pond was formed. There some willows of good size cast a pleasant shade over the limpid water, and Tom had on one of his visits cleared up all the underbrush about it, and put up one or two seats; it was a pretty spot, and perfectly retired from observation.

"Tom is going to take a look at his old fish-pond," said his aunt, as she saw him through the back window springing over the fence with a bound, "how very happy he seems."

An hour and a half had probably passed when my wife called to me as I was sitting on my front-stoop.

"Do, my dear husband, come here, come quickly."

Not knowing what might be the circumstances, I hastened into our sitting-room, where I knew she was, and which commanded a view both front and rear.

"Do, dear husband, just look yonder."

She was looking from the back window. I took my stand by her, and soon saw what had caused her surprise. There was Tom with Lilian leaning on his arm, approaching the house, and talking and laughing together as if they had been old acquaintance.

"There is something," I replied, "that I fear will be a source of trouble."

"How so, dear husband?"

"Two young hearts like theirs will be very apt to kindle by contact."

"And what harm if they should—what a lovely pair they would make!"

"That is spoken rather from your kind heart than your wise head, dear Emma; you forget to what family she belongs. Would you dare risk the happiness of that dear boy with one who has sprung from such a stock?"

"But Lilian is no more like them than day is like night."

"That may all be, but we cannot tell yet what time may develop. Oh, I should shrink from such an alliance as from certain danger. But we have no time to talk about it now; only I ask you *most seriously* to do nothing and say nothing that would lead either of them to imagine that such an idea ever entered our minds."

"And need you have added that superlative qualification to your request?" looking at me with that pleasant smile, which always lighted her countenance with its sweetest expression—"Is not your simple wish all I ever need to know?"

Lilian had been with us now for two weeks. She was not present when Tom arrived, and in fact knew not that we expected

him, nor, indeed, that we had any such relation. We had been very careful in abstaining from conversation before her that had reference to the personal interests of ourselves or others—*for*, although we had a high opinion of her, yet we felt, or at least I did, that connected as she was, our safest way was to be on our guard. It seems Lilian, in the little walks she took around our premises, had discovered this pretty retreat, and for a few days past had in the afternoon chosen it as a spot where she could spend an hour or two with some choice book in hand. Their meeting must be described by themselves.

As they entered the house, and came together into the room, Tom in his free and easy way said:

"You see, uncle, I have had more success to-day than formerly, when you and Auntie used to laugh, and ask me, 'where were the fish?' I have caught a great one to-day. But I must ask the favor of an introduction, for although we have had quite a chat together, I believe neither of us knows who the other is."

This matter was soon accomplished, when my wife asked:

"Then you met at the fish-pond?"

"I will tell you how it was, Auntie; you see, I remembered the old spot where I used to enjoy myself so much. I thought I would take a run, and look at it, and being in rather a jovial mood, with no care of the old store on hand, after I got out of hearing and came nearer the place, I began to sing one of those old college songs I learned from uncle, and I kept it up until turning suddenly around the bushes that hide the place where I fixed those seats, to my astonishment I saw sitting there, with a book lying on her lap, a young lady in a state of great excitement, and looking as pale as death, frightened almost out of her senses."

"Not so frightened as surprised," said Lilian smiling.

"Well, I thought there was the manifestation of great alarm, for I at once said, 'Do not be alarmed, miss; I am a very harmless person, although just now in rather a merry mood. But I will not disturb you in the enjoyment of this quiet spot, and will at once retire;' so taking off my hat, I was bidding a silent adieu

when, perhaps seeing I was not such a terrible bug-bear, she said:

"By no means, sir; perhaps this place belongs to you; it is my part to leave," and she arose to depart.

"I believe, I said, 'I have no ownership to claim over the premises beyond that of a squatter. To whom it belongs I know not, but when a boy I took a fancy to it, and cleared up the obstructions around it, and put these rude benches here, and believe me,' I said, 'if I had ever thought they would be occupied as they have now been, I should have taken more pains in their construction; but I beg of you to be seated, and pardon my intrusion.'

"I cannot think of doing so," she replied, "unless, as you have taken such an interest in this spot as to make it such an agreeable resting-place, you take one of the seats yourself."

"I will do that with pleasure," I said, and then added, "do you ever fish here?"

"I have not as yet, but sometimes, when I see their bright scales in the water, I almost wish I had a rod."

"Will you allow me," I said, "to run back to the parsonage, and get one; it will take but a few minutes."

"Oh, by no means," she replied; "it is near tea time, and I must go to the parsonage myself."

"Are you visiting there?" I asked.

"I am," was the reply.

"Oh, then we shall have, I hope, an opportunity to try our luck some other time. I am a visitor there also." This intelligence seemed very much to quiet the nerves of the lady; she became quite composed, the color returned to her face, and she was able to converse without a tremor in her lips or voice; and a very agreeable time we have had of it. Pardon me, Miss Stanley—I mean I have had."

Lilian made no reply, but a rich flush spread over her beautiful countenance. I saw how it was, and from my heart wished Tom well back to the city. It seemed to me one of the most unfortunate events that could have happened.

Towards the close of the evening, as soon as Lilian had retired, Tom placed his chair near where his aunt and myself were sitting, and addressing himself more particularly to her:

"Is she not a lovely creature? I never saw one half so beautiful before."

"Miss Lilian has a very pleasant countenance," his aunt replied. I was too much occupied with serious thoughts about the state of things, to enter into any converse about it.

"Why, aunty, when I came so suddenly and unexpectedly upon her, I said, you know, that she was frightened; and so she must have been, I think—for I was singing that uproarious song, you know, uncle, 'Come, all ye jolly boys.'"

"Why, Tom, I had hoped you had forgotten all such foolish things," I replied.

"Me! no, uncle, I wouldn't forget them for anything. Why, uncle, we fellows sometimes sing them along the streets in the city."

"I should think you would be taken up by the watchmen."

"Not for singing; there is no law against that. I had like to have been nabbed, however, for something else, but got off. But I was telling about my meeting with Miss Stanley. I said she looked frightened; but I can tell you I was. I really thought I had come upon an angel unawares."

"Oh, Tom!" said his aunt, breaking into one of her hearty laughs.

"It is true, aunty; and would not you, uncle, if you had been in my place? You know she is beautiful—and to see such a fairy-like being all alone, so unexpectedly! I wonder you did not say something about her to me; but I am glad you did not, for our meeting was most romantic; I shall never forget it. But will you not tell me all about her?—who she is—that is, who the Stanleys are?—it seems to me I have heard the name mentioned before—do they live in this place? and what is she doing here? merely on a visit?—do tell me, aunty, all about her, or I shall not sleep a wink to-night."

As I had heard enough to convince me that there was trouble

ahead, I left the room and retired to my study, there to devise some means—what, I did not know—to nip this mischief in the bud—leaving Tom to the prudent care of his aunt, and trusting to her discretion—although I knew her own feelings were almost as much enlisted in the matter as those of Tom himself. I had, besides this, much to occupy my thoughts in reference to the young man, from what had dropped from his lips as to his conduct in the city. A shudder passed through me at the time, and I think he noticed it, for his eye was fixed upon me as he spoke. On one account I was glad he said it, for it would give me an occasion to say to him what I might not have found an opportunity to do merely from the information the letter had given. It, however, confirmed but too plainly the fears expressed by his former master.

I had often heard parents say that their anxieties and troubles on account of their children increased with their years. I felt very sure that all my cares for Tom were light, in comparison with those that now oppressed me.

For several days after his arrival, my time was wholly taken up, so that I could embrace no favorable opportunity for a private interview. In the mean while, the two young people were thrown much together, or they managed to get together and keep together most of the time. I had some hope, at first, that Tom's rather wild manners would alarm Lilian; but he had such warm feelings, and could so easily revert from a boisterous laugh and some story of wild doings, to the most graceful and gentle expressions of thought, that made him appear so much better by the contrast, I soon saw its delusion; and I had often noticed that women in general do not fancy what they call—in derision, I suppose—"nice young men." They are captivated with the opposite of themselves. That Lilian did not avoid him, but was rather willing than not for a walk or a ride, was very clear. What the result would be I feared, and resolved to do my best to frustrate it, if I had to send Tom back to the city forthwith.

The day before my interview with him, which I am about to

relate, my fears took a new alarm, from something which his aunt said to me just as I was about to go away for the purpose of visiting a sick woman.

"I wish, dear husband, you would try to give Tom an opportunity to talk with you—I mean alone. He has asked me once or twice, within this day or two, when you would probably be at leisure. He wanted to talk with you."

"Wants to talk with me! what about?"

"He did not say, but I suppose we can guess—but, dear husband, you will not be hard with him?"

"Am I ever hard with anybody?"

"Oh, do forgive me! What I mean is—remember he is young, and how can he help feeling as he does? We were young once, you know, and are not too old now to sympathize with two young hearts that have been so *providentially* thrown together."

"I shall try to have them *providentially* separated, then; and that right off. I tell you, dear Emma, this is the most unlikely event that has happened to me ever. We must not run blindly and leave these providences to work destruction, without using our common sense to frustrate them."

"Well, only be gentle with Tom. You know he has a soul of honor, and no doubt wishes to let you know how he feels—and to get your approbation."

"He will never get it, depend on that. I only hope—, but, no matter, I will be gentle; but just say, Emma, what you would have me do."

"Just follow the dictates of your own kind heart—"

"And let it run away with my judgment and common sense!"

"Oh, no, that is not necessary; but you know almost all matches are made without consulting very ceremoniously with judgment."

"I believe, dear Emma, you are in favor of a union between these two young—children, I call them."

"I am, indeed; there never were two more fitted for each other—and I believe they are truly in love."

"In love! in love!—and here it is not ten days since they first met! Surely, Lilian has got some sense left, as not to give her affections to one whom she in fact knows nothing about!"

"She knows that he is our nephew, and she knows that we love him very much, and everybody else loves him."

"What can either of them know of the other in so short a time?"

"Did you never know a case where a much shorter time accomplished a very happy union? Now, tell me."

As this last answer was a home thrust, I went on my way. I saw it was useless to argue the point with one whose own heart had not yet become callous to the power of that divine essence; and yet I knew that, in the case of those of whom we had been speaking, there were too many dangers ahead for both of them, which I foresaw, to allow me for a moment to waver in my determination to counteract them. I went on my way in a very solemn state of mind.

That evening I found leisure to give Tom the interview which he had requested, and was quite willing to let it seem to have been granted at his solicitation.

"Uncle," said Tom, so soon as we had taken our seats in my study, "I have for some days been wishing for an interview with you where we could be alone. I want to make explanations of some things I have said in your presence. You will remember, perhaps, my telling you about such a foolish matter as my singing in the streets in New York, and that for some freak or folly on my part I was seized by a watchman."

"I do remember it, Tom."

"And have you any idea of the peculiar look you gave me at that time?"

"I remember looking at you, and I remember feeling most acutely at the time."

"Well, uncle, that look I shall never forget, if I live to be an old man."

"I am not conscious, Tom, of anything but the feeling which affected me."

"Uncle, there was a whole sermon in that look."

"I wish, in general, that I could get up one on so short a notice, and with no more effort; although, I must confess, it would be dearly paid for if I had to undergo such a shock as your remarks gave me."

"I knew it, uncle; I knew all how you felt. You said to yourself—or such is the language which that look spoke to me—'There is that boy, whom I nurtured in his childhood with a father's care—whom I have spent hours, and days, and weeks, and months, in trying to teach what would be of use to him when he became a man—whom I have thought of daily while he has been away from me under others' care—whom I have prayed for when I prayed for myself—he has grown up to man's estate—and now, from his own lips, I hear him say that he has become recreant to all my pains for his good.'"

"No, no, Tom; stop, my boy; not so bad as that!"

I spoke in haste and in confusion. The penitent look he assumed as he commenced this address—the tremor in his voice—his choked utterance—had taken hold of my feelings "like a strong man armed." It required every effort of my will to keep them at command.

"Well, I am glad of that, uncle—I am heartily glad your love was not obliged to suffer so severe a blow; for I can assure you that your boy *has no real stain* upon his character. Uncle, I can look you fairly in the eye, with as pure a conscience as I did when you, in my childhood, took me on your lap and rocked me asleep in your arms."

"Tom, say no more; I believe you, from my heart; say no more—let it drop."

He saw that I was deeply affected, and was himself obliged for a few moments to cover his face. As soon as he could speak, he continued:

"A heavy load has been removed from my heart, my dear uncle. But I wish to speak further about that look of yours. It set me to thinking in regard to my whole course since I have been away from you. I am fond of society—that you know;

and for these two years past have made many associates—some of them good fellows—honorable, pure-minded young men, others good-hearted, but fond of fun and frolic, and there is no doubt, in their company at times, I have been as jovial as they, and have entered into some of their plans for an evening's amusement. But, uncle, I have never done *one single thing* which would bring a blush of shame upon your face, although you might, and would, no doubt, say, 'My acts were not wise, and ought not to be repeated.' I can tell you, uncle, if it would be worth while for you to hear it, the very thing for which, as I said, a watchman seized me——"

"No, Tom, I do not wish to know it. You are conscious of impropriety, and that is enough. I have always had the most implicit confidence in your truthfulness and your honor; and I have now; not a tinge of suspicion rests upon my mind."

"Thank you, uncle; I most heartily thank you; but I am aware of something which I never thought of before. Hereafter it will be to me like the armor of Achilles, to protect me against temptation to go aside from all that is honorable and of good report. It is this—the thought, *that a stain on my character—a loss of my reputation—will plant a dagger in your heart.* And so help me God! I will preserve a fair name, let what else may happen, that you may never have a wrinkle on your brow through my misconduct."

Some moments elapsed before the conversation was renewed. Tom had said all he had to say, but my turn had come to bring up another subject which had disturbed my peace. But it was hard work for me to bring myself to mention it. He had so wrought up my feeling for him—he appeared before me now in such a noble, manly character—I felt so drawn to him by his touching exhibition of a loving, sensitive heart, that I could not bear to say aught that might be unpleasant for him to hear. But my conviction of duty at length triumphed over my feelings, and I resolved to open the subject at once.

"Now, Tom," I said, "I have something to say on another point which I feel to be one essentially bearing on your happi-

ness. It is a delicate matter, I know, and one in which the parties themselves are more immediately concerned, and not often benefited by the interference of others. I suppose you can give a fair guess now what I mean?"

"I think, uncle, you have in view something bordering on love matters."

"You are right. And there is, perhaps, no one point in a young man's destiny in which such serious consequences are involved, as in the proper guard over his affections, and keeping them in suitable control——"

"Will you please tell me, uncle, how he is to help himself?" Tom thus broke in quite unexpectedly. I had much yet to say by way of preface—his question struck me "aback," and, for a moment, I must confess, I was at a loss how to answer. I was determined, however, not to be beaten at the very outset.

"How is he to help it? Why a man must not, in any plan that involves his interests for life, make a move without looking on all sides, and making a careful survey of the circumstances——"

"But suppose, uncle, he makes no move at all—it comes upon him unawares, and seizes every feeling of his heart, and just makes him a captive, soul and body?"

"You are stating an improbable case, Tom. A man possessed of rational faculties need never be brought under such bondage——"

"You must not tell me that, uncle, for I know to the contrary. And if you will only think back in regard to your own case—auntly has told me all about it—could you help loving her after you had seen her the first two hours—now say, could you?"

"There were no circumstances in that case which offered any hindrance. We knew all about each other."

"Do you think, upon your honor, uncle, that if there had been unfavorable circumstances, as you call them, it would have made a material difference? I tell you, uncle—people may say what they please—love is a thing sent from heaven, as I believe, and we might as well try to resist it as to steer the lightning.

"But the lightning can be managed, and made to follow the rod."

"Say the wind then—can you stop a whirlwind?"

"Tom, you use strange terms. You surely do not mean by your remarks to intimate that they illustrate, in any way, your own condition. You surely have had no experience as yet to justify the use of such figures of speech?"

"It is no figure of speech, I can assure you. I could not get up figures of speech enough to show how utterly bound in mind, heart, and soul I feel."

"Tom, you distress me."

"Sorry for it, uncle—wish I could help you."

"But, Tom, you do not mean to say that you have formed such a strong attachment for Lilian Stanley, that a proper view of her situation and yours, fairly set before you, could have no weight in leading you to ponder and sift the case in all its bearings?"

"I have pondered and sifted it, uncle, until it seems as straight as the rule of three. Why, if I love her with all my heart, and she loves me with all her heart, I should like to know, uncle, what there can be to consider. You do not believe, uncle, that I could love an unworthy object—that I could forget what kind of relatives I have had—the dear mother who is no more, that lovely woman, my aunt, and last, though not least, yourself, uncle. Do you think, trained as I have been amid the purest circle of domestic love, I could be fascinated with one who was not lovely in every sense of the word?"

"But, my dear boy, we may be deceived in that matter. Those qualities which we inherit from our parents may lie concealed for a long time. There may be a beautiful form and a very pleasant demeanor, and apparently an amiable disposition; but after a while, when the hopes and elasticity of youth have vanished, those inherent natural propensities may, and no doubt will, manifest themselves. Now, I admit that Miss Lilian, at present, is very much to be admired; but when I know from what stock she has sprung, and what blood runs in her veins,

it would not surprise me if, as occasion shall offer, when she becomes matured, there should be a development of some traits that would in the eyes of her husband mar all her beauty, and be to him a source of untold misery—at least to one of your temperament and training."

Tom listened quite patiently to my suggestions, and I could not but hope he was inclined a little more to listen to reason. His answer will show.

"Uncle, I should not care if her father was a wild Indian, and her mother a Hottentot. No one would ever make me believe she was not just what she seems—the loveliest, purest, best of human beings—and always will be."

I saw it was utterly useless to urge that argument any longer—I must try something else.

"Well, Tom, I will say no more on that head. You seem very strong in the idea that you love Lilian, and seem willing to run what I think a dangerous risk. Are you very sure that she has the same regard for you?"

"I don't know about that, uncle. I don't think she can ever love me as much as I do her—I am not so worthy. Why, uncle, you know some preachers say that we must regulate our love to beings according to their worth on the moral scale. I don't know whether you preach that doctrine or not; but sure I am, if our love to each other should be apportioned by that rule, I ought not to ask of her as much as I give. Why, uncle, she is *very good*; she has said more that has taken hold of my heart, in the short time we have been together, than all the preaching I have ever heard from the pulpit."

"I am rejoiced, Tom, if that is so. Her views on the subject of religion I have as yet had no opportunity to know (the reader will remember that I had not as yet held the conversation with her as recorded in a former part of this narrative). But the question I asked was whether you knew that your love was returned. Have you told your feelings, and has she expressed her own to you?"

"Oh no, I have said nothing to her expressly on that point."

"Then you may be disappointed altogether."

"I don't believe it. I am just as sure, uncle, as if we had held a formal confab, and let it all out. Love does not need the tongue, uncle; a grasp of the hand, a look from the eye, the tone of the voice, the very breathing—all have a language which tells as truly as so many words spoken."

"Well, Tom, I must say you are a strange mortal! And are you going to take for granted all those signs, and risk your happiness on nothing more positive?"

"By no means, uncle; you see I have answered all your questions fairly and squarely. I have told you I loved Lilian, and felt sure that she loves me; but I have never yet, uncle, done any thing of consequence without your consent first obtained; and surely I would not, under your own roof, do such an ungracious act as to make proposals to a lady, and ask for her love, without first asking your consent. I did not seek this interview for that purpose; but you have brought up the subject, and I have told you the whole case; and now, just so soon as you say yes, I shall know then what to do."

"I fear, Tom, I can never say it—not under present circumstances. My first objection arises from the fact that she is descended from a family of most fiery tempers, and deficient in moral sensibility. She has been reared amid turmoil and strife—she has been accustomed to see father and mother arrayed against each other, and children in arms against their parents, and provoking each other to wrath."

"Poor thing, I pity her from my heart! Uncle, all that warms my heart to her more intensely; and I do believe, in spite of all you say, it does yours too. To think what she must have suffered; so mild and tender-hearted, so gentle in all her ways! her very voice soft and musical. Do you believe, uncle, she has ever engaged in any of their squabbles?"

"No, I cannot."

"I knew you could not. One might as soon believe an angel of heaven would snarl, and scold, and fret, and worry, and get enraged, as to believe it of her."

"But she has been exposed to such evils—brought up in the midst of them; and I cannot say, but a good angel might, by constant contact with evil, have the moral sensibilities sadly blunted. I was going to say, moreover, besides the danger I have mentioned, I apprehend great difficulty for you, if you prosecute this affair, in the opposition of the family; they are devotedly fond of money. It has been their idol; they have large possessions, gained, some say, very unjustly. I do not pretend to know, but, depend upon it, they would never consent that this daughter should marry any but a wealthy man; and the probability is, should it become known that you were paying attentions to Lilian, she would be immediately taken away from here, and have to suffer perhaps more than ever."

I soon saw that I had touched a point at last that Tom had not considered; he was much agitated—he arose, and walked the room. I pitied him most truly, and again and again regretted that he had come to us at such a juncture.

For some minutes not a word was said by either. I knew if he truly loved her he would be willing to make a sacrifice of his own feelings rather than disturb her present quiet, and risk the danger of her being withdrawn from our care. At length Tom paused in his hurried walk.

"Uncle, tell me what I must do."

"Return at once to the city."

"And leave things just so."

"Yes."

"Oh, uncle, how can I?"

"Put on the man, Tom."

"Why, uncle, it will be like tearing my very heart strings."

"I know, my boy—as you now feel—it will be a severe trial; but as men, we often have to brace ourselves against misfortunes. I feel that it has happened unfortunately for you, and for us, that your visit should have occurred just now."

"Dear uncle, please do not say so; whatever may be its result, I can never regret that I have come in contact with Lilian. I shall be a better man, uncle—her beautiful image

will ever be present with me, alluring me to that which is pure and good. Ah no, uncle, do not say you regret our meeting!"

"Only, Tom, for your sake. You have yet to make your way in the world—fair prospects are before you; but your own efforts will be needed, and must be exerted to the utmost. A few years and you will probably be in circumstances more favorable for forming a connexion for life than you now are. Exercise patience, and submission, and trust; and you will not lose your reward."

"Well, uncle, I shall do as you say, hard as the task you have given me. How soon had I better go?"

"This is Friday, remain over the Sabbath, and on Monday take the stage."

When Tom left my study, I felt as if a great burden was removed from my mind; and yet there was a very sore spot in my heart. I saw plainly that the poor boy was most deeply smitten, and sympathized in the trial he was about to suffer; and yet, I verily believed I had done that which would result in good to him.

After Tom had left me, he entered the parlor where his aunt and Lilian were engaged in pleasant converse; the former at once perceived from his altered countenance that something unpleasant had occurred. She, as well as Lilian, knew that he had been spending the evening with me; but one of them only had any suspicion of the purport of our interview. Tom said but little, and his manner had completely changed. His aunt made several attempts to arouse him, but his constrained air was too evident to escape notice; and what added to the surprise, especially of Lilian, was Tom's asking his aunt if "it would put her to too much trouble to have a few of his articles of clothing got ready, so that he could have them early on Monday."

"You are not going away, Tom?" asked his aunt.

"I believe it will be necessary."

"Where—not to the city?"

"Yes, ma'am."

Lilian looked at him a moment and then resumed her needle, but made no exclamation of surprise. Mrs. R—— noticed that she grew deadly pale, and that her needle moved as though worked by a trembling hand. Tom hardly looked at her while in the room; he did not remain there long, but retired to his own apartment.

They saw each other only during meals the next day. On Sabbath afternoon, just before the setting of the sun, Tom came up to Lilian as she was standing by the front door.

"Miss Stanley, as I shall not have an opportunity to visit again for a long time our little retreat, I feel like taking a walk there; may I have the pleasure of your company?"

She hesitated a moment, seemed somewhat confused, but consented; and soon arraying herself, they proceeded as usual arm in arm; nothing but subjects of a general nature were started by either of them. Both acted under restraint, and it could not properly have been called an agreeable walk.

As the day was declining, as soon as Tom had seated his companion, and as he had invited her there for a special purpose, he lost no time in commencing the conversation.

"Miss Stanley, I suppose the probabilities are against our seeing each other for a long time, if ever again. I cannot part from you without expressing my sincere thanks for the kind and faithful hints you have given me in reference to my duty, as to the great subject of religion. I shall think of all you have said with deep interest, and only regret now, that I did not at the time give you greater encouragement to continue. It was not indeed the first time remarks of that nature had been made to me, but it was the first time they ever arrested my attention."

Lilian was about to reply—she fixed her lovely eye a moment on him, and then gave way to a flood of tears. Tom was in an agony of feeling. At one moment he was on the point of letting out the fulness of his heart in acknowledgment of his ardent love. But the recent scene with me came to his rescue; he had made me no special promise, but he had given me to understand that he would be led by my advice. Yet he must say

something ; to have a lady thus affected in his presence, and stand by an indifferent spectator, he could not do.

"Miss Lilian, you distress me beyond my power to express. Have I done aught to cause you grief?"

She shook her head.

"Then, when we part, we part as friends, and I may look back upon the hours we have spent together, and feel that nothing in my conduct has been a cause of pain to you, as the privilege of your society has been unalloyed pleasure to me?"

"Please do not speak thus ; in a few moments I will endeavor to command my feelings."

It took some time, however, to do this ; but the dear girl was able, after a strong effort, to regain composure.

"I am sorry, for your sake and my own, that I have been obliged thus to yield to the power of feeling. I know you may misconstrue its cause ; but bear in mind that I am a novice in all such scenes, where kind and gentle words and acts have place. I have never been used to them, and their novelty has a powerful effect. You will pardon me, therefore, and forget it."

"Do you really wish me to forget, that what you are pleased to call kind words and acts on my part have had a power to move your heart?"

"I regret nothing."

"Not even that we are so soon to separate?"

"Has my conduct led you to form such a conclusion? Your suggestion is hardly generous at such a moment."

"Forgive me, then, if in my desire to know that the pain of parting is not all on my side, I have gone beyond the bounds of delicacy. I leave you with sincere sorrow ; but I would fain leave behind in your remembrance nothing that can throw a shadow upon our past intercourse."

"Would not the thought of lost friendship, to one who never before now tasted of its luxuries, be apt to cast a shadow over the whole scene?"

"Yes, if lost, it doubtless would. But may not friends retain sweet memories, and live upon them? even though far away!"

True friendship loses not its powers by distance of space or time. And may I ask the privilege of being so remembered by you that if in the providence of God we should meet again, and you had reason to believe that my heart was as true then as it is now, you will let me stand in the same relation to you, as a friend, which I venture to hope I do now."

"You ask what perhaps I ought not to grant ; but I have never learned to conceal my feelings, and I hope may never learn to hide them from one to whom I have given, as I believe I have to you, occasion to think I prized your friendship. I promise what you ask."

He then took from his finger a plain gold-ring.

"I am a poor young man, and have no costly token about me to present you as a parting gift ; but if you will take this, and put it where you can occasionally catch a glimpse of it as a memento of its former owner, you will add to my present happiness." She took it, and with a smile said :

"And you would not care for anything that, in like manner, might remind you of her in whose memory you yourself wish a place?"

"Oh yes, most dearly would I prize such a token, even if it was of itself as poor a one as mine."

"Before we part then on the morrow, I may find something in my little stock of keepsakes that may serve the purpose. I have nothing by me now."

As Tom, no doubt, felt that he had in some measure gone round his implied pledge to me, no sooner had he and Lilian returned to the house than he sought me out, and in a straightforward manner revealed to me, as near as he could, word for word, all that had passed between them.

"And now, uncle, I feel much more contented to go back and stick to business."

"I suppose you feel that you have engaged yourselves one to another?"

"Only as friends, uncle ; you surely cannot object to that."

"By no means, if the engagement does not merge into

something else. But, Tom, I want you now to promise me that you will let love affairs alone until you are in a condition to marry and support a wife. This hurrying into matrimony, just as a young man is beginning life, is, in many cases, a great evil. Much of the unpleasant results of married life come from straitened circumstances. Few men can treat a woman with all that tenderness and love, so necessary to their mutual happiness, while suffering under those cares and necessities which press upon them. You are yet too young even to make a suitable choice. Your views will change materially after a few more years have passed. Let business, at present, occupy your mind. In the right time, no doubt, you will meet with a suitable companion."

"Can you think of one more suitable, uncle, when that right time you speak of comes, and she should prove to really possess those excellences of character, which are now only apparent, that is as *you* think—I believe them to be the essences of her nature—than this same dear girl now under your roof."

"If circumstances were different, Tom; but as they now are, I should feel that the venture on your part would be too great."

"You ask me to make you a promise, uncle. I fear to be bound in that way. You see how near I have come to breaking an implied promise already. But this I will say: I shall do nothing that you disapprove. But as to my letting all matters of love alone—supposing they won't let me alone, what then? I certainly came here as free from any such thought as any old man of eighty. All I thought of was having a good time with you and Aunt, and no care of the old store on my mind; and now, uncle, you might as well ask me to keep the sun from rising, or my pulse from beating, as to put away the feeling I have for Lilian. But I can wait until that time comes you have spoken of. I only hope it may come soon; we are friends now—whether we shall ever be anything else, I shall leave for you, uncle, to decide."

I could not help pressing the dear boy to me in a fond embrace. With all his strength of feeling, there was not only a method in

his madness, but such a desire to do all he really could do to meet my wishes, that I felt prouder of him and fonder of him than ever.

The closing of this narrative must be left for another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

"MY DEAR UNCLE—On my return to the city I have endeavoured, as nearly as possible, to follow your instructions in reference to strict attention to my business. Indeed, I have no desire now but to make myself useful to my employers, and to improve myself in general knowledge. My evenings are spent in my room, and through the day I am fully occupied. I did not tell you that I had made up my mind to have a free conversation with Mr. Deming, and make a clean breast of all my peccadilloes in days past. My resolution to do so was strengthened by the very kind manner in which he received me on my return, and by the treatment I have received from Mrs. D. and all the family. A fine room has been assigned to me in place of the small one I have occupied since I first came into the family. The servants style me, now, Mr. Thomas, and sometimes Mr. Leslie, in place of Thomas, or Tommy, or Tom, as formerly. To *you*, uncle, I hope always to be looked upon as Tom, or your boy. No change in your address will ever be satisfactory to me.

"As I was no longer an apprentice, and under no restraint to obedience, I felt, too, more inclined to make a confidant of my old master; and for fear he might have heard or suspected that my course at times had been rather premonitory of evil, I believed a truthful exposure would relieve his mind, as it would mine.

"So, the second evening after I came back, I watched my opportunity, and had a free and most pleasant conversation. I

told him everything, even to particulars which you did not care to hear. He seemed gratified beyond what I can well express. It seemed to give him a new interest in me. I believe I had, before, his good feelings; but I know, from what he has told me, his good opinion had been somewhat injured. Now I feel certain that I have both. And here again I would thank you, uncle, for the manner in which you have trained me in reference to an open, frank, truthful, manly exposure of anything that may have been faulty. I am convinced that the only way to be truly happy is to be truly honest; and by that I do not mean mere honesty in business, but honesty in character—that a man should appear just what he is, and have nothing back, unknown, that he would not care to expose to the whole world. I can now look my employer in the face, just as I can you, uncle. You know all about me, and so does he—the good and the bad.

"And now, uncle, I must tell you the news as to my present situation and prospects. I have been hired at a good round salary, with the promise of being taken into the concern the next year. In the mean time I am to go to Europe on their account—to have all my expenses paid while absent. I am to spend some time in England and France, making purchases of goods, and learning more fully the character of some of our correspondents. How long I shall be absent I know not—from nine to twelve months. I shall start by the next ship, which will be ready in about two weeks. Of course I shall run home to say good-by and get your blessing, without which I should fear shipwreck and bad luck. It is uncertain when I shall be with you, and can stay but one night when there. With much love to dear aunty, and just as much to Lilian as you feel warranted in giving, from your knowledge of my feelings,

"Your affectionate nephew, THOS. LESLIE."

Some months had passed since Tom had left us, and one or two letters had been received from him; but they were very short, and directed to his aunt, as they referred to some private

matters between him and her, purchases he was to make for her, &c.

At the time I received the letter just inserted, the death of Mr. Stanley had taken place, and the developments already related in regard to Lilian. I did not write to Tom about them, for fear his mind might be stirred up and unsettled. Although some of my objections to his connexion with Lilian were removed, yet there were other things in the case that operated with me against any further progress in the affair than Tom had already made. I anticipated now a pleasant surprise for him; and as his letter informed me that he was about to sail for a distant part of the world, I saw clearly that time would be gained, and that when they two came together again, something more than an engagement of friendship would undoubtedly take place; yet, before any ratification of it could occur, they would both be better able to judge of the strength of their love, and of their fitness for each other.

As the time of his arrival was uncertain, there was a strict watch kept up, I believe, by all the family, each day that the stage was expected; and the sound of its horn was the signal for all to run to the door and windows. It happened, however, when he did come, that all the family, with the exception of Lilian and Jane, were away. Mrs. R. had gone to call on one of the neighbors to spend the afternoon, and I had gone to visit a family a few miles off.

A gig stopped at our gate about the middle of the afternoon, from which Tom alighted, and, without any ado or notice being taken by any one of his arrival, he came into the house and entered the sitting-room—when Jane, hearing some one enter, came with haste to see whom it might be:

"Oh, Mr. Thomas! is it you?"

"It is myself, Jane."

"But, how did you come? the stage is not in!"

"I could not wait for the stage, Jane; I was in such a hurry to see you all. But where are uncle and aunt?"

"Your uncle has gone over to the Neck to visit some family

and your aunt has gone out to tea; but I will go and let her know at once that you have come, and she will be home right away."

"Oh, no, Jane, it is not worth while to do that; I can amuse myself until she comes. Where is Miss Stanley?"

"Oh, la, Mr. Thomas! have you not heard the news? There ain't no more Miss Stanley; her name is Granger now. Shall I call her?"

Tom was so stupefied by this intelligence, that for a moment he was like one under the power of nightmare; he felt his strength departing, and sat down.

"I will call her," said Jane, "for I know she will be mighty glad to see you." And Jane started to do as she said; but Tom, feeling that an interview would be most painful, and in fact more than he could bear, weak as he felt, started and rushed to the door. Jane was ascending the stairs:

"Jane, Jane—I do not wish you to call—to call her—I charge you not to."

The poor woman was alarmed by the energy with which he addressed her; but seeing Lilian about to descend, stepped up to her:

"For goodness' sake, Miss Lilian, don't go down!"

"I do not intend to go down, Jane."

She had heard the command given to Jane, and although with a heart full of joy she had rushed from her room to meet one whom she believed to be her dearest friend, she suddenly arrested her steps, and returned, almost overpowered with the sad feelings that came like a thunder-clap from a clear sky. Not wishing any consolation that Jane could give, she closed the door against her, threw herself into a chair, and sat like one who had no more to do with joy or life.

Jane, thus shut out from converse with either party—for Tom had closed the parlor door, as though he, too, did not wish to be disturbed—bethought herself to go for Mrs. R.; and my wife, hearing that Tom had come, gladly excused herself to her neighbor and hastened home. Tom was walking the room, evidently under great excitement. As his aunt entered, he gave

her the usual kiss, but his manner was strangely cold and formal; he was pale, too, and his countenance more sad than she had ever noticed it before.

"Are you not well, dear Tom?"

"I am well in body, dear aunt, but my heart is sick unto death; death would be a relief to me."

"Tom, dear Tom, I entreat you, tell me the cause for this distress. Have you seen Lilian? Has anything unpleasant occurred? I am sure she has been most anxious to see you."

"If you do not wish to drive me from the house, dear aunt, you will not mention her name to me again. Yes, uncle was right; I see it now."

His aunt, resolving if possible to know the truth as to what had taken place, left Tom walking up and down the room with that rapid stride which denotes an agitated mind, and hastened to see Lilian.

Lilian had been weeping, but she was now sitting like a statue, in a sort of death-like repose—pale, apparently helpless, and the very image of despair.

"Lilian, I entreat you to tell me what has happened. What have you done that has so disturbed poor Tom? He is almost beside himself."

"I have done nothing that I know of."

"What have you said to him, or he to you? There must be something. Try to think what you have said; do, I beg of you."

"I have not seen him, nor he me."

This was said while she still sat motionless in her chair. My poor wife, almost distracted by this strange state of things, resolved to find Jane and try to ascertain from her what she might possibly know about the cause of this trouble. Jane was a very nervous creature, of most excellent disposition, but very easily alarmed; and when in that state, so stupidly confused that it was very difficult for her to remember anything distinctly—especially if she had taken any part in it, or been present at the time. My wife found Jane sitting in a room we

called the nursery—although there had never, while we had occupied the dwelling, been any nursing done in it. The good woman was rocking herself very fast when Mrs. R. came in—I suppose in consequence of the excitement of the moment. The latter looked almost severe—she could at no time look angrily—and very likely spoke in an urgent manner; for she was in a great strait to find out what had happened between the two distressed folks.

"Jane, can you tell me what is the matter? What ails Mr. Tom? and what ails Miss Lilian? They seem almost distracted, and I am nearly out of my head. Do, Jane, speak and tell me."

The poor woman looked up at her mistress with quite a wild stare, but made no reply.

"Do, Jane, if you have any feeling for me, try to compose your mind; you will craze me if you don't. Who opened the door when Mr. Tom came?"

"I don't know."

"Who saw him, then? You must have seen him, for you came for me to let me know that he had come; you must have seen him. Where was he?"

"In the parlor."

"What did he say to you? Was he cheerful?"

"Cheerful! why, yes, ma'am—pretty much as usual."

"Did he ask for me, or his uncle?"

"I rather think so, but it all seems so confused, that for the life of me, Mrs. R., I cannot say just what he did say—only I remember his calling to me, as I was going up the stairs, and forbidding me to say anything to Miss Lilian about him—that he did not wish to see her, or something like that; and then Miss Lilian, you see, heard that, and back she goes to her room and shuts the door; and there was I not knowing a thing what to do—one of 'em mad, and the other all struck of a heap—Mr. Tom a walking up and down the room like a man with his head turned, and the other a doing I don't know what—for I couldn't hear a breath of noise from her no way; and so I thought my best way was to go for you, and so I went, but

what ails the distracted creatures is more than my poor wits can tell. It came on the quickest that you can think, Mrs. R., just like a flash; but what begun it, you see, is beyond all my comprehension. Mr. Tom turned pale as death, and staggered like, and set him right down in his chair. That is all I know about it. He seemed to be worked up awfully, just at my naming Miss Lilian."

Getting no satisfaction from Jane, Mrs. R. resolved once more to see Tom, and for that purpose she went down to the parlor, where she had left him; but no Tom was there. She looked into the other room, below stairs, and then up into the room he usually occupied when there; but in vain. She then inquired in the kitchen, which formed a wing of the house. The black boy said that he "seed Massa Tom, just a leetle while ago, git into his gig what he came with, and drive off the way he came."

I believe my poor wife would have been almost deprived of reason, if I had not just then driven up, and come into the house. She was crying piteously, and seeing her in such a condition, I was of course greatly alarmed. Very soon, however, she unfolded the state of things, and the strange conduct of Tom, and his sudden departure. I had no doubt, in some way inexplicable then, he had heard something, or misconstrued something that Jane had said, and being of a high temperament, he had taken offence, and was on his way back to the city. I was not long in deciding what to do, but getting immediately into my chaise I drove with all speed towards the town where I supposed he had hired his gig, being too impatient to wait for the stage. My horse travelled fast, and I let him have full way—the distance was four miles. I saw a gig standing at the door of the tavern, and a hostler about to lead him off. As I entered the hall, Tom met me; he gave me his hand, but said nothing. I took him at once into a spare room.

"My dear Tom, what does all this mean?"

"My dear uncle, that question I must ask of you. My feelings have been most sadly shocked, not only at the heartlessness

of Lilian, but to think that my uncle, the being I relied on as true to me beyond all doubt, to whom I opened every thought of my heart, and who knew how strong and overpowering was my attachment, should not even have taken pains to have prepared my mind for that event."

This whole address alarmed me most seriously. I verily made up my mind that he was deranged. I endeavored to appear as calm as possible, and tapping him on the shoulder, said:

"Come, come, my dear boy, you are tired, come sit down and tell me your trouble."

"Uncle, do you intend to mock me? Do you count my violated feelings as of no consequence?"

"In what way have they been violated?"

"You knew, uncle, all my heart. You knew, as surely as you could know anything, that I expected at some future day to offer my heart and hand to Lilian Stanley; you might, then, I do think, have given me some warning—you might have prepared me for a disappointment by writing to me of her change of feeling towards me, and not leave me to suffer the horrible suspicion, that my best friend, my uncle, whom I love with all the strength of a child, could be willing, in order to carry out his plans of duty for me, to favor his own protégée in being false to his nephew."

"Who do you mean has been false to you?—Lilian?"

"What else can you call it, uncle?"

"Call what?"

"Why her marriage to another, when I had as strong an assurance of her attachment to me, yea, and of her promise too, as if we had been formally engaged."

"Who has told you she was married?"

"When a lady changes her name, of course it is for that which her husband bears."

"My dear boy, you have been under a great mistake, and I am most heartily sorry, for I know that you must have suffered terribly. Lilian's name is changed, but for proper reasons, which I will unfold to you on our return home; but I can assure

you, if you ever had her love, you have it still; more I will tell you on our way; but we must hasten, for poor Lilian is suffering full as much as you have been; do not let us lose a moment."

I cannot well describe the effect of this revelation on the poor boy; his mind had been wrought up to an intensity of feeling, and to have relief brought so suddenly was almost as difficult to bear: he walked up and down the room with his face covered, and finally came up to me, and threw himself upon my shoulder, and wept. I was glad to know that he could weep; it would bring relief.

"Dear uncle, pardon me, if in my excitement I have said or thought any thing that might manifest my loss of confidence in you."

"There is nothing to pardon, dear boy, but much for you to hear, and me to tell you, and the sooner we get off, the sooner the mystery will be cleared up, and dear Lilian be comforted as well as you."

And while I was on my way, with Tom by my side, it may be as well to relate here what had transpired at home.

Jane, after Mrs. R—— had left her, began, as she became more composed, to think over matters from the beginning, and finally, as though some light had broken upon her, came hastily into the room where Lilian and my wife were, the latter doing what she could to soothe the suffering girl by assuring her that there had been some great misapprehension on Tom's part, which, no doubt, would soon be cleared up.

"Mrs. R——," said Jane, "I believe I have got it."

"Got what, Jane?"

"The thing that this whole trouble has come from."

Both Lilian and my wife looked at her with great interest.

"You see, when Mr. Tom asked me where his aunt was, and where his uncle was, I told him that they had gone out, and where. Then, says he, 'but where is Miss Stanley?' 'Ah', says I, 'ain't you heard the news? there ain't no Miss Stanley any more; her name is Granger, shall I go and call her?' and I see at once he was took like as if he was shot, and he staggered as I

have said, and took a seat, and then went to walking up and down, and seemed most crazed."

While Jane was telling this, my wife and Lilian looked at one another a moment, and then one burst out a-crying, and the other laughing, and they kept crying and laughing by turns, each of them, until Tom and I drove up.

"There they are!" exclaimed Jane, "there is Mr. R—— and Mr. Thomas!"

"Now, Lilian dear, come with me, come and meet Tom;" for a moment Lilian hesitated, but at length arose, and leaning on my wife's arm descended, and was in the parlor when Tom and I entered. It needed but a glance of the eye from each at the other; neither smiled; but as Tom advanced towards her, she left his aunt, and made a step or two towards him. There was no mincing of matters—they were in each other's arms, Lilian crying and laughing. Tom pressing her to his bosom, saying not a word, while the big tears rolled down his manly face. I did not care to see any more of the proceedings, so I went out thoroughly convinced that it was a useless task to fight against love when it once gets a strong hold."

Two years after this I had the pleasure of uniting them in the bonds of matrimony. As Lilian could never bear the thought of living again in the home where her childhood had been spent, nothing was done towards making it habitable. The woods and farms were sold, and invested in property in the city, where Tom and his dear Lilian lived in prosperity and happiness.

THE END.

1873. 1873.

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