



# CRANSTON HOUSE.

A NOVEL.

BY

HANNAH ANDERSON ROPES,

AUTHOR OF "SIX MONTHS IN KANSAS."

"With patient mind  
Thy course of Duty run:  
God nothing does or suffers to be done  
But thou thyself wouldst do,  
If thou couldst see  
The end of all events  
As well as He."

---

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To my Brothers,  
T. P. AND P. W. CHANDLER,

TYPES OF A TRUE AND PROGRESSIVE MANHOOD,—IN WHOM  
MY LIFE, OTHERWISE WEARY AND DESOLATE, HAS  
FOUND A DEFENCE, STRONG AS THE WALLS  
OF A FORTRESS,

I AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATE

This Volume,

CONTENT, IF IT BUT RECEIVE THEIR APPROVAL.

APRIL, 1858

H. A. R.

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## CHAPTER I.

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The plane of one's life is not that which appeareth:  
The inmost thought and purpose, that is the life.



## LITTLE PETER.

---

PETER stood upon the granite steps, leading to a brick, palace-like dwelling-house. The entrance door was wide open, and the windows, even to the third story, for it was a clear, bright morning in June. Near the base of the steps, close to the paved sidewalk, and under the shade of a spreading elm, now newly dressed in its first, delicate summer foliage, stood a family carriage, and attached to it, a pair of gray ponies, now prancing uneasily, weary of waiting the tardy steps of their master for his usual morning ride.

Peter was a slight-built boy of ten years; his face said more than that, especially at this moment, for it was full of puzzled inquiry. He had the complexion of a fair, delicate girl, an abundance of golden curls, limbs remarkable for finish of outline; his taper fingers, always subject of remark to a new observer, would have served well for a model to a sculptor.

The boy's dress, was of fine material, yet worn almost to shabbiness. He held an elegantly bound volume in one hand, between the leaves of which his forefinger was thrust, as though he had sprung from his reading to look at the famous ponies. The manner of the child was that of uneasiness, and pain; and he rubbed his right hand nervously over the brightly shining nob of brass, surmounting the iron rail.

Standing by a mirror in the chamber of the second story, was the lady of the mansion, arranging the strings of her bonnet. She was a long, skinny woman of forty, whose outlines, Time and a hard, restless spirit had sharpened to the keenest points. Her hair was of soft texture, and a beautiful brown shade, which she now touched anew with a small brush dipped in Eau de Cologne, bringing it down over her forehead with great care, covering thus the clearly defined "crow's feet" about the temples. Her complexion was good for her years and poverty of flesh; indeed, her face was more attractive than the average, when she felt in good humor, or until you recognized the significance of the nose; the decidedly upward tendency of which, with its fine point and glossy strained skin, prepared you for words of vinegar rather than oil. Her voice can readily be imagined after this description of her person; just now it could be distinctly heard in the street, though her words were addressed to some one in the chamber.

"Have you heard from Stanwood? It seems to me it takes him a great while to make up his mind, and if he don't take Peter, what *is* to be done with him?"

"Mary expects him to stay here; I told her not to give herself any anxiety about him, any way; that I would assume all responsibility till he was provided for; besides, I think Stanwood will decide to take him."

"Well, now, Paul, he won't; he has written a note to that effect. Here — no, there it is on the dressing-case. I tore it open, for I knew you would not show it me if it was unfavorable; but there, it is my luck, always something disagreeable; that boy will be the thorn for

the next ten years, I do suppose; get him a place! Nobody ever wants *that* kind of a child. Here it is, but two weeks before we go into the country for the summer; don't fall back upon the possibility of my taking care of another boy beside my own. I'm sure it does seem as though Philip and Johnny would be the death of me, without the addition of a red-headed fire-brand like Peter."

Paul Cranston, who was the other speaker, looked annoyed by this reply; brushed his hat more vigorously; drew on his gloves with a jerk; the dainty riding-whip was drawn from the corner of his wardrobe, and turning round sharply, he said: —

"Come, are you ready? Where are the boys? Joan, bring down the boys."

A handsome, good-humored, kind-hearted man was Paul Cranston. Everybody liked him; everybody depended upon him at dinners, as a necessary part of the entertainment. Everybody in making out a list for a party, or ride, or boating excursion, said: —

"Put down Paul Cranston, of course; can't do without him; ten to one *she* won't go, and if she does — well, poor Paul — ah, these widows!" and the speaker in Paul's circle always ended with a smothered groan!

Some charm, however, there must have been about Mrs. Cranston, for in her early life she had never been without admirers, and was successful in captivating two brothers, both younger than herself. Paul, her present husband, was not much older than Peter, when, at her first marriage to his brother, she was introduced to him. For years they did not meet again. When they did it was at the funeral of Peter Cranston, Esq., her noble, oft-tried, but brave husband, who fell almost

upon the threshold of public life, leaving a name sooner forgotten by his wife than by the historian.

Paul, his younger brother, now filled his place in the home of his wealth. This morning saw him descend the grand old staircase with the bounding, elastic step of early manhood. Variable as an April day in his emotions, he shut the frown of a previous moment into the chamber from which he issued forth, humming snatches of old tunes as he went, interlined with a loud, cheerful call, now and then, of —

“Come, boys. Joan, bring the boys.”

On the sill of the door he stopped, and the frown gathered over his face. Down before him stood the defenceless little boy, his sister's child, the namesake of his deceased brother, rubbing as before, yet more mechanically, the well-polished brass, and tightening his fingers in the gilt leaves of the choice volume, while, at the same time, pressing closer and closer to the iron rail as though, poor boy! he would gladly merge himself in any material thing, to be out of the way entirely. In short, he looked as though he had shrunk away from a blow which he had not thus escaped, poor orphan! Every word uttered in that chamber fell upon his astonished ear like a withe upon a raw sore. Faintness was already creeping upon him, but he did not know it! There were no ponies before his eyes now! No objects of grandeur or beauty. His little soul was hardly in the flesh! It floated in a sea of pain immeasurable, and to seek for foothold was of no avail.

Unconsciously, little Peter was a living rebuke to the advancing family, and to none more so than to Uncle Paul. Mrs. Cranston had but expressed his inmost thought when she said she could not have him

there. Looking now at the boy, Paul wished him anywhere else rather than at his door, under his care. Always in the habit of mastering all obstacles, uprising between himself and an atmosphere congenial to his self-love, the delicate riding-whip fell with the force of a thwarted will across the shoulders of Peter; not with malice, not with defined intention, but as an involuntary expression of power, bent on being made comfortable at any sacrifice.

Paul Cranston made a god of his own ease and comfort. No longer master of himself, he exclaimed, with a bitter sarcasm, one must hear, to appreciate, —

“Put up that book, you young rascal. One of Peter's children, one of Mary's, two of my own; I might as well hang myself.”

The reins were in his hand; down came the whip upon the beautiful ponies, and away rolled the carriage with its miserably wealthy inmates.

Holding by the door, and shyly, with the pitiful uncertainty of one who feels out of place, Peter proceeded to lay the volume carefully upon the marble table, among others equally valuable. With great terror welling up in his large blue eyes, he glanced at one elegant picture, and then at another, with an intuitive seeking for help; but there was no response from their cold eyes, and hardly daring to press his feet upon the bright figures of the carpet, the little pinched face turned towards the staircase.

With one hand holding by the rail, he began the ascent, wondering that it looked so far to his room; wondering that his feet seemed so heavy; wondering where he was, where his mother was; that thought

quickened into expression his fast-waning faculties :  
"Mother! mother!" he cried, in a voice of childlike  
despair; and, throwing up his arms, fell a heavy  
weight upon the softly wadded carpet.

Peter's pain had found relief in total forgetfulness.

## CHAPTER II.

---

"Let the fitful dream go by,  
Gather up thy drapery,  
Bow the head and close the eye;—  
Life is earnest.

"In this pregnant mystery,  
Wherefore what, and where are we?—  
Solemn questionings for thee;—  
Life is earnest.

"Startling facts before thee lie,  
In the night of destiny,  
Yet *thou* canst not see thy way;—  
Life is earnest."

## COUSIN SALLIE.

---

A THIRD story front window had contained another listener to the unfortunate, one might say unchristian, conversation of the morning. To her, however, the style was not new.

The first-born of this house — the only child of her father, Sallie had known something of trial, through the restless, suspicious, fretful temper of her mother, while he lived to control that strange nature; but nothing of real sorrow through her, until after his death. Then it seemed to her as though all dreams of happiness were closed up forever.

There could never have been a closer union between a father and daughter. In her, he endeavored to produce his ideal of a perfect woman; to him, his success amounted to a satisfaction.

By nature, Sallie possessed a large and well-balanced mind, a healthful bodily organization, and a conscientious integrity of character, leading her with unshrinking courage and firmness even through the dimmest-lighted path of duty. Subdued by this overwhelming bereavement, absorbed in the constant recurrence to it, as the end of all things to her, too young to analyze her own course, or whither the course of others was drifting, Sallie never awoke to the knowledge of the elements composing the disagreeable atmosphere now about her, until this morning.

Her mother had married again; it often happened thus, and why should she complain? She strangled the pain it caused her, as most unjust and unworthy. Children had been born; no one welcomed them with such reverent joy, for she loved little children.

All along through the years of the new rule in the house, whenever her heart ached most, and she felt a chill of lonely, helpless, defenceless desolation, creeping over her, her mind overstepped all facts intervening, and fastened every emotion of pain around the grave of her father.

The morning in which our story opens, found her sitting by the open window, absorbed in the mysteries of a new book, while, at the same time, she took into her outer consciousness, all the loud, sharp words, spoken in the room beneath hers, and from them also she was weaving a string of mental queries with regard to little Peter, of whom she had hitherto taken but little notice, though, in truth, he was an object of interest to her, as an orphan cousin, and namesake of her father. She had sprung from the chair and looked out at the open window; she saw the whip laid upon his shoulders, and with bitter, burning indignation, she heard the rude, as well as cruel exclamation.

Sallie reached the top of the lower stairs in time to see Peter fall; and could the unconscious little boy have heard her tender words of love and pity over his ill treatment and cold neglect, comforted he must have been. But Peter was wholly unconscious of this, as well as the whole outside pressure of circumstances which hedged him in like a wall of iron, pressing closer and closer with vice-like tenacity.

Sallie lifted him tenderly in her arms; the weight

was more than she could carry without staggering, but her delicacy shrunk from calling help. Resolutely she began to mount; it was her first step in the *actual* of life; thus she had assumed her burden; in it, there could never be found the least sting of regret; her first effort led *up*; so did her after life, dating from that moment.

Peter's room was close by. She reached its door; it looked very uninviting. She changed her first plan of laying him upon his own bed and resolutely mounted the second flight of stairs leading to her own apartments. Peter was laid upon a lounge, close by the open window, from whence the morning breeze fanned his pinched, unconscious cheek. Sallie bathed his face with water, and called him by name, but he seemed to have entirely made his escape from the present; she became frightened, pulled the bell violently and burst into tears.

Margaret, from Sallie's infancy a staid basement pillar to this family, answered the bell. Quietly she entered, drew Sallie aside, and proceeded to unbutton the jacket of the fainting boy. She gently turned him upon his back. The change pained him. He opened his eyes and groaned, then passed away into unconsciousness.

Wise and discreet Margaret had also been witness to the abuse of the morning.

"Miss Sallie," she said, "the little boy has not been well for a few days back. He eat no breakfast; and has eaten not much more than a robin for a week or more. I will go and prepare something nourishing. You will please undress him in a few moments, and bathe his back with water. He is lonesome after his mother,

and a ride will not come amiss either to you or him. There is 'the Duke;' shall I order him into the pony chaise? No one can object to your taking an airing with your own team, or your taking him with you."

With this well-covered dryness of speech, and without waiting for an answer, Margaret retired as soon as Peter began to breathe freely and turn his singularly fine eyes slowly from one to the other of his companions. It was more than an hour before she returned with a tray of most inviting delicacies.

That hour was the opening chapter of a new life to Cousin Sallie. With the moisture of tears still upon her lids, a smile of love and pity encircling her beautiful mouth, and pleasant words issuing from her lips, for the double purpose of re-assuring Peter and calming her own heart,—her own mind stood appalled before a broad, clear, lightning-flash view of thickly crowding incidents, wholly inexplicable to her fresh young mind, crowding close behind, throwing shadows forward. In this machinery of events, she and Peter were suddenly interwoven. How suggestive it became to her quick intuitions! Always magnanimous and brave, she faced the earnest questionings of her own mind. More than any thing else, when the current ran smoothly, she loved her own ease. Was she to lose it? Why was this helpless little cousin, Peter, here? Why was Aunt Mary somewhere else? Why did she never see this Aunt Mary? Where did she live? what was the reason of her seclusion? and why did everybody keep so hush about her? Why did her father die? He could always bring order out of confusion!

Poor Sallie was brought down to matter-of-fact things, by a moaning cry from Peter, as she removed

the shirt from his shoulders. A bright red, swollen mark stretched from one to the other. The shirt clung to it, and as she removed it, the skin gave way. Sallie's thoughts were no longer queries, but practical acts of kindness.

She wet a towel in cold water and gently bound it over the inflamed skin. She chafed his little hands in hers, and told him the while a pleasant story about her horse, given her by her father, and named by him the "Duke of Wellington," because she admired that great man so much.

All the while Peter's large blue eyes looked suspiciously into hers.

"Is Uncle Paul your father?"

"No; he is my uncle, as well as yours. My father is in the spiritual world. His name was Peter, and you were named for him; and now I want you to be my brother."

Not in the least diverted from the image of terror and dislike, stamped by cold indifference and unreasonable impatience upon his memory, Peter said again,

"What makes you let Uncle Paul live here then?"

"He is my mother's second husband, and this is his home."

Peter's only reply was a sudden effort to raise his head upon his hand, by resting his elbow against Sallie. After two or three vain attempts he succeeded. Then he strove to get down from the lounge. Sallie put her arm around him.

"What are you going to do?"

"I must go away, Cousin Sallie."

"Oh! no, no! my dear little cousin. These rooms are mine, given me by my father. Every thing up here

is mine. Lie down again; that's a dear, good boy. By and by you will feel better. Margaret has gone to get you some breakfast, and after that we will take a ride. I have just thought of a nice place to visit of a summer's morning. It is where your mother was born, and my dear father, too."

"And Uncle Paul?" interrupted Peter.

"Yes; Uncle Paul, too. Peter, he was very unjust to you, and to me also, this morning. I cannot and do not wish to excuse him, or in trying so to do, to make wrong appear right, but he is not always so cross as he was this morning. Before this time he is very sorry, and, I'll venture to say, will throw that whip away, from impatience with himself, before he gets home."

"And Aunt Fannie, who talks so loud, what does she want to do with me? Is Stanwood a policeman?"

Sallie could not help laughing at the idea which had found its way into the head of this unsophisticated, frightened little boy; while she felt the color mount her cheeks at the mention of her mother. Pressing her lips down upon his forehead, the better to hide her confusion, she replied,—

"My little cousin must not forget that his Aunt Fannie is my mother, and I love her very much. She is very nervous, and you must excuse and pity her."

"I don't know what you mean by nervous. Does it make you do wrong things to other people?"

Peter's question was, to Sallie, an entirely new way of presenting the subject; like the lifting of a curtain from a darkened window opening upon a forbidden prospect.

With the finesse of good breeding, as well as fine delicacy of mind which Sallie eminently possessed, she

withdrew his mind from the subject, by turning his thoughts in another direction.

"Peter, my father used to say families inherited the same evils. I'll make a bargain with you. We will help each other to uproot self-love while we are young."

Peter's eyes almost frightened her with their searching, unshrinking gaze.

"Let me whisper to you, Cousin Sallie."

She bent down her head.

"I hate him! I hate him! Don't tell my mother! Don't tell anybody that I have the mark of his whip on my back!"

Peter became very excited.

"I can never wipe *that* out, never! I can never forget it; oh, no! I want to forgive him, but I *can't*. Oh! I hate him for it, and that is worse than all the rest."

He dropped his head down in Sallie's lap, and wept aloud. She drew his beautiful curls up over her fingers, while her own tears fell silently like a shower over his bowed head.

Difficult indeed was her position, and wholly without precedent in her past experience. Her woman's tact, and her truly religious education, stood sponsors for her, instead of age and experience. The facts in the case were dangerous ground for her to tread, and the only way of escape for Peter seemed to be to divert his mind entirely from the subject.

For a long while neither spoke. Peter's tears relieved his full little heart, which seemed to have been created thus far only to suffer, the innocent for the guilty. As his sobs died away, Sallie repeated, almost



in a whisper, passages of poetry from the Psalms of David, and verses from simple ballads, such as would calm and cheer her feverish, crushed little patient.

They were at length interrupted by Margaret with the breakfast, and the announcement that the Duke would be at the door in half an hour.

Both were very much refreshed by some of Margaret's nice cooking. Peter moved about with much difficulty, yet resolutely resisted all assistance in making himself ready; and in less than an hour from the time he eat his breakfast, the beautiful fields encircling the city lay around the Duke, the pony chaise, and its occupants.

The face of the broken-hearted child brightened. Tear-stains faded before the love and kindness of his new-found relation. Sallie was fast gaining his confidence, and he began to ask a variety of questions, sometimes answering them himself. As an instance, he said, "Why do people call Nature a 'Dame?' My mother always seems to me like Dame Nature." At last they were in the open country, where the far-off hills stretched like a tower of strength between the green fields and the blue sky.

### CHAPTER III.

---

HOME is the ark of life;  
And from its halls the strong and brave  
Go forth upon the breaking wave,  
To mingle in the strife;  
And years of manhood hurry by  
Till age forgets its nursery.

The timid say "Farewell,"  
But shut behind their hearts the door,  
That hid the weary world before,  
With fears that few can tell:  
And, roaming round the restless earth,  
Return to nestle by the hearth.

## CRANSTON HOUSE.

---

TURNING into one by-road after another, where the quiet of a June day seemed to have reached its utmost repose, they at length traversed a long, shady, grass-grown avenue, winding its way beneath the branches of venerable trees, and halted before the door of an old mansion of the better class, built before the Revolution.

Sallie secured the Duke under the shade of an old elm; took little Peter by the hand, walked slowly about the ancient garden, with its prim paths, its borders of box, its old-fashioned shrubs, whose June flowers brought in their delicious odor an ever-fresh memorial to Sallie, from the far-behind childhood of her ancestors, once happy, gladsome visitors to these same garden favorites.

At last, they sat down upon the stones imbedded in the grass from the door to the carriage drive. A charming old place it was, a wide-spread domain, well kept, with an uncrowded out-look far away to the mountains on the one side, and to the grand old sea on the other; while the city lay in the quiet rest which distance sometimes gives to the fiercest turmoil, making a pleasant miniature picture between the two. Near the mansion, groups of stately and venerable elms stood like sentinels to guard the uninhabited dwelling, while the soft ripple of a gentle stream, winding its way through the orchard, and far off across the mead-

ows, was borne to the ears of our two cousins, like a soothing benediction.

"How do you like it, Peter?"

"I should think my mother had lived here."

"Why?"

"It looks just as she talks."

"Suppose we go inside and see her chamber; I'm going to let you find it; it has always been kept as she left it."

Sallie produced the key and unlocking the door, pushed it wide open.

"There, June sunshine, come in with us, that it may look and feel more warm and life-like." So saying, she drew Peter's hand in her's, and mounted the stairs; very slowly he went, holding by the banister.

Sallie wondered if he thought of the last time he tried to go up stairs that morning, or if the motion produced pain across the marked shoulders.

The saddest sight on God's earth, is a broken-hearted child; and in this puny creature trudging at her side with the weary slowness of decrepitude, the young buds of promise, too immature for hopes or fears or doubts even, had been chilled till they were broken at the stem! How cold his little hand lay in hers! He only thought how tired he felt, and wondered what it meant.

Sallie looked earnestly at him, and to call up his attention, referred again to his mother's room; it proved a good stimulus. She sat down upon the top stair and went on with the thickly gathering thoughts of the morning.

Presently, Peter called out, "Here it is Cousin Sallie." She hastened to him.

"How do you know this to be it?"

"You said the house faced the south; then that way is east, and that north, and this is towards the western sky, and the sunset. O Sallie, here is her name on the window-sill, and on the panes of glass, ever so many times. Look at this, too — 'Mary, the mother of Jesus' — I think she made that on the Sabbath, and when she read the lesson — see the pretty little face, *his* mother was beautiful, and so is mine."

"So you think this a pleasant room, where your mother lived when she was young like me?"

"Yes, I do; I wish my mother was here."

And again he drew his fingers over the glass, where her diamond had marked the words — "*Mary, mother of Jesus.*"

"Do you think she would like to live here?"

Again he looked wistfully, almost suspiciously, at her, and said, —

"You must ask her. How should you like it?"

"I like anywhere with my mother."

"Suppose we spend the day here. Margaret, put us up a basket of luncheon, and we can turn the Duke into the orchard."

"Won't he run away?"

"The Duke? he knows better than that. My Duke run away? Why, Peter, he knows me better than you do. Come, let us go and take off the harness."

Peter, too, had been taught many things, but of the past he said nothing, except of the one idea, and that — *mother.*

The Duke, released from the carriage, followed his mistress to the watering trough, and thence through the gate into the orchard, where he made his first demonstration by rolling over on the clean, spring grass.

The house now received a more close investigation from its visitors. The windows were opened; Aunt Mary's chamber dusted; together the cousins filled the quaint old vases with roses, lilacs and syringas, and drew water from the deep well in the black oaken-bucket. How rapidly they were getting acquainted; how many pleasant remarks they made, which the entire freedom of the place caused to well-up from the inmost heart. More than in a year's ordinary intercourse did they, in one short morning, learn to know and love each other. Henceforth they could be no more strangers.

At last Sallie settled away in the capacious, unpainted, oaken chair of her grandfather, cushioned with a Job's patience, patch-work of the richest bits of silk.

Peter stretched himself upon the floor. He was tired, but he secured a book and soon rested his head upon his hands, with the open book on the floor before him.

Sallie opened the book of her own stirred memories. The morning of a new epoch had opened to her. A youth of luxury, ease, and self-indulgence, was passing — had gone. She felt it glide away. With eyes dilated, and a new tremor of the heart, she acknowledged it, and courageously turned to face it. Not as something she should love, but must accept.

Like the car of Juggernaut, iron Destiny rolled over the pleasant, dreamy nothings in which her life had been passed, and crushed the life out forever!

With sudden energy she arose from her seat, and made a voyage of inquiry through the house. It was a capacious old mansion of considerable pretension, somewhat curiously planned, seemingly enlarged by in-

stalments, as the means of the original owner increased. Most of the rooms were partially furnished, having an air of old-fashioned comfort, and Sallie's impression was, that this estate had been given to her by her father, with some trifling restriction. No occasion had rendered it necessary for her to refer to the subject before, and she could not determine until she read his will, now lying securely in her writing desk, where it had remained untouched since his death.

The result of her research over the house seemed very satisfactory, for she came back with a bright, smiling face, saying aloud:

"With the furniture of my two rooms in town, and a few articles in the kitchen, — Margaret will know what, — we can be very comfortable."

Peter, still absorbed in his book, took no notice. Sallie went down to the carriage and procured the basket of lunch, and rousing him, she sat upon the floor by his side, making a pleasant pastime of their uncere- monious dinner. Thus passed the day.

Soon the Duke was again in the carriage, the key of the old mansion safe in Sallie's pocket, never before deposited there with such a sense of joy and thankfulness for the useful riches it could unlock to her, as now.

## CHAPTER IV.

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" To get at the truth of any history, is good ; but one's own history, when a man read's *that* truly, and without a mean and oversolicitous introspection, knows what he is about, and what he has been about, it is a Bible to him."

### COUSIN SALLIE'S DILEMMA.

---

A PLEASANT sunset it was, a June sunset—the richest in beauty attained, and the most full of promise for the coming day.

Their way was towards the east, but the sun, like a faithful sentinel, threw before them a flood of light and glory. Sallie's enthusiasm broke forth upon the universal beauty environing the city; Peter replied:—

“My mother is looking at the west now.”

“Then you shall too,” said Sallie, and gently drawing one rein as it hung loosely upon a hook, she turned into another pretty lane, diverging somewhat, but appearing parallel with that which was taking them home. She continued—“Now Duke, make out your own way,” and withdrew her hand from the bridle.

“Does he know the way?” said Peter.

“Just as well as I do, and he loves his freedom as well, too, and he shall have it.”

“My mother says it is not good for us always to have our own freedom. How do you know it is, for the Duke?”

“Because, he is like his mistress, and keeps the right path best when not forced into it; when left to choose; when trusted with confidence; and if this little cousin of mine wishes her to do well for him, he must believe in her.”

“My mother says we must do what is right and not

trouble ourselves about what happens afterwards, or what people think."

"So said my father, little philosopher; but I fear I have not arrived at that place yet; to do things without looking for, and receiving the smile of approval — ah! I know how cold and cheerless it is; but in that direction my path lies now; will habit render it easy? or shall I attain to a faith as large as yours, and be content with right doing?"

Peter had crept close into the corner of the carriage and did not hear her; the old pinched look was upon his face, his thoughts were grappling the facts of the morning; and oh, how heavy they sunk down upon his heart; how he quailed before the return to the glittering splendor of that never-to-be-forgotten house.

There was a silence, — broken at last, by a smothered cry from Sallie.

Peter saw her only, she was pale and frightened; while her consciousness recognized only one individual, a third person, and coming towards them, hat in hand, which he swung as an indication that they must stop. The Duke understood, and halted. There came instantly a loud report from a blasted rock — a great smoke, and as it cleared away, the person was nowhere to be seen.

"That was God's providence," said Peter.

"Providence, indeed," said Sallie. "How strange! how strange! the fulfilment of a dream — of a promise given in a dream; but shall I never see him again? will the 'hour' never come?"

Peter thought only of the danger escaped, Sallie, only of their Deliverer. Silence came again. The Duke went on vigorously towards home.

At length, Sallie said, "Does your mother believe in dreams?"

"She believes in every thing and everybody."

Peter spoke sadly, for he remembered the morning, and his own faith was shaken in himself, as well as others, but he continued, as though it was a relief to talk of his mother, —

"My mother says, God comes in every way to those who listen, and he speaks good words of comfort in the night time, when people won't hear in the day."

Sallie's interest in her young cousin, first awakened in the morning, increased every moment.

"And does Peter always think as his mother does? He seems so wise a boy, that his Cousin Sallie will make him her confidant in the matter of a very singular dream."

"I am not wise, and I don't know what you mean by confidant."

"Well, I think I should prefer your opinion of my dream to that of any other person, except your mother, even if you do not think you are wise; — because it will relieve me, and then if you are not enough of a prophet to tell me what it all means, or what to do, you must ask light of your mother, who, from your own showing must be both wise and good. Now listen, Peter: It was very soon after my father died, and — and — when Uncle Paul came to live with my mother; I don't think I can make you understand how unhappy and heart-broken I was."

"Cousin Sallie, my mother can, I'm very sure."

"It was so lonely everywhere I could not rest at all anywhere, so I walked my chamber floor till after midnight. I called upon my dear father as though I could

not live without him. I longed for his presence. I pined for his counsel and protection. At last I threw myself, completely exhausted, upon my bed, praying that some one might come to me in my desolation, and thus I fell asleep. I dreamed, I suppose, — but oh, how real it was! — that I was sitting in that great chair, by the back drawing-room fire. You know that chair, Peter; it was my father's seat always. The doors between the two rooms were closed, but I sat facing them; one door slid suddenly back, and a gentleman entered. He smiled kindly upon me, and although I had no recollection of ever seeing him before, I sprung from the chair and advanced to meet him. He lifted his hands as though he would repel me, and repeated these words: 'The hour is not yet come,' and with a smile of encouragement vanished out of my sight. I awoke full of peace and rest; no sleep was ever so refreshing, but I remembered so vividly my anguish and desolation when I laid down, I saw, before my eyes almost, so many promises to the fatherless, that it seemed to me then, and always has since, as though God, in mercy to my weakness, sent one from the world of spirits to comfort and re-assure me; and in that thought I many times since have found strength more than equal to the emergency. It is very hard not to find sympathy where we most expect it, or to lose caste where from no change in one's self, but only from a new order of circumstances, could the fact find justification. And, Peter, when I awoke it seemed as though the promise, 'When thy father and mother forsake thee, then the Lord will take thee up,' was verified in me. But to-day — now, the strangest part of it is, that when danger threatened us, which we could not

foresee, or either you or I avert without special knowledge — that same gentleman has come and lifted his hand precisely as he did in my dream. Now I am very sure the man of to-day, who rescued us, is not fresh from the spirit land. No; he is a living reality, for I saw him wipe the perspiration from his face, brush back his hair, and spring over the wall; and, moreover, I am not asleep — was never so wide awake in my life as I have been to-day. What became of him is a little unaccountable; but it was a living man who saved us. I wish I knew where to find him, that I might thank him, and ask him to come to me now, when I feel so alone and in want of encouragement, to strike out a new path. What shall I do about it, Peter?"

Peter arose on his feet, and turned his little, earnest face towards her, while with his own peculiar, excited manner, contrasting so strikingly with remarkable slowness of speech, he exclaimed, —

"Don't you do any thing, Cousin Sallie. You just trust in God. My mother says he always comes to us in some way when we most need him. You tell her about it. I'm very sure she will tell you, as she does me, when I wish to know what I shall do next year, 'To rest and trust.'"

Sallie threw her arms around the neck of the strange boy, and exclaimed, —

"My darling cousin, I seem to hear the words of my father sent through your mother and yourself to me. I had no thought of hunting for this person. I was only disappointed that he fled so quickly; as you say, I will 'rest and trust.' Little preacher, I wish I knew your mother; but as I cannot at present, it is some



comfort to know the child she has so exclusively trained, and who does her so much credit."

Into the grand, old city rolled the carriage, and, as the twilight deepened into darkness, its occupants mounted the granite steps which had witnessed the opening of a new day to both of them. A new epoch, indeed, of thought, suffering, and purpose.

Now, it often happens that an aggressive, unreasonable spirit, is the first to assume the appearance of injured innocence. Thus these two cousins, who were guiltless of all blame, except standing in an unwelcome position, found the family at tea, and were met on the part of Paul Cranston with a frown, by Mrs. Cranston with total silence; she, looking like a most ill-used woman, while the boys were cross and tired. Nothing more restrained and uncomfortable could have been got up to damp and chill absent members of the family than that tea hour. Still, to Sallie, it was of use. Like the sudden winter's storm coming in the early autumn, to drive the delicate songsters of the northern forests farther south, lest they loiter and die, so she, by the incidents of the day, and in fact of many months, slowly drifting together, was being urged to a good and noble work for others.

Naturally good humored and easily pleased, not to say dreamy and idle, a warm and loving welcome on their return would have closed, for a time at least, all effort for Peter and his mother. Thus, of course, Sallie did not reason; on the contrary, her spirit was very sore, and much bewildered by the state of things, time only could explain to her. Certain it was, that like two culprits, these young cousins, slunk away

from the dining-room, to Sallie's own apartments. All the way over the fine old staircase, she stooped and encircled little Peter with her arm. He was too young to understand how one person doing a wrong to another, always hates them for it, and she, too refined, too aggrieved to explain.

She had no more difficulty in persuading him to come into her room to sleep upon the lounge, than she would in gaining the consent of a starving beggar to come in and be warmed and fed. Peter was not without will; but now it was entirely quiescent under the strange and fearful influences at work upon a system so sensitive; and to her he gave himself up, quite unreservedly. He brought his night clothes from the bedroom, undressed, then knelt down by the couch, folded his hands reverently, and repeated the Lord's prayer, adding the words—"Bless mother, Uncle Paul, Cousin Sallie, Little Peter, and make them all good." He turned to Sallie, placed his arms round her neck and kissed her; then with a most touchingly subdued manner, he laid himself away upon the couch, turning his face to the wall, saying, "Good-night Cousin Sallie," and in a short time was fast asleep.

For his sake, Sallie had kept calm and cheerful, though her heart was full to bursting; but the work she had imposed upon herself, was not yet completed, and she could not indulge in the luxury of tears. For a moment, she bent over the sleeping boy, traced the blue veins around his temples, and across the beautiful Grecian nose; watched the nervous tremble of the eye lashes, and the quiver of the parted lips; lifted the golden curls away from his face, the remembrance of what they had been called in the morning, added

another pang to her aching heart; she dared not trust herself longer, and passed into her sleeping-room, with a sudden effort of resolution, such as one assumes who goes to look once more upon the face of a departed friend.

With cold hands and a throbbing head, she drew from her writing desk, a copy of the last will of her father, and sat down upon the floor to read it.

Over the first clause she broke down entirely; it ran thus:—

“I give to my beloved wife.”

Sallie's state changed from one of mere pain, to that of deepest humiliation, now first acknowledged to herself; never before did her father appear in such striking contrast, never before the new relation into which her mother had entered appear so much like sacrilege. With her peculiar characteristics, now it would be impossible not to look at the case in a light she had never seen it in before,—confessedly it must pass into oblivion forever, even to her own heart.

“It is only about the old house I wish now to learn, and why should I torture myself in this way.”

Her finger traced its way along the pages of the sacred document, through blinding tears, till she came to this passage:—

“I give to my dearly beloved and only daughter, Sallie, the estate known as the ‘Cranston House,’ subject only to an undivided fifth interest, belonging to my brother Paul, now a minor.”

Still farther on, she marked this passage with a sudden thrill, as though it had just been spoken to meet her case:—

“I commend to the especial care and tender regard

of my dear daughter, her father's beloved and honored sister Mary, and her little son, my namesake, Peter Cranston Stuart, who, for reasons not to be mentioned at present, are otherwise quite unprovided for. My confidence in my daughter, leaves me no room to doubt her tenderness, generosity and devotion, as well as unquestioning activity in their behalf,—left in her care, as pensioners from her father. The time may come when a home in the old family mansion will be found desirable, and with this possibility in view, I give to Sallie the furniture now in said Cranston House, and for her more independent action, that which I purchased expressly for her rooms which she now occupies.” Then followed description of stocks in banks and railroads, of which Sallie, not having arrived to the dignity of a business woman, took no account, so absorbed was she in her rapidly maturing plans, and the decided approval here given to them; strange she thought that she never read that will before, and what a glow of real joy lit up her face, now that she had talked with her father as it seemed, and obtained his views and wishes, upon a subject so rudely thrust before her this morning. The only difficulty now before her was, to get an honest expression of opinion from her mother and Uncle Paul—and turn which way she would, it looked quite impossible for her to accomplish. She thought of it all night,—light came with the morning, she changed her tactics, determining in the first place to consult her guardian.

## CHAPTER V.

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"THEY say that at the sight of the Apollo the body erects itself and assumes a more dignified attitude. In the same way the soul should feel itself raised and ennobled by the recollection of a good man's life."

## COUSIN SALLIE'S GUARDIAN.

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UPON the corner of two of the principal streets of the city, stood an ancient building, large, high, and weather-stained, with a sharp, sloping roof, cutting a clear outline against the sky when it was free from clouds, and, from its height, quite lost in their obscurities when storms lower, or ocean mists settle down over the city.

Heavily set in frames of stone, with panes of glass cut in diamond shape, stood, on either side this clearly defined ridge-pole, rows of gable windows, like watchmen on the look-out. A high and narrow door opened from either street into a square room, walled in on every side, with the exception of the space taken up by the doors and windows, with closely packed shelves of books. Over each entrance door was the name of the owner and occupant, in bold German text, and Marco Mazoni could answer to that name, within that building, from early morning till late at night.

High up under the eyelids of those unwinking gable windows, with the appearance of being sustained by them, was another sign, matching the before mentioned in style of lettering, while all the way along the street one could read upon it, "Antiquarian Book Store." The building was peculiar for its venerableness, its ancient style of architecture, and its isolated appearance, flanked upon either side with newer, more capacious, and vastly more pretentious brick and mortar.

Like a gentleman of the old school, dressed in small clothes, with powdered hair and "top boots," whose dignity and firmness secures him from being jostled on the pavement amid the rush of a stronger, younger crowd, and who, with urbane self-respect, cultivates no element of amalgamation with the encroaching fashions of a newer and younger age; so this old building, retainer of the scholastic wisdom of all ages, stood its own, without allowing any innovation upon its first rights, or so much as a dove-tailment upon its heavy, square, stone corners, or the least appearance of "billing and cooing" between its heavy roofing, and its staring, new-looking, red brick neighbors.

An Italian by birth, a German by education, a resident of the city of Sallie's birth for a period nearly double her age, a client and long-esteemed friend of her father, was Marco Mazoni.

He had become rich without losing his simple nature, or throwing aside his habits of industry. By marriage he had connected himself with a highly respectable family — was the father of a daughter about the age of Sallie, and one son somewhat younger, now a clerk in the same business with himself.

With a business air, the growth of a day, Sallie passed hurriedly through the spacious and tasteful front-room of the bookstore, where might be found, at almost any hour of the day, scholars and gentlemen of leisure, seated with homelike ease, around the large table occupying the centre of that room, and spread with the choicest trophies of spoils from the stalls of publishers, both of the old and new world.

Closing the door of the backroom upon all intruders, she found, as she often had before, her honored friend,

wholly absorbed over the musty pages of an old and almost illegible volume. At the sound of her voice he threw off his glasses, shut the heavy book together with a slam, musical to Sallie's ears, because she read in it a welcome; and caught her affectionately by both hands, giving her the assurance by words from his honest lips.

She, somewhat overawed by the force of her own new current of thought, said the very thing she did not believe or think. Who can say they have not at some time done likewise?

"I fear I am intruding this morning, sir?"

"No, no; Miss Sallie can never intrude. I am always at her service. It is business she's come for. I see it in her eyes, and hear it in her tread. Pray sit down here, and open your heart, my dear young lady. Is it a lover? or have things proceeded to a marriage arrangement? Are the settlements to be made? or is it spending-money the young lady will have? Ah! these young ladies, how lightly they throw away what their papas are long years of toil in accumulating."

Mazoni, meanwhile, had taken a seat opposite Sallie, and covering his own keen observation with this playful rattle, had made out the case much clearer than she could have done, for he knew the whole history of her family far back, where, had she looked at it at all, every thing was clouded in a mist. To him, Sallie was a subject of the utmost and ever-active interest. All the weak points of her position were familiar to him. Quick in his movements, rapid in his conclusions, loyal to his friends, and wise in his insight into character, Mazoni both startled and relieved Sallie by saying, in a low, earnest voice, —

"Do not fear; you were not born to fail, or to dream away your life. That which has happened, which is written upon your face in the stain and anguish of tears, fresh from yesterday's experience, is not unexpected to me. Be comforted by the knowledge that your father saw it from afar, and prepared for it and you, when time showed the turning of events, making a change necessary, *best*."

Sallie was weeping a silent shower of tears. They were like the early rain from a cloud, brightening and relieving itself thus.

Tears also gathered in the eyes of her beloved friend, but with the force of a strong will, he thrust them behind a humorous smile, and commenced a smooth, almost musical run of soothing ideas upon pleasant words.

"My dear young lady, time is a good fellow. It has brought us, without violence, to the 'turn' before referred to, and with the addition of its co-worker and able adjuster of difficulties, space, a very few more months will smooth down the roughnesses that now make your young heart, all unused to act without precedent, moan with pain. Cranston House is *yours* by legal title, with a very slight reservation; but a *home* for the whole family, by the law higher than all parchment securities. The inherent love which every true soul has for the place their feet first pressed, their hearts first learned to call *home*! there is no breach; you see there must be none." And he laid his hand impressively upon hers. "Cranston House gives you the power of untold blessing! The sunlight longs to creep into its ample chambers once more. I feel its warmth among those sacred places coming

back to me from the far back memories of my young, strong life. Open its hospitable doors, dear Miss Sallie. You, and you only, have the key, and there are others who crave its shelter, who strayed away only to return broken-hearted, or soul stained; or, like little Peter, homeless from his birth. But enough of this. Aunt Mary desires to visit the old home.

"There is a most inquisitive, curious creature, called the 'World,' by some, 'Society,' by others. Tell this amiable, well-intentioned meddler, if it peers its face into yours and asks the question, that you have an aunt who desires to pass a period of time in her childhood's home. That is disposed of. As for Stanwood, I will see that he refuses to take Peter, if he has not already. The lad is not strong. Sorrow nursed him, and frayed the fabric of his young life. My God! how blind we are! To put your father's namesake, and sole representative by name, to that trade. Why, it needs one who has been fattened upon fun and frolic, and has the thews and sinews of a plough-boy, for success in such a vocation. Well, well; it is not so badly meant as it appears. The difficulty is, we do not keep the first clause of the command, 'To love God with all the heart;' and thus we cannot see clearly to measure the length of that other command, to 'Love our neighbor as ourselves.'"

Mazoni spread out his hands, like a surveyor reckoning a wide extent of country, and continued, —

"Consideration, that is what we lack. People are much better than they affirm by their acts. Some ripen early, like that child Peter. The special grace of no *earthly* hopes encircle their sad, yet consecrated infancy. But the most of us, in whose very nature

there is interwoven a vast proportion of crude material, need an equal proportion of sun and rain, fierce storms and angry winds, before we become mellowed and rich in flavor, golden and delightful to the eyes of others. Miss Sallie, there is one regeneration, but many paths. Let each one choose their own. The same goal will be reached at last.

"Little one! keep heart, and have patience! First with others; secondly with circumstances; and lastly, the most difficult of all — with *yourself*!"

He took up her hands again, kissed them tenderly, and added:—

"You are not acquainted with your Aunt Mary, it is time you were; under a 'bushel' she has been hidden quite too long; I will write to her; I will make all the arrangements for you; Uncle Paul must be seen in the morning; he wakes up one of the kindest of men; I will drop in after his fresh egg and coffee; I shall make a joke of it! thus I escape his antagonism; I shall declare it *my wish*, to have a party at the old homestead on the fourth; you perceive there is much to be done."

Mazoni ended with a laugh, in which there was more noise than merriment; mastering thus, his own stirred sympathies, and sad, because broken reminiscences, he again turned a listening attitude to Sallie. Like a skilful general, as he certainly was, having given her ample time to recover her usual self-possession, he now drew from her, the various suggestive experiences of the day previous, without giving her one glimpse of light respecting Little Peter's early history, or the shrouded fate of her Aunt Mary. To put the question to him, his manner entirely forbade, and her

own delicacy shrunk back from, while the last charge with which he wound up this important conversation, left her more in doubt of the past, yet more determined in the course she would pursue. He charged her to do all honor to those who were bound to her by the ties of blood, because of that relation, if she could not from involuntary respect; and as she arose to go, he opened the door for her with a pleasant twinkle in his keen black eyes, a cheerful smile wreathing the mouth, and a fatherly grasp of the hand.

He was about to say good-morning, when he found the doorway filled with the person of a gentleman, evidently most welcome and most unexpected; for he darted forward, caught him round the waist, and poured forth hurried exclamations in Italian, which were answered in the same language. All that Sallie could understand was the name.

She attempted to gain the door leading into the street unobserved, but without success, for Mazoni called her back and introduced her; this was the third time she had seen that face; it seemed to her by no means strange or new; long had this image laid in her heart; the feeling she had not defined and could not; her experience was not large enough; to her it was sacred, too much so, to become a matter of discussion; with heaven she had often laid bare all her thoughts about it. True to herself, so far as she could go by the light of any previous precedent — not yet did she realize that this oneness of feeling with an *ideal*, now first really ultimated to her mind by actual presence, was the germ of a *union*, no time or change could set aside or destroy. To-day it seemed as though this man was a part of herself, precisely as her dear father was, and as

she was just learning to consider her Aunt Mary and Little Peter; they were a part of her world, now that world seemed complete.

Not a word of English could he understand. Many letters of introduction he gave into the hands of Mazoni, and one directed to Sallie's father. Mazoni handed it to her, and explained to him. Max Wortenberg was a man to make an impression upon any person, and under any circumstances. Sallie could not understand his language, but his change of manner assured her that he had learned she was an orphan, and his letter years too late. With the demonstrative manner peculiar to the sunny south, he advanced towards her, took her hand, looked long and earnestly in her face, while the moisture of tears hung ready to fall from his lids.

The thought that surprised Sallie most, when she walked rapidly home, was, that she felt strengthened, rather than agitated by this interview. And through the numberless petty trials and annoyances, not to say humiliations attendant upon a change from her old home to the new,—the breaking away from position, shelter, and nominal protection, to the duties of an untried and quite novel condition of life,—the remembrance of that moment, when with honest sympathy, Max Wortenberg took her hand in his, and spoke with the only language he could use, and she understand,—the eloquence of the eyes,—came often like an angel in the night time of the soul, and comforted her.

## CHAPTER VI.

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"WHAT is man without those home affections, which, like so many roots, fix him firmly in the earth, and permit him to imbibe all the juices of life? Energy, happiness, does it not all come from them? Without family life where would man learn to love, to associate, to deny himself? A community in little, is it not it which teaches us how to live in the great one? . . . Ah! let us carefully preserve these chains of domestic union. Do not let us unbind the human sheaf and scatter its ears to all the caprices of chance, and of the winds; but let us rather enlarge this holy law, let us carry the principles and the habits of home beyond its bounds."



## THE NEW HOUSEHOLD.

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ALL through the coming of the leaf, the opening of the blossom, silence had reigned in the deserted rooms of Cranston House.

The sturdy, clumsy bumble-bee, with his rough, yet good-natured voice, had bobbed his head often against the outside of the window panes, in blissful ignorance that they were a wall impervious between him and the inner spaciousness, where the sun lay so temptingly revealing it. And the timid humming-bird pecked, without fear of human intrusion, at the delicate blossoms growing in almost untrimmed wildness up and over the windows.

Prolific nature had sent forth rejoicingly myriads of insect tribes to render musical the whole air. Every shrub gave utterance to a concert on its own private account, while harmony, one with another was universal.

The dew of an early summer morning was broken from the long unfrequented carriage path by the wheels of Mazoni's carriage. And it was Margaret who now unlocked the venerable door. The capacity of Margaret was immense in her own sphere, and out of it neither her ambition or long familiarity with the family she served, no contingency of circumstances ever offered sufficient inducement for her to venture.

A tread-mill woman she was not. No one ever

liked *life with variations* better than she; and the air with which she set that door open, assured Mazoni she was all right upon the question of a new colony from the stray branches of the Cranston family.

Her first act was to open the windows, then she came back to the carriage, lifted out a basket of tools, then a succession of bundles, little curious boxes and bags — a collection of odds and ends — thrown aside by others as worthless, turned to good account by this good creature, and now ready to fill many a useful office in the department of her new housekeeping. To look at her flush of honest interest in the whole arrangement, one would have supposed she was a young bride just entering upon her first domicile duties. But those who knew Margaret could never remember any instance in which she laid plans for her own aggrandizement.

To-day her heart was aglow with the new current of freshly stirred memories springing up at every tread she made over the large and dusty rooms. Off came her bright, fresh turban, and into the dresser drawer she thrust it, while a plaid kerchief was drawn from her capacious pocket and bound about her head.

A precious pair of pockets wore Margaret, and they seemed on this morning to have distended to their utmost capacity. The shelf was soon loaded with her treasures — a ball of wicking, papers of tacks, skewers for digging out the corners of the dusty window panes, a tin pepper-box and nutmeg grater, with a singular-shaped salt-box, made of wood with a tightly fitting cover, not to particularize the stock of rags for cleaning, all in the strictest order to her mind, from the definite purpose to which each had been consecrated

Somewhat relieved of the weight at least, she still thrust her hand down to the extreme end, and throwing out some holders from one, and an orange from the other, she turned the pockets inside out, gave them a good, hearty shaking, slipped them under her skirt again, hung up the holders on the old jam hooks, and looking admiringly at the fine orange laid it high upon her shelf, uttering the single word, "Peter."

Now she was ready for action. Did ever anybody want what she could not supply? There were to be paperers, and they must have paste. It was made, over the freshly lit fire, in a kettle a hundred years old, and when she took it into a long shed to cool, plenty of voices were heard, and the shadows of furniture wagons fitted over her bowed head, while her ear heard, with a great bound of joy, the voice of little Peter, calling, — "Margaret, which way are you?"

Cranston House received a most thorough scrubbing and general putting to rights. Before the clover was cut down by the farmer's scythe, or the cricket set up its midsummer note, Sallie, Peter, and Margaret, were established as the nucleus of a new household, within its venerable walls.

The one event to which they all turned with earnest expectation, was the arrival of Peter's mother. Her room was nicely prepared for her, and every day found them looking into it again to perfect, if possible, their previous arrangements. Slipped out from under the weight that oppressed him, Peter bounded up and down the house with the happiest expression on his beautiful face, singing often to himself: —

"My mother will hear my prayers to-morrow-night."

Ah! Peter, like the rest of us, bowed the knee in delightful homage before an *idol*, beautiful, good, but weak to save him, as he to uphold himself.

Mazoni arranged every thing with skill, good taste, and the kindest consideration for all parties. Peter followed him about like his shadow; Mazoni taught Peter how to look after the garden, how to water and harness the Duke. He talked to him of his dear mother with an enthusiasm equal to his own, and every night when he bade him good-night, he always added with a bright, benignant smile, "Your mother will come to-morrow!"

Mazoni also held long talks with Margaret about the best and most economical mode of proceeding with the house arrangements; and to Sallie he was, as far as possible, the representative of her father.

With singular unwillingness to leave the old homestead, he lingered, walking each morning around the wide-spread estate, and at evening sauntering slowly with hands folded beneath the skirts of his coat, along the walks in deep meditation. The expression of his face was happy, like that of one holding pleasant converse with friends, while the light of a life, according to the Commandments, shone forth from it, like the glow of a warm sunset in October.

At parting, he said to Sallie—"Remember, my dear, your income is very small, you must not go beyond it, that would be dishonest; you will keep ever in view, the possibility, I *ought* to say, probability, that the time will come when you will have less positive income, than you have now. A well-balanced mind is quite superior to the uncertain tenure of profit and

loss. Such an one, dear Miss Sallie, was your father. To you, this new mode of life will be an excellent school, and I am glad to have you enter upon it, while I am here, to see your first efforts. Of your final success and triumph, even, over what now looks most unpropitious, I shall not doubt, though I shall not live to see it. Little one! it is but a mist, a curtain, an invisible line between the natural and the spiritual; it is not right in me to say I shall not live, I crave pardon. One should not fall into that material mode of expression. While I wander over this old place, the feeling in my heart contradicts my words. I *know* I could not, do not, enjoy this hallowed spot *alone*! Your father is at my elbow. I listen for his voice and long for it. And while I listen, straining each sense to catch what they have the capacity *almost* to reach, and bring back to my hungry, waiting soul, *his* thought penetrates me through a finer medium than the ear. Often his words were prophetic, you are now carrying out that which he anticipated. Your Aunt Mary was his most intimate friend, in her you will find your best teacher.

"My dear young lady, there is but one doctrine, one faith, one religion, and one God. He is, and ever will be, your best friend. We, who stand about each other here, as often seeming to hinder as to help, are but ministers of his purposes, removed, when no longer of use in one state, that we may work more effectually in another. To-day, I feel reluctant to part from you, why? I should not ask! Standing on the ground where your honored father once stood, it is not strange if I scent the soft air playing across the fair hills of

that better country which he now inherits. I see your dear father's image in his daughter. She will do nobly; it is her inheritance.

"My Annette! Sallie must ever be her friend. Cold and proud she is; Sallie will impart to her warmth, and through it, love to all creatures."

## CHAPTER VII.

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"LET us be ever sure that earth shows no fairer sight than the old man who hands over, without repining, the lamp of truth to younger runners than himself."

**"WALKED WITH GOD, AND WAS NOT,  
FOR GOD TOOK HIM."**

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"WHAT a noise," said Mazoni, one night, as he thrust his latch-key into the door of his own mansion, and he joined in the merry laugh sounding from his own parlor, as he proceeded to set his cane in its accustomed corner, and place his hat and gloves upon the table.

"What is it, my love, that I may laugh too?" he asked, good humoredly, as he entered the room.

Annette, with a beauty and grace which, if it did not excuse, could certainly make one forget, her neglect to answer her father's question, put forth another question, "Father, was it not Max Wortemberg, whom you introduced to Sallie, the week before she went out of town?"

"And suppose it was; what then?"

"I know it was, father; for to-day when we were returning from the dentist's, where Sallie had been to have two teeth extracted, we walked very slowly, because she really was faint, I knew by her looks, though she would not own it. Well, it was such a joke; we met a very fine-looking gentleman who, long before he came near enough to speak, looked straight into Sallie's face. I declare, I thought she must have looked pale to him, and that was the reason why he neglected me so entirely for her; never dreaming he had seen

her before; think of my astonishment, papa, when he held out his hand and she took it."

Annette had told her story thus far, in a disjointed manner; but now she broke out into the merriest laugh, while her father joining with her, turned his eyes from her face to Sallie's, in order to elicit something more. Sallie's eyes told wondrous things, but her cheeks rarely changed color; yet he who knew her so well, as he now looked at her, thought—

"Ah, I must see to this, a vein has been struck, there will be no harm if it is not ruptured."

Annette having found relief, began again: "Only hear what he said, in slow, measured accents; it was so funny:—'Miss Cranston, what is the matter?' I supposed he thought she looked sick, and for that reason put the question, but Sallie replied in Spanish, 'Did you wish to say, *How do you do?*' You should have seen his look of gratitude! Why, he is splendid; and after talking a moment in Spanish, he broke out impatiently over our language. 'I not, can! I sorry, very ugly it English! words many, rules not can meet, it them! Miss Cranston very young lady! speak Spanish, French! longer her life, it me take, to get one little English.'"

Annette with her hereditary fun and power of imitation, set the whole family in an uproar of merriment by the graphic description she had given.

"And what in the world can we do with him if he cannot talk in English?" said Madame Mazoni.

"As a mother would, so act; quite as ignorant as he is of English, I came to this country, and what was more serious, with an empty purse. In Peter Cranston, I found friendship, honor and principle. He took

me to his father's house; he rendered it easy for me to accept his father's hospitality, by asking me to teach him German and Italian. Thus it was, I became master of English, and as his friend, received patronage in my business. All I am, and all I possess, even my introduction to you, my dear wife, I owe under heaven to this good man, and to that loyal, generous friendship. Take Max Wortemberg into your hearts; his father gathered grapes with me from the sunny slopes of Italian vineyards; I am a better man to-day, for the love he bore me."

Mazoni turned at the sound of the opening door, it was Wortemberg!

Madame Mazoni found no difficulty in giving him a welcome.

If Annette was pleased with him as she saw him in the street, now, in drawing-room costume, she was dazzled and surprised at his manly elegance. In five minutes, she had decided that he was the handsomest man she had ever seen. A more correct impression would have been, of that rare, full development, arising from healthful German and Italian parentage. The head was German; the features, complexion, and dark lustrous eyes, of Italian finish; and so with the bodily proportions. There was German strength, and force, softened into Italian roundness and grace. In his introduction among the friends of Mazoni, he sustained himself admirably. The position could hardly have been more difficult, but his eyes were on the alert to catch all his ears could not understand. Annette's haughtiness melted before his genial mien. Sallie's sympathies were stirred, because he was in want of help, and she could give it. It was beautiful

to see her feed him with the family English, by cutting and rolling it, into delicate bits of French. How animated his manner became; Mazoni would not help at all, so delighted was he with Sallie's success. Thus, the first evening of this new intercourse passed away, followed in quick succession by many others, often in the city, but still more frequently at the old mansion, among the elms and willows, — Sallie's ancestral home.

Everybody loved Max Wortemberg; he was so strong, and yet so gentle, he possessed so much force, and yet so little consciousness of it. With a bound, he seemed to spring into the knowledge of American institutions and usages. Everybody honored him. An introduction from Marco Mazoni, was an ample letter of credit for any man; and in one year's time, Max Wortemberg, stood as securely within the best circle of American society, as though he had been born to inherit the place. Young, high-minded, earnest and enthusiastic, doubts of others had never clouded the clear horizon of his mind; the occasion was yet to drift in upon his actual life, when his own motives should be brought to the test of worldly, surface-judging men.

Meanwhile, Madame Mazoni, a calm, clear-headed woman, kept up a great deal of thinking about this new relation between the two young ladies and her husband's friend. A good and true mother was Madame Mazoni; she was also a most affectionate and disinterested friend of Miss Cranston. Her heart rarely deceived her; forty years of life, progressive and upward in its tendency — one half of that passed in the atmosphere of a man who took the highest and broad-

est views of life; — there were no mists of mere personal consideration blurring her clear and honest conclusions.

The quality of each of these young people, she saw and measured. There was never a doubt in her mind of the superior nobleness of Sallie to her own daughter Annette. A singular anomaly in nature, was this only daughter, in which all the good qualities of both parents appeared in an inverted order.

In Max Wortemberg's manner there was no preference shown for either. Madame Mazoni wondered if they would become too much interested in him, while he remained unoccupied wholly by either. That Sallie seemed the best adapted to him she saw very clearly, not from any outward manifestation on either side, but from that keen, subtle, unreasoning, and oftentimes unreasonable intuition, which belongs to woman, and to her exclusively; — clearest and strongest in the finest specimens of her sex; heaven-given as her guide always; — the most self-evident, when she is in most peril, and seems the most defenceless; sorrow to her who does not listen for its faintest whisper, and accept its unerring monition!

Madame Mazoni said nothing; her true womanly delicacy, forbade any direct interference; she was quite superior to manœuvring; but she resolved to make one in the usual amusements of the young people, and induced her husband to join in the rides and rambles, filling the larger portion of their country visits.

That Annette had beauty, none saw or gave better evidence of the consciousness thereof than Max Wortemberg. Sallie had grace, — grace of figure, grace of motion. Her voice was musical, her laugh like sunshine; it made the listener happier; and when she

became earnest, and self-unconscious in conversation, her thoughts embodied themselves in words of beauty, written language, failed to express. Annette was dark and striking; Sallie, fair as the lily of the valley.

Cranston House was still in a state of earnest expectation. Aunt Mary, why did she not come? A creature simply believed in, never seen by the younger expectants, and never talked of by the older ones; her image so long desired, almost faded into a mere myth. Little Peter drooped again; Sallie took him to ride; Mazoni brought him pictures. One night when he bade them good-night, Peter came back to Mazoni, and said:—

“Is summer most gone?”

“It is passing; are you sorry?”

He turned the latch in his hand, nervously, and replied:—“She said she would come in the summer, and she will!”

Mazoni seemed disturbed; he often received letters, but did not read them to others. Certainly his manner became very absent. One night, after having read a closely written sheet, he seemed wholly absorbed for a long time in his own thoughts. Then he took up another note lying neglected by his side. The young people were noisy with their own talk, and did not hear his exclamation as he read. Madame Mazoni did, for his manner had long troubled her. Now she gave a long breath of relief, for she could tell very quickly, that the last information annoyed him; it was irritating, wholesomely so, for he jumped up and called out for Max Wortenberg to go with him to see a gentleman at the hotel, and they departed.

The young people, Annette, Sallie, and Annette's

brother William, continued their merry-making, as though nothing had been abstracted from their circle; and as little conscious how destiny was throwing her shuttle, freighted with a mingled yarn of random shades, and weaving for them a colored web, which could never fade!

In a private parlor of the hotel, a rosy-faced, black-eyed, black-haired young man, walked up and down with restless impatience. He received Mazoni with extended hand, but looked suspiciously at Wortenberg. Mazoni introduced him, remarking that he desired his presence at this interview.

“To what am I indebted for this honor?” asked the young man.

“It does not matter,” replied Mazoni, sadly. “It must be thus, or not at all. He is my friend, and to be trusted. Your father never questioned my judgment or courtesy.”

The young man seemed rebuked and remained silent. Mazoni, with suddenly roused effort, continued:—“John Warren, you ask to renew your offer of your heart and hand, to my daughter Annette. Accept it I cannot. In thus rejecting entirely and forever, your proposal, I do not forget your happiness. Annette is not in love with you. Thus far, in her brief life she has only loved herself; and if she did love you, your tempers are not the kind to draw well together. In this note, you ask secondly if, on your return from abroad, with good character, good success, and her consent, you may hope for my blessing!”

Mazoni paused, his whole manner was earnest, impressive, and even touching; when he again spoke, his



voice was broken with emotion. Still standing quite apart from his companions, he folded his hands over his breast, and continued:—

“Annette is my dearly beloved daughter, but of her faults, I have never kept either her or you ignorant. Mistaken in my conclusions, I may be, but I must act by my inmost convictions and leave the result. My belief is, that your good and happiness, your progress and hers (and there is no such thing as happiness, distinct from progress and goodness), will be best secured, by a total separation and forgetfulness. Some one older and more calm, will best control my Annette; some one less exacting will best secure her obedience. Pleasant playmates you have always been, but you do not reverence her. A lover is *no true* husband where the memory of his partner does not render him devout! Through her, he must worship God, else he is hopelessly unbelieving. My son, are you answered?”

Without waiting for a reply, Mazoni stepped forward, and laid his hand tenderly upon the head of young Warren. “You ask for my blessing in the years that are not, and may never be, to you or me; and under circumstances which will produce a condition of things, in which my eyes *see no* blessing. Accept then, the blessing now, my dear young man, and leave the unrolling of the future with God!”

Mazoni raised his hands, and lifted his eyes upward. To Max Worttemberg it was a thrilling tableau; a grand old picture of the masters. His finely shaped head, the thick frill of curling white hair, stretching in masses from ear to ear; the heavy, white beard, the dark, earnest eyes, from which large tears hung ready to fall; and the devout attitude! Instinctively John

Warren bent down before him, with his face buried in his hands, while the fast-coming tears trickled through his fingers. The only sound heard, was the musical voice of Mazoni, in these words:—

“Israel’s God bless thee, my son; make a high and safe way before thee over the great deep, and a place for thee in the hearts of strangers; give thee faith, and honorable manhood to live, and peace whereby to die!”

When young Warren looked up, he was alone; he had parted forever with his friend, the friend of his father, Marco Mazoni. The morning found him upon the great deep, outward bound; while Mazoni took passage in the cars, for a distant state, with little Peter snugly encircled in his arms.

Long afterwards, little Peter told his mother, that Mazoni, the first day of their journey, held him so tight it choked him almost; and that he looked at him all the time without talking. That he wiped the tears from his cheeks many times, and often kissed Peter’s forehead.

“But,” said Peter, “he did every thing so softly, I thought he was a spirit!”

All day they rode, and all night. He took Peter closer to him, and held his hand; sleeping, sleeping so soundly, breathing so heavily; that Peter said he didn’t know what for, only he could not help watching him!

As the day dawned he awoke with a shiver, wrapped their garments more closely about them; lifted off Peter’s cap, and brushed back the hair from his fair forehead, rested his cheek against the little upturned face, caressed him with the utmost tenderness. Then he commenced to talk, and gaining courage as he proceeded, with earnest gestures, and fond kisses, he

made out a long, clear history. Peter took that conversation home to his heart! Much, he was too young to understand, but he pressed it down! locked it in! No earthly power, no torture could have forced it from him! There was one who sat near, who remembered the low, earnest tones of Mazoni's voice; who noticed the boy slip down from the seat, stand with his face towards Mazoni, and one hand resting upon the back of the next seat, as though he must support himself; for his lips were very pale; his cheeks flushed, and his eyes almost wild in their earnestness: but no word of interruption, or inquiry issued from his lips. There he stood like a young martyr, while the planks of all social relations were ripped from beneath his feet! If ever a man possessed the power of giving his hearers the whole of a fact, or idea in a few words, and impressing it upon the mind of his hearers, it was Marco Mazoni.

Little Peter, frail and slight, with his golden curls, and lily-white complexion; seemed, by some fearfully wondrous power, "transfigured" in the "early dawn" of that autumn day, from a shrinking child, into the man of purposes! purposes so momentous, it seemed as though the material, the natural would give way, for want of breadth and strength to sustain them.

Mazoni had, evidently, made a great effort to say all that he had said, all that it seemed to him of vast importance to say. Long had he weighed the consequences of the disclosure, each day arriving at the same result. To Peter he must trust something, which only Peter could act from, when Mazoni was gone. He had completed the task, his work was done! Holding the little face between his hands, and gazing with wistful

eyes, and prophetic spirit, that old man saw him, as one called of God! and it seemed even to himself, as though the weight of years had fallen off from him.

Peter, in the new wisdom gained, seemed to comprehend it partially, for when the cars stopped at the end of their railroad travel, he insisted upon taking the valise, having previously fastened the scarf about Mazoni's neck. He then thrust his hand into that of Mazoni; thus the two stepped out from the cars. The boy seeming to receive the mantle of manhood from his strangely altered companion; now unconsciously letting it fall from his shoulders, while he took his first advance into that second childhood, oftenest perhaps, opened to the strong and faithful pilgrim; always in mercy, to whomsoever it is rendered; giving thus, rest to some weary spirit, which through conscious life in the past, can no longer obtain it.

Mazoni roused himself with another shiver; the place was familiar to him; he led the way to the hotel, where he was well known. The hearty welcome from the landlord waked up his fast-passing consciousness, — the cheerful wood fire, and smoking breakfast! He would be *strong* after breakfast! So he said to Peter; and Peter *believing*, answered, "Yes, sir."

Blessed old man! spared the pain of anticipating Peter's agony and desolation twenty minutes later, when, with a sip of hot coffee, and the cup still in his hand, Marco Mazoni suddenly rose from his chair, with the haste of an urgent call, uttered the one word, "Coming, coming!" turned his face partially towards Peter, pointed upward, then settled gently down, leaving the cup upon the table, slipping aside the chair, and meas-

ured his length upon the floor, like a newly felled oak of the forest.

Every traveller was upon his feet, and crowded around the fallen stranger; but it was Peter who knelt beside him, crying out, "Come back just a minute! Oh, just a minute; my mother wants you so much." The eyes certainly turned feebly towards the kneeling child. The mouth essayed to speak, but failing, smiled! The spirit heard, and answered, but the flesh was weak. Again and again Peter kissed the face, pressed his lips upon the eyelids, and laid his face, in faint helplessness, down over him.

"I will be with thee" was spoken to the *child* as well as the man.

Behold it verified! The boy clutched the landlord, who stood weeping, utterly powerless, by the sleeve. He, stooping down, gathered the child up in his strong arms, and nestled him on his capacious breast, as a mother would an infant, and lifted up his voice anew and wept! The face of Peter was buried in that great honest bosom, and his sobs lost in the wilder outbreak of the man. Men's tears are like a violent shower of hailstones.—large, heavy, brought forth with sobs of unusual pain, and of short duration.

The little trembling creature in his arms, the home-thrusting fact of a most dire calamity, recalled the good landlord, he produced a large bandanna handkerchief from his pocket, wiped away the signs of emotion; he would have done the same for the child, but the face could not be withdrawn from his vest, where it lay buried.

"Lord bless the poor child; this is no place for you; What *am* I to do? Was he your father? Where's

your marm? Where was he going? eh, boy? There's a dear boy; come, you shall see your marm; I'll telegraph. What news to send home! Is your marm his wife?"

"No, no!"

"Who, then, is your mother? What's her name?"

Now Peter became self-conscious, he hesitated. What an agony was in his little heart, where, like molten lead, lay the recital of the morning's chapter of his own history. He crowded it down as though it choked him, and lifting up his head, he said, "Mrs. Mary Stuart."

"Now tell! is it so? Lady Stuart, our pale Samaritan. *She your* mother? John, harness up, go fetch her; bless your heart, why she is close by, only a few miles; we don't mind a few miles, boy. Kiss me. *She your* mother; dear angel lady. How shall I break this blow to her?"

To the landlord hours were shorter than to Peter. Long he sat alone in the quiet chamber where the remains of his friend were laid in proper order for their last repose. Men came in, and went out, looked at the boy, and the sleeping clay, with curious interest. Both seemed equally quiet.

Mazoni, vested in the plain citizen's suit he wore from home; all care was gone from his face; the furrows were smoothed away from his brow; the features seemed more finely cut. Whatever of worldly expression they had worn was gone, as though some sudden and unexpected joy had opened before him.

Peter's mother had been his sole teacher, almost his only companion. Of her he had learned that the death of the body was a good and orderly event. He did not

know what *fear* was, in connection with any of God's providences. Aside from this, he had a fine sense of the nature of a *trust*. Nothing but absolute force could have induced him to leave his post as watcher by the side of one who had been so dear a companion, till other friends came and assumed the responsibility.

There he sat, through the long day, pale, cold, and silent. Others came in, to be sure, for they were a kind people; but the golden curls of the singular little boy, rested upon the end of the same pillow, where the gray hair of Marco Mazoni was clustering like a crown of glory, about his noble brow!

## CHAPTER VIII.

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YESTERDAY has gone up to Heaven's Chancery. To-day is ours. Let us make it the royal accoucher of To-morrow.

## THE BETROTHAL.

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AT first, Peter felt very cold and weak, so he sat down close by the bed, where, precisely as in a sweet sleep, his friend rested, and at last his head, so weary, so very heavy, dropped down on the pillow. More than once he spoke to Mazoni, then he would reproach himself for disturbing his sleep. Peter's mind began to waver between the reality, so cold and cheerless about him, and the misty fragments of dreams. For awhile, the strange faces, coming and going, pained his delicate, over-wrought, nervous system, — then he shut his eyes, and murmured "God is here with us; she said we could not go away from him!" Then the paleness grew more white and transparent, the muscles relaxed, a repose, almost of death, settled down like an angel of mercy, over the lone, defenceless little boy. Peter had lost his consciousness.

Two days later, when Mrs. Stuart entered Cranston House, little Peter, still unconscious, was borne in by her side.

The first meeting Sallie had with her long-desired aunt, was sealed with tears. Sad as was that interview, the ground of common sources of sorrow, broke down all intermediate steps in the progress of intimacy, and they knew each other, better perhaps in one week, than under ordinary circumstances, they could possibly

have done in many months. Together they watched over their little treasure, whose young life seemed destined to be crushed by successive shocks, with which he seemed by nature, wholly unable to combat. Love! love! it was an element essential to his existence! without it his life fainted. So young, defrauded of the ordinary rights of home, his nature was not fairly developed—it must be made up to him. Thus, and thus only, in after years, once grown to maturity, the evil of life's earliest period, might be over-mastered.

In that home chamber, where the sun came each day and watched his faded cheek, where the moon also threw over him the shadows of his mother and Cousin Sallie, with the ever-watchful Margaret, the blood settled into an ordinary and healthful circulation. Peter became himself again. No one thanked God more for it, than Margaret. It was her privilege first to take him in her arms, as a change from the bed of his long sickness. When she had arranged him to her satisfaction in her liberal lap, then she reached over to the corner by the fire, and took up a basket. She opened it, and held it to Peter; there, sleeping, rolled up in a knot, was a pretty kitten.

"I got it for you, Peter, and you must name it."

"Must I? I will think what it must be. Thank you, Margy."

Then the kitten jumped up, and stretched herself, purring the while, and looking with benignant eyes at her new master, and, as though she would measure him at a little greater distance, she sprang upon the table, made a seat of her tail and two hind paws, and with most amusing stateliness took a fresh survey.

Peter proved his entire recovery by naming his pretty pussy "Proudie," because she looked proud and strong, he said.

Aunt Mary had indeed come when most needed. She was diffusive as the dew, and as unobtrusive. Beautiful, intelligent, and graceful—a softened image of Sallie, a portrait of what Peter would become, she was the most finished and attractive of the three.

Sallie did not forget that there was a mystery about her; she simply ceased to desire any explanation; it seemed like sacrilege, and no amount of audacity, looking steadily into her face, would presume to question her. Of herself she said nothing, her present life seemed cut away from a portion of that which had preceded it. Her *personal* life appeared to have been lived out. Her face showed the marks of both *conflict* and *conquest*; and that the struggle of the former, as well as the flush of the latter, were dead to her, was evident from the total absence of all expectation in the future. Thus this truly charming person stood in that anomalous and touching position of isolation, having no *past* and no *future*. To it she made no reference, except in connection with the house they now occupied. Every member of the original family, scattered or passed away, was a living, beautiful reality to her. Often she would picture, with graphic skill, the former inmates. No unpleasant details were brought in to mar the beauty of her pictures. Her eyes, so wonderful in expression; so blue, not with the color of the heavens, but like the reflection of that azure vault, in the bosom of a deep, still river, from which it receives a deeper, softer shade. Whence came the dark and broad socket, where they turned, as though worn in, as by fire?

Sallie, strong in unsubdued prejudices, could not understand how tears could have washed deep basins for those loving orbs to turn in, and yet leave no stain. Sometimes she thought they never could have been so beautiful in expression as now; and yet they told a story she having never read, nevertheless grew better by, every day.

Each day's conversation, and the nameless charm of her atmosphere, sparkled with the ever-varying, soft hue of the opal. Her interest in every one she met was living and active. Then the dog, the cat, the horse, the cow, the chickens, and the birds, — she and little Peter seemed, in their sports, to be one with them all; and the trees, how she loved them. She said, "Do you know, I often think these trees know me; here they have kept guard from the days of my grandfather; I played about their trunks, and under their shade, from my earliest recollection. When away from their grateful protection I used often to think, that had they possessed the power of locomotion, they would have come and sheltered me again. Like my relatives they seem, and I love them."

How glad Sallie was that Cranston House, and trees, were Aunt Mary's future home. Sallie thought, "An ugly image I am, yet I see it in her, beautiful as her spirit is. Traits, which I suppose we both inherit, are in her like lighted transparencies. I have none of that oil of kindness, or the fire of love, which *gives* continually, asking nothing in return, absolutely nothing! which sends a light to the ends of the earth, and whose rays never fade! How can she love everybody so much? Uncle Paul, my mother, as well as everybody else. They are cold as ice to her; no, it is even worse than

that, because her love might melt and warm ice! It is the hopelessness of indifference. I wonder if she knows about little Peter's experience there? I am not going to say or think at all about it, it makes me so full and indignant; oh dear! I suppose it is a wicked indignation; *that* I will confess to myself. Well, she is the most beautiful of the family; nobody can rob her of that, not even time; it is the beauty of soul, and will increase forever. How gracefully she walks about, with that strange boy. I'm sure no wealth or power could add to her as an object of interest, and yet I feel sure her heart has been broken on some kind of a wheel of fortune. What *is* the history lying behind this strange state of things?"

Sallie arose and went nearer the window. It was a day in March, when the sun seems to relent, and turn back repentant towards the earth, so long freezing, dying for the warmth of its rays. The snow softened, and came trickling down, in dirty pools of water, from the sunny slopes and pasture knolls. All along, the earth showed its bared and ill-used surface, in the saddest raggedness and tatters. Children, loosed from the house by the tempting warmth, loitered with new joy, to thrust their feet into the channels of water, filling the deep ruts. The doves too, peeped out from their warm cotes, venturing daintily, settling at last where they could drink and "croon," as only doves can, — telling their joy in dim, dove-like notes.

Sallie, too, caught the new signs of life; it quickened in her the love of life in all its forms. She thought of her Father, of Mazoni. She felt almost as though she heard them say, "Behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth," and her heart leaped up to co-operate in



that new creation. She looked around to see where Aunt Mary was, it was some time before she discovered, for she did not look high enough.

There they are at last, upon a high rock, beyond the little creek, a long way up stream, from where it wound its way, by the orchard — Peter and his mother stripping hemlock from some boughs, and tying it into brooms. Sallie's eyes filled with tears. "They really are as much above the ordinary plane of mortals, as their present position is above the tide below, and as much isolated from human sympathy." Sallie now thought of Mazoni's words of her, the clause in her father's will, and of the pitiable position in which Peter was found after Mazoni's death. How different the lad had seemed ever since, how hard it was, for even the mission of love to call him back again to life and strength; how he watched his mother and how manly he has become! "I wonder if any other boy ever took so much care as he does; it is not like a child."

Her reverie was broken by the entrance of Margaret with letters. One was from Annette, asking her to come into town at once, for Max Wortemberg had returned from the South, or West, where he had spent the winter, and, to use Annette's expression, "He is more splendid than ever. Come in and see him, for he returns very soon."

Without hesitation Sallie went. Annette had said truly; he *had improved*. He had grown into more full proportions; had become entirely at ease in the English language; talked well, and always to the purpose. His return brought back in full force his remembrance of Mazoni. The tears would roll over his cheeks whenever the name was mentioned. And his care for

the family, his tender regard for the widow, won their gratitude and confidence.

Max Wortemberg had been travelling through the great west. Iowa and Wisconsin were just attracting the attention of the public. Minnesota, too, was reaching out her hand to the advancing pioneer. Wortemberg selected a town site, and invested a large sum of money. The oldest son of a now fallen family, he had long cherished the plan of calling a town by the family name, and directing all his energies towards building it up. Finding himself so well introduced into confidence through his friend Mazoni, he never suspected, how, as a *foreigner*, he might be traduced. With the utmost frankness and enthusiasm, he talked over the plans now maturing in his own mind. He urged Madame Mazoni to entrust her son to his care, and, when they had together completed the necessary arrangements, to go herself with Annette, and make a new home in a new country.

Many pleasant hours they spent, in humorous discussions about this scheme, so wild and undesirable in the eyes of Madame Mazoni. A nobler heart than that in the breast of Max Wortemberg, never animated human frame. He had kept the conversation between Mazoni and Warren, fresh in his memory, as a sacred trust, doubly sacred, from the immediate departure of Mazoni, and his subsequent death. It was, in fact, the last talk in which they were associated. It seemed to point to him, as the proper person to secure a legal right, to protect and guide Annette. Force of circumstances had brought forth in his character the reasoning faculties quite in advance of the emotional nature, so that he had never stood fire, or fallen under the ar-



rows of Cupid. Too loyal to the sex, to suppose it a trial to marry any lady so attractive as Annette, the possibility of after regrets did not find rest in his heart. His strong devotion to Mazoni, and that conversation, decided for him, a course of action. Accordingly, after spending a portion of an evening in glowing descriptions of the West, he seated himself between Annette and her mother, drew a hand of both between his, and, in a serious manner, asked the hand of the daughter, and the consent of the mother.

Before he received an answer from either, and for the purpose of giving them time to think of the proposition, he spoke of the religious nature of this most solemn compact, and closed with this most singular remark:—

“If Annette accepts me as the protector of her person, the guide of her life, there must be, on her part, a renunciation of that pride which mars her beauty, that haughtiness which blinds her to the call from other hearts; she must forget herself in her new home, and make it a haven for all who demand its hospitality. Will Annette accept?”

Breathless, and quite unnoticed sat Sallie, through this most unexpected conference! Of herself she did *not* think at all! Wortenberg's manner was so beautiful, he was so much affected by the proposition he thus made; the result of his reasoning seemed so natural, to come forward as the guide of Annette, that with *real pleasure* she heard Annette's reply in the affirmative, saw without pain, his kiss upon her hand, and when she gave them her congratulations, they were without a single selfish emotion!

Long years afterwards, Sallie remembered the state

of her own heart at that moment with a glow of honest satisfaction. Truly, she possessed the noble power of rejoicing with others in their joy, without first looking to see how great a discount would accrue to her own sources of enjoyment. To these young people she gave *freely*. Elated with undefined happiness, Wortenberg asked her to join them; why should she not leave the old home for a new, where Peter could make his mark? Alas! unwittingly, Max Wortenberg had hit the “joints of her armor!” and her thoughts came back to herself. Though how small a chink the light flashes, revealing things long existent, now first seen! Chill, lone, desolate, widowed! the plank on which she stood, was slipping from beneath her feet; her life-boat had lost its pilot; the “great deep” was between her and the strong man, beneath the shadow of whose wing, she had unconsciously nestled. As though *this* was not enough torture, the true character of Annette, rose up before her as not the proper person to make Max Wortenberg happy. Like a voice of inspiration, the words of Little Peter often came to Sallie.

He had said—“Don't you do or say any thing, Cousin Sallie, when you are not quite *sure* you are right.” And so she passed out towards her home alone; alone, forever more, it seemed to her! Every thing seemed coated with ice, even her cloak *stung* her like frost!

The sky was lowery with a cheerless, lifeless whiteness, breaking in through the clouds and giving a forlorn distinctness to the far-off horizon, beneath which the dwellings of men, stood out tall and desolate. Sallie's heart began to rebel, it was cruel to allow so many people to struggle in an ungenial world. What had

they done to be left so uncared for? What had any of them to compensate for being born? Why was this gulf opened at all before her? and what now had she left? "But Aunt Mary and Peter, and the Duke, papa's last gift, and the dear old home, and the memory of those who loved you so much, on whom immortality has set its signet," said her better nature. "And the beauty and promise in friendship, in usefulness, in an orderly life, in imparting love and happiness to others," still whispered the good angel.

"All very good preaching," said Sallie, "but as free from a central point of action, as this raw, miserable, homesick-looking night."

The Duke drove to the door, while Sallie's eyes were blinded with tears. Her ears were greeted with the tones of the piano, the curtains were up purposely for her, she knew it; it warmed her a little; the light shone through the little paned windows, a welcome so true! The picture of that time-honored sitting-room, where comfort reigned and display was never admitted. Sallie was *herself* again; none but a practised eye could have discerned the traces of tears, when, with a merry laugh, she came in upon them.

## CHAPTER IX.

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"If you will still appeal  
To evil life in all,  
I know a demon-band  
Will answer to your call.

"But when the Lord was gone —  
The Lord who came to save —  
Two angels, fair and bright,  
Sat watching by the grave.

"And from that blessed hour,  
With an immortal mien,  
In every tomb of good,  
Some angel sits, unseen.

"The spell to bring it forth,  
With lowly, gentle mind,  
With patient love and trust,  
Go seek, and ye shall find."

## WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE.

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As Annette was in mourning for her father, it was decided to keep this engagement private for a period. Now that the question was settled, Max Wortemberg became a most devoted lover, a most affectionate son; and Annette's young brother, William, looked up to him with the confidence and love he could have felt for an elder brother.

Before the sun had warmed the earth into a return of smiling blossoms, Wortemberg and young Mazoni were on their way to the West. William wrote often to his mother; seemed happy, and full of hope; spoke in the terms of highest regard of Max, and dwelt particularly upon the deference and honor everywhere paid to him on the journey, and in the new city he had planted. Each of these young men had taken with them a large sum of money, and as soon as the necessary arrangements were made at their new home, Max Wortemberg departed, with the funds, to purchase goods at the nearest commercial city.

The next news came like a fearful and most inexplicable crash. It was announced in a letter to Madame Mazoni, enclosing one for Annette, both from Max. To Madame Mazoni he wrote the simple facts in these words,

"An awful calamity has come upon me! The two packages of money, one belonging to your son, the

other to myself, have been stolen. In this hotel, within twelve hours, not leaving my room but to take a bath, and for my tea; my entire dependence of immediate cash is withdrawn from me. I get no clue to lead me out of this mystery. I lived and acted, to be your strength. Now, ah, me! I am the unfortunate defrauder of you and your children. Have patience; I go to redeem that which is yours, or you see me no more. Write to your son, and explain; I cannot for a space."

To Annette he wrote, — "The way is dark; I grope, I know! I hear nothing but the words, the voice of my dearly beloved! Trust me one year; if success crowns my exertions, and it will, — God helps such as try manfully, — on this date, one year, you will hear from me. Take courage; do not ask the purposes, but believe in me, trust in me."

Of course the family were thrown into the greatest excitement and distress, not for the cash, but the fathomless mystery. Had Max Wortemberg been a native American, with all the strong, personal aims inherent in our people, he would have done precisely what he did not do. Men who are strong in their own integrity are rarely suspicious of doubts on the subject in the minds of others. His present distress arose from the loss of money entrusted to him, and the temporary inconvenience thus entailed upon his friends. In, and of himself, no sudden gust of angry circumstances could so have shaken him.

Well he knew *he* and *time* could head the most boisterous wind, and ride into port on the foaming crest of the highest wave. Unromantic as it may seem, the strongest man under heaven is made stronger by the

consciousness of money in his purse; especially where others are dependent upon him, or anticipate looking to him for protection. Eminently a practical man, Max Wortemberg saw with a glance the odds against him, with a pocket minus all bills of exchange. But he did not see, or feel, or know, how, in the home of his beloved, the home, time-honored by the residence of his friend, Mazoni, and consecrated at least to *his* mind by those last sad funeral rites — his good name was in the fire of the refiner.

Facts of so much importance could not be kept from the immediate friends of the parties concerned. There they lay, those raven-winged messengers of evil omen; Max Wortemberg's letters, upon the table in Madame Mazoni's library. The room, to those who had been in the habit of visiting it, through the life of Marco Mazoni, was a most excellent portrait of himself. Plain, elegant, ample, containing numberless shelves, laden with the holy sarcophagi of thought — running back through all ages, — it would seem as though the very scent of Mazoni's meerschaum, still lingering about his room, and still lying as he left it, upon the corner of his mantle-shelf — might have rendered merciful judgment easy to any, who there took up the scales of justice.

But no, everybody who claimed to know "men" and the "world," and "society," said he had run off with the money. The women, blessedly ignorant of the pressing incentives to great crimes, and innocent of that wide flight of the imagination which can grasp, suggest, and fasten them upon others, fluttered like timid partridges, at the report of an unexpected fire.

Madame Mazoni was thunderstruck at so foul an assertion, such a thought had never occurred to her, and she threw it from her, as she would a viper.

"Mr. Cranston, it is simply because you are not intimately acquainted with Max Wortemberg, or that your prejudice against foreigners has biased your judgment. If you knew him, you could understand how impossible it is for one, who sets his own price above any measure of gold or silver, to sell out for a few thousand dollars! No, no, the human goodness I have tried as I have his, I have faith in, under greater darkness than this. If Mazoni was only here! if he was, sure am I, he would decide to go to these young people immediately; and, as I am his representative, I shall go at once and take out the necessary funds."

Paul Cranston, not with intentional rudeness, certainly, but because the habit of his mind saw his own opinion, pre-eminent above all others, and also, because he was habitually regardless of the feelings of others, broke forth into a most boisterous laugh; a laugh to make one shiver, echoing through the apartment, like the clatter of breaking china, or the falling of shovel and tongs over the andirons and fender.

"Madame Mazoni you must excuse me; you ladies are blessedly ignorant of society at large, — the masses, — in whose ranks honor is yet a myth! Depend upon it, Max Wortemberg is a consummate humbug; I always supposed he was; turned out as I expected he would. Annette, my word for it, you will never set eyes on him again. Most astonishing thing to me, that a bright, handsome girl like yourself, should have acted so foolishly. Had it been our Sallie here, I should not

have been surprised, or my sister Mary; she, — the more of a devil a man is, the more she will insist he is not understood!"

Thus for want of delicate consideration of others, this man whom they all loved so much, thrust home to each heart barbed arrows, that could but rankle and fester, till time laid the plaster of forgetfulness thereon.

Mrs. Stuart was the only person present who really understood Paul certainly, and just now, in that library, it would have gone hard with him, had the same "measure" been meted out to him, that he, without much thought, or true exercise of charity had "meted" out to one not at hand, to defend himself. Mary's genial smile lit up her large blue eyes; the mouth responded: —

"Paul, it is simply a question of time. Let time settle its own account; a year is but twelve months; by looking at the date of those letters you will see one month of it is already passed. I am ready to turn prophetess, and affirm that Annette will be married this day year, and that you, Paul Cranston, will give her away."

Everybody else irritated Paul, but Mary never. It was a strange power she had, he could not answer her back; she did not excite his antagonism or bring down his harsh invective. Now, there came a sudden tinge of sadness over his face; she inferred that he was thinking of the old time, when, as children, they stood together in the old square pew and traced the lines of the psalm chanted by the choir from the pages of the same book. *He* really was thinking of Peter and his cruelty to him. He was very sorry for it; he would have preferred that Mary witnessed it rather than

Sallie, because, as he had just said, Mary could always see through the ugly outside to something better within. Then, again, he had been unjust to Sallie with regard to her property. He could not bear to be angry with himself, and so, in self-defence, he expressed quite an amount of uncomfortable feeling upon her. The great demand upon a gentleman of his clique, the fashion of extravagant luxury, rendered him, if not dishonest in the literal application of the law of the country, at least indulgent to himself beyond what his late brother would approve. Indeed, there was no man he so hated to think about or talk about, yet he honored him above all men; he would at this moment prefer his approval to that of any other person. Paul did not believe in the spiritual presence of those who have gone before to the kingdom of immortality; so he always said, but he feared it, nevertheless. So strong was the power of association in the mind of Paul, that oftentimes the perspiration would start over his whole body, while rambling about the haunts of the old house; as though Peter Cranston had suddenly laid his hand upon his head, as he did often, when in the prime of manly strength, he used to come home for an occasional vacation.

The little conference of friends broke up, Madame Mazoni, Annette, Aunt Mary, and Sallie still believing in Wortemberg's integrity. Madame Mazoni made immediate preparation to go to her son as privately as possible. Annette was to remain with Sallie at Cranston House. She wrote a most affectionate letter to Wortemberg, assuring him of her constancy, though it must be confessed, Sallie's suggestion first decided her so to do. She went on with her marriage prepara-

tions as if nothing had occurred to cloud her prospects. In this, too, she was strengthened by the superior judgment of Sallie, who entirely swept out of the house all conversation on the mystery surrounding Wortemberg, until it faded from their minds.

Three sets of nimble fingers were busy over piles of linen, cotton, and muslin, while as the summer advanced, little Peter took a wondrous interest in the garden, and lands belonging to the estate. There had been a marked change in the boy since Mazoni's death. It really took its date from that long conversation now known only to himself. Now he knew there was a purpose in his life. No longer dreamy, or lost in books, the color of *health* or *hectic* (there were two sets of opinions) began to glow upon his cheeks, and the pained, pinched expression of his mouth was lost sight of, in the bright, wide-awake tone of his countenance, and the constant industry of his life.

## CHAPTER X.

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"THE man who loves,  
Goes out to sea upon a shattered plank,  
And trusts to miracles for safety."

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## THE FRUIT OF A MISTAKE.

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Noisy, snappish, unfeeling March wound up its reign with a blustering snow storm; while gentle April, always fickle, though asking forgiveness with tears, entered upon her first morning's levee with smiles so warm and loving, that all trace of lingering winter departed as by magic. March said with a sneer, to the withered grass and shivering twigs of the moaning, desolate trees: "Shall these dry bones live?" April, almost destitute of distinct utterances, worked silently under an uncertain sky—loosened the hard earth, about the roots of every thing, that had the power of reproduction, unclasped the light bark from every bud of promise, and said with a voice of soft breezes and gentle showers, "Come forth."

The family at Cranston House lingered over their breakfast, on the memorable first of April, with unusually buoyant cheerfulness. Annette's wardrobe was ready for the bride. She was to open her mother's house during the week, and get ready for her return. Every possible arrangement was talked over with a fulness of hope, and assurance of pleasant results, as though the reins of government were in their own hands. Their joyous, unfearing peals of laughter were brought to a sudden hush by the noiseless entrance of Paul Cranston. Words are not much at any time, and certainly no words could express with such fearful



truth, as his face and step, that some great sorrow entered with him.

"Is it mother?" was the frightened cry from both young ladies.

Mrs. Stuart said, "It is a child; which?"

"William!" he answered.

There was a great cry! and then the most deathlike silence.

Words! to be sure, what are ye, when the "only son of a mother, and she a widow," is taken? Tears! ye are but a mockery of relief, when the heart is *wrung dry* with the agony of accumulated desolation! Destiny! must *you* press your cold foot of iron upon the young sapling this widow labored and toiled to rear into a tree of shade for her old age?

When a sense of the present came into the thought of this family, Paul was in a chair close by the door, with his pocket handkerchief thrown over his face and head; Annette upon the floor, with her head in Sallie's lap; Mrs. Stuart by the table, with her arms round little Peter. Paul was the first to arouse himself; his best nature was in the ascendancy this morning, but he could not bear the sight of grief; it made him uncomfortable, he always threw the thought of it far from him, and he cheated himself, by charging this to refinement of taste, to extreme sensibility. It was in fact, one way of giving expression to love of self, over love to the neighbor.

"Mary," he said, drawing near, and speaking in a whisper (Peter shrunk away to a distant corner of the room. Paul knew why, and hated him for it), "I can't bear these things as you can; the body has arrived, and the mother. You must go in and take charge.

I'll be responsible for all expense." Paul Cranston took out his purse among these stricken women, as though he could give consolation in gold, and buy off all obligation of sympathy. His distress was *masculine*; theirs was *feminine*. Mary pushed back the purse with a gentle dignity he could no longer understand, and thus another wave was added to the widening current between them.

Our life is cut into segments by events, not years — states of mind, not days and weeks. Upon that floor, with her head bowed down in the lap of Sallie, what was Annette thinking of? her fair-haired, petted brother? yes, and with true sorrow: her poor mother? yes, and she felt as though to have spared her this blow, she could have given up any real or fancied good she possessed. But where did she cast anchor; in the heart of the strong man far away? No! In our *extremity*, fictitious ties break like burnt tow; the heart unwraps itself from the bandages of custom, accident, or *expediency*, cuts clear from all thralldom and goes to its own! Annette's life was purely natural, and of necessity *weak*. To-day, with this sad news ringing in her ears, she got a startling view of herself. She never could tell how it happened, that the old love of her childhood's companion should, at this solemn hour, float up to the surface of her being; yet thus it was, he seemed to stand close beside her, as her only protector now.

The call for immediate action drove all personal considerations away from our little circle, and when, after a week of excitement and distress — when William was laid away by the side of his father, and

Annette had settled down at home, with her mother, it seemed to them all as though an age of care had rolled by.

Aunt Mary had done as Paul had desired her to, she had made great exertions, quite too much for her strength. The ground was damp, the house in town cold and unfit for one so delicate to go about in. No one thought of it at the time. She coughed badly, and Margaret testified her anxiety, as she always did, when occasion called for it, by frequent comings and goings, and characteristic presentments of various teas known to be good as simple remedies. Sallie noticed it with a sudden spasm of pain, augmented by the sad memory of two bereavements in one year. Thus far, Sallie had not learned to accept all things pertaining to life as good: her heart rebelled against any more inroads upon her social circle; the more she thought about it, the more a dreadful fear took hold upon her. Strong in herself, could she not do something to avert so great a calamity? Now she set to work, to think and devise with a ready purpose. She consulted the doctor; she followed implicitly all his directions, with a zeal in keeping with her earnest, noble character: she planned rides, and watched with the nicest discrimination all her fancies and predilections. One active purpose created another indirectly bearing upon it. She became little Peter's teacher. Her ambition took a definite direction, — Peter should excel all boys for scholarship and accomplishments, for was she not *equal* to the task? had not her father often said she must learn so thoroughly, that she might teach if need be?

Meanwhile, April finished her mission faithfully,

and gave place to May. Two months more and the pledge of Max Wortemberg would be redeemed, and Annette would go far away as his wife.

Sallie in thinking of it, considered it a matter of politeness as well as pleasure to invite Madame Mazoni to pass the summer after the marriage at Cranston House. Spending the day there soon after; she proposed it, taking at the same time Annette's hand in her own. They were sitting upon the sofa together; it was the left hand, and upon the forefinger of that hand glittered a showy ring, never seen there before.

"Why, Annette, how is this? Max Wortemberg never gave you such a ring as *that*."

"How do you know that?" said Annette, with a slightly irritated manner.

"It is not his taste at all. I could wager my own *right hand* he never gave you such a ring as *that*; there is ever so much meaning in a gift of jewelry, and his taste is truly exquisite. Don't you remember the long talks we used to have about cultivated taste in contradistinction to that which is vulgar? Please don't wear that, if it is only from respect to his good judgment. Let me think — in eight weeks he will be here, or he will write."

"Sallie, I never expect to see or hear from him again."

"Why, Annette! is he dead, or are you stark crazy?"

"He is not dead to my knowledge."

"Then, Annette, what *is* it? Do not be discouraged now, when you have borne up so well. I believe in him as I do in my Bible and my God; and if he prove faithless to you, there will be nothing left on earth to *trust*, or in heaven to hope for! How can you sit

here so coolly and suggest such a thing? How can you do such injustice to one of the noblest of men, and your father's friend too?"

There was a pause, painful and awkward, broken at last, by Madame Mazoni.

"Tell your own story, Annette; had you listened to me, no explanation would have been necessary."

With a great deal of embarrassment, not unmingled with regret, quite apparent, and arising doubtless from the clear, straightforward way in which Sallie's higher-toned mind had presented the case, Annette made a statement to the effect that John Warren arrived quite unexpectedly in town the week after Willie's funeral. He came to see them; he sympathized much in their lonely grief; he renewed his old suit with pertinacious earnestness; represented with arguments she could not answer or withstand, that Max Wortemberg was an imposter. She said she struggled hard to be true to him, till his year expired, but that her *own heart* proved traitor to him; and John, finding this out, would not yield his consent for delay and explanation, firmly believing she was deceived in the *man*; that John also insisted upon the utmost secrecy in the engagement to himself until the last of May, when with strict privacy, they were to be married, and settle in a distant city!

Sallie still turned the ring upon Annette's finger wistfully and in dumb amazement! From her downcast lids the tears dropped upon the showy stones, and with her glove she wiped them away unawares! Her thoughts were far enough from that showy, gaudy bauble, groping for the man upon whom this news would fall like a thunderbolt, that her spirit might sit down in sad sympathy with his, and with the beautiful,

most touchingly delicate silence of true friendship, give him comfort. At last she repeated through tears and sobs:—

"Dear Annette, how I pity you; how was it possible; he, so noble, so tried, where a man is most sensitive; how could you forsake him; how could you cut off his only request—a chance to clear himself? I am very sure you could never have loved him. You are self-deceived; you have deceived him, and you will have broken his heart. I have placed all your quiet content through the winter to your faith in him. What will you do when he comes?"

Annette was quite overcome at her friend's excitement, but she spoke up cheerfully.

"Never fear for that, Sallie, he will never come; your mother says so, and your Uncle Paul too; they advise to this step."

"And your mother," said Sallie, turning her eyes to the place where she sat. Madame Mazoni's face gave no response; Sallie could not read it at all. It haunted her after she went away; it was suggestive, very, but to all her questionings, whenever she looked back to it, there came no reply. She tied on her bonnet, saying, as she put her arms around Annette, and kissed her many times,—

"I've no more arguments to offer as rebutting testimony to those older and wiser than I am; I hope you will be happy. Please don't ask me to the wedding; indeed, I cannot come. I dare say it is best thus,—I almost see it in that light now,—but I pity him so much. Poor man! a stranger in a cold-hearted country, what a reception awaits him! Good-by, dear Annette."

And thus these two girls, so unlike, so knit together by family intimacy, parted company, not often to meet in the future, and *never* to open their hearts to each other, as in the years lying back of the present.

Sallie, on her return home, could not understand why she found it so difficult to repeat this conversation to Aunt Mary. A new, God-given emotion is always born in the soul, unheralded by our outer consciousness. To Sallie it appeared simply unpleasant to break in upon her habit of pleasant thought for Annette, with such unlooked-for, disagreeable news. Her own plane of thought, though healthful and elevated, was still that of a young girl; while that of her Aunt Mary was of a woman who had early made the circuit of life's hopes and fears and disappointments, and thus mounted to a higher plane, — a table-land of the soul, where, with an eye cooled from the fever of life, she saw clearly the bearing of events.

Sallie waited till the spring twilight took them both to the windows of the family sitting-room, where, partially screened by the gathering darkness, freedom of expression could be indulged in, without that scrutiny of face to which Mrs. Stuart was somewhat addicted. On this occasion, in reply to Sallie, she said: —

"I am very much surprised, but not at all sorry. It has from the first seemed to me a mistake, and however much he may suffer at first, it will be transient. You will not be more surprised at any thing, when you arrive at my age, than your present ignorance of your own emotional nature. It often seems to me as though the Divine Father lifted very gradually the covering from our hearts, that we may not arrive at a knowledge of our own impulses and necessities in advance of our ability to act."

"Is this the reason why you are always so averse to hastening, or forcing circumstances?"

"Perhaps so; 'Thou shalt do no violence,' is full of beauty to my mind now. At your age, I should have thought it very wrong, not to say cowardly, if one did not use force against force, where right was with them, and wrong opposing. Now, just now, Cousin Sallie, you can hardly do Annette justice, because you, in the first place, are differently constituted, and, secondly, have never had a like experience. One must indeed have patience with one's self, and tender, loving patience with all one's friends, as Mazoni used to say, and he might have added, and I am not sure I have not heard him advance the idea, that we should follow the divine example, in leaving, with reverence and with freedom, the hearts of others to ultimate themselves. Our own motives are at best none too easy for us to analyze; then, surely, we are poorly prepared to weigh and measure those of others."

Thus talking in a low, quiet way, almost as though she was thinking audibly, she came close to Sallie's side, resting her hand upon her shoulder, and gazing forth at the dear, familiar green, the old, well-worn road, the fields beyond, the sparkling roll of the rapid creek, and the woods still further on towards the west, where the glow had not all faded, and over which hung a warm haze, giving beauty to the whole landscape. There was a silence of a brief space, in which the earnest gaze of both seemed reading some page of natural history; then she spoke again.

"It hath *its* history Sallie can't read; I must unlock it to her before I go; yes, before I go!"

## CHAPTER XI.

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"PARTED ! Face no more, voice no more ;  
Wiped wholly out like some ill scholar's scrawl  
From heart and slate !"

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## THE RETURN.

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ON the morning of the 20th of May there came a note from Annette and a box of cake; — she was already Mrs. Warren, and off towards the rising sun on her wedding tour. Her mother also sent a kind note, saying she should come to Cranston House as soon as Annette was settled in her new home. Thus it came to pass, that Madame Mazoni's house in town, where, as a matter of course, Max Wortemberg expected to meet Annette, was shut up for the summer. No preparation had been made for him. Privately, Madame Mazoni had her reasons. As for Annette, it was pleasant for her to think of him as dead, and naturally enough, she acted as though he was.

The 20th of June was a day of expectant excitement at Cranston House. Paul was on hand that day, early in the morning, bent on having a good time at the expense of these foolish people, who were absurd enough to believe in a man whose long absence had rendered his existence almost a myth. So sure was Paul that Wortemberg would never return, he said he would wager his share of Cranston House against Sallie's Duke.

Sallie said she would take no risk of losing the Duke, but she would bet the pony chaise. How Paul laughed at this implied doubt; she declared no doubt

was implied, only she could not venture any way with the Duke.

"But," said Paul, "If there is no *doubt*, where is your risk? I risk a fragment of this place, is not that sheer extravagance, against a mere horse? especially as I love this place as well as any of you, and sometimes think I shall turn you all out, and take possession."

Then he shouted again! It struck a long, untouched note in Sallie's memory; how it jarred her nerves! The dear old place, held in reserve by her dear father, as a final refuge for Aunt Mary and Little Peter. How could he talk so? She rose and shut the door, that no hint of the possible instability of her present home might reach her ears. With sudden resolution, she turned to Paul, and with an air of determination he never saw in her before, said, "I set the Duke against your share of this place." At the same time turning down the lid of the old-fashioned desk, she spread paper before him, and called in Margaret to witness the transaction.

Paul Cranston drank too much wine; it was after dinner, and the well-filled side-board in the opposite recess had been to-day, and not for the first time, well patronized by him. To tell a truth that neither he nor Sallie had yet really arrived at, that side-board and the ancient, well-filled wine cellar which had been included in Sallie's legacies from her father, were the principle attraction now to draw him home. His habits were growing decidedly bad. Under the influence of wine, wisdom goes away, and folly takes command. Paul had used up the largest portion of Sallie's money, and now, in his heart, he was already planning how he could secure a larger share of the real estate. It had more

than doubled in value since Sallie became of age. His manner to-day proved that he knew it. Had he been under the guidance of his usual share of shrewdness, he would never have opened the eyes of others to the workings of his own mind, but Folly had the reins, and under her guidance he was no longer non-committal. It was truly painful to see how this naturally noble man, like a hungry beggar, scented from afar the prospective possession of Cranston House, with its rich lands and acres of pines and oaks. Poverty was chasing upon the heels of his dissipation; he could not turn and *face it* like a man, for alas! the Moloch of desire had crushed in its fatal arms the veriest trace of manhood, till it was weak as the pithless, lifeless rush, swaying in aimless idiocy, by the sedgy marsh.

Not yet had Sallie any suspicion of his habits; to drink wine was no unheard-of thing that she should question, and to drink to excess, if she thought at all upon the subject, she supposed quite out of the line of *gentlemen*. Wise Mrs. Stuart and shrewd Margaret understood it all. The paper, however, was drawn, signed, and witnessed, and Sallie took possession of it. Paul helped himself to more wine, and with a boisterous manner, assured Sallie he should win his bet. Then he thrashed round the house in a reckless sort of lord-and-master way, as though he, in the first place, was taking "account of stock," and secondly, as though he was looking for something—it was Peter.

Peter's mother had told him to remain in her chamber with her; she did not wish him to see his uncle under such unpleasant circumstances. At last he asked where Peter was.



Sallie replied, "Up-stairs, getting his lesson."

"Has a private tutor, I suppose," with a sneer.

"Yes," said Sallie, with great self-possession.

"Has, has he? What does the tutor propose to make of him, eh? Tied to you two women, is not the way to make a smart man. Why don't you put him to a trade? Call him down, Sallie, to bring round my horse."

The words were hardly uttered before Margaret appeared with the horse at the door.

"Halloo! that's one way. Has'nt darkey enough to do in-doors that she must also do that amiable young gentleman's work?"

Margaret heard every word, her only demonstration was to stand a little straighter, give a peculiarly significant jerk to her turban, and look blacker than before. Sallie still ignorant of the cause of this new manner, stood alone with her uncle, and held down by main force her fast-gathering indignation.

"You see," Paul continued, "you women are fools about matters of this sort. Now, follow my advice, Sallie, and put him to a trade, — a trade, Sallie, under a good tight master; you see it is bad blood on one side: and — well — his mother is not what she was once."

"No," broke in Sallie, no longer able to keep quiet, "no, no, once she might have been something like *you*, and *me*, creatures of flesh and blood, merely living to cultivate the same; but now, by some process we have yet to learn, she has become an angel!"

Now Paul laughed again, and coming close to Sallie, he said:

"She is weak, weak now, and" —

"Uncle Paul, don't for mercy's sake try me too long,

else I shall say something I shall be sorry for. Once let me say, Peter is my heir, and neither he nor his mother will come upon you for support. He is not going to a trade, but shall have the education of a gentleman's son. It does not matter to me about this unknown father; he must have had some noble traits or he could never have won my Aunt Mary. Uncle Paul, you *will* respect her blood as the best in the country; the child is as much like her as child can be like a parent, and if he was not — if every relation he ever had, proved themselves worthy to be hung, it can never make any difference in the affection I have for him."

Much longer this conversation might have continued, had not Margaret, grown quite impatient with the delay, as well as with Paul, called out to the patiently dozing horse — "Whoa," with such zeal as to start the aforesaid quiet animal into sundry antics, which none but his master could well subdue. Never were women more glad than Mary and Margaret, when Paul was safely in his carriage, and the reins in his hands.

Wonders will never cease, thought Sallie. He is the same man, only more defined than I have ever known him to appear before; is it — can it be possible! that he drinks too much wine! that they *both* drink! she fairly gasped for breath; and springing to the side-board examined the decanters. "Oh, dear! it must be; it must be! I can thus explain ever so many things; Mazoni must have known it; this is the clue to some of his hints, and the key to a part, at least, of his sadness just before his death. Yes, yes, it must be — and my little brothers in Germany — what will become of us all? Uncle Paul grows so reckless and extravagant; and she, my dear mother! oh, if my



father had only lived! he knew how to control her. How strangely she looked the last time we dined there, and how they both slept after dinner, and were so cross at tea time! Sallie had buried her face in the pillow on the sofa from very terror at the light which showed her thus plainly all the prospective misery they, as a family, were likely to pass through. Excited, alone, and just now timid, she almost doubted if there was any God or guide over the affairs of earth, and in a condition almost of despair, she went listlessly up the stairs on the way to her room. Passing the door of Mrs. Stuart's chamber, she heard, as she often did, the pleasant voice of Little Peter reading the service for the evening; it re-assured her, drove the spirits of evil away, and the good angels came and "ministered unto her."

Paul Cranston's ride home quite sobered him; or, if that did not, the first letter he opened, after comfortably seating himself before his library fire, did. There were two of them in one envelope, one for him, and the other for Annette Mazoni. His ran thus:—

"Knowing you to be a friend of Madame Mazoni, and fearing the uncertainty of the mails, with liberty borrowed, I enclose one copy of a letter to you, for her daughter, which you will please present to her at once. You will please inform her, with expedition, of another copy trusted to the mails, and that I believe to be with her as soon as possible, after this reaches you; departing on the same day of this date.

"I am, very truly, your obedient servant,

"MAX WORTEMBERG."

Paul Cranston's muddled brain cleared. He twisted his note in his hand, and thought.

Around all her children, gentle night drew her curtains, suspending, per force, the world-struggle—the life-strife of so many, and softly closing the lids of others; many of whom, nature in her multiplicity of beauty, or love with its divine elixir, or friendship with its steady, healthful pulse, gave neither joy, hope, nor promise. Between the fevered earth and the stars, so bright, secure, and unsympathizing, she spread a veil of watery mist, and through the ocean courier, *east wind*, she uttered her moaning wail, rocking with its cheerless, monotonous cadences, the bed of many an invalid into long wished-for, unconscious sleep.

With one exception, the inmates of Cranston House lost in forgetfulness and dreams, the pain, and even terror, of the previous evening. In a little slip of a room, opening into the large and airy chamber of his mother, and upon a bed, narrow, and snugly fitting into a recess, lay little Peter, silent as though dead; yet wide awake; his large blue eyes looking up into the thick darkness of midnight, with a steady, and almost unwinking, stare. The temperament of the child, was that which his complexion indicated—*intensely conscious*. Of his uncle he never talked, and on the conversation the day previous, no comment had been made, no criticism uttered. Outwardly, every thing had gone on as though it had not happened. Had the whole conversation been repeated to him, it would have been wholly new, and his capacity of comprehension could not have measured it, so little did the actual, so dimly did the real, stamp its imagery on his mind. Still, the atmosphere unreasonable Paul Cranston brought into the house that day, rested with crushing weight upon this innocent child. White as the pillow on which

it lay, the little face looked out uncomplainingly helpless in its agony. The eyes repeated over many times, the prayer the lips could not venture to utter, because of the sleeper close at hand; and over the words, "Our Father," they searched yet more earnestly into the darkness of night; believing because his mother said so, that the "Darkness and the light were both alike to Him"—yet wondering, questioning if possibly, he, Peter, who had known no home, was not, perhaps, *outside* the circle of common brotherhood, a link forgotten in the general supervision, assigned no place in the particular arrangement of the Father's Providence: and thus, the hours counted out their accustomed moments, sounded their signal from the old clock, till at last, oh, joyful sound to the weary watcher, a human chronicle, almost, cheered the lone child. Chanticleer announced the hour of a new day! What a relief it was. Peter's pussy Proudly responded by a sudden curling of herself into most graceful postures, previous to a spring from her cushion upon the floor, to his bed. The boy laid his arm over her soft fur. She acknowledged the attention by a gentle and continuous purr. The current of his thought was changed. Peter slept, in sympathy with the only companionship which his condition could accept.

Morning brings a blessing in her hand, to every waker, however poor in resources, or elasticity of spirits. The pattering of rain, waked up Peter. In his bed he sat and played and talked with his kitten; then he dressed, and took a look from every window in his mother's chamber, and together, they went down to the parlor. What made her watch him so closely? Truly he was very pale, and as the day wore away, he

grew restless, absent, and feverish. And still the rain dripped from the eaves, came in spasmodic gusts against the windows, and brief showers from the trees, among the branches of which, the winds moaned; while with strange hopefulness, they nodded their heads at each other, laden with the young, rich foliage, and still lingering blossoms of early summer. Until the mist obscured all objects, Mrs. Stuart stood at the window, enjoying the abundant rain. Margaret's freshly lighted fire eclipsed the lingering twilight, exorcised the east wind's chill, and drew the family near the genial hearth. Peter's wistful face was ripe for the usual hour of frank, confessional, and suggestive questionings.

"Can you tell what I was made for, mother?"

"Why do you ask, my boy?"

"Because, there don't seem to be room for me, I am afraid I am in somebody's way all the time, and, and, I don't remember that we ever had any home. I don't think people like children,—there seem to be a great many of them too. I keep thinking about them very much. I should have thought God would have done better than he has by small people, who cannot do for themselves."

Peter was sitting upon the hearth-rug, with his feet between the time-honored brass andirons. The howling wind sent a chill through him, and he drew a little nearer the cheerful blaze, holding his open palms up to warm. At his left, was his mother in an easy-chair, knitting, and by the desk on his right, sat Sallie, drawing a map of the United States.

Children are miniature text books; and wise are those teachers of the people who deign sometimes to

choose a subject of discourse from these household manuals.

The queries, of which little Peter had relieved himself, had opened a flood-gate of thought in the minds of his listeners, bearing them away, into suggestive regions of the mind, whither he could not follow; and so he remained unanswered.

"Mother, can you tell me why he makes them, and places them, where they are not wanted?"

"No, my boy, I cannot; but this I can tell you, He *has* reasons, wise, merciful, and good: and with Him little Peter and his mother, and all other defenceless people, can trust results, without fear or doubt."

"Mother, are you sure uncle Paul is your brother?"

"Yes, indeed, I can remember seeing him sit where you now do, asking strange questions of his mother, as you now do of yours."

"I wish I could have seen him then, and her too." The boy turned his face towards the wall, where the picture of his grandmother hung. "Please tell me some more about her; but first tell me, mother, why uncle Paul does not love me?"

"Little Peter does not love his uncle; *that* is reason number one; and little Peter reminds him of an unpleasant piece of family history, and it gives him pain."

Sallie dropped her pencil, and looked up earnestly, but the history was not forthcoming.

Calm as a day in summer, when violent tempests have cleared the air, was Mrs. Stuart. Peter came to her side and looked up into her face. She drew the young head close to her own, and said cheerfully: "Speak on, my boy."

"Mother, I told Marco Mazoni I wanted to go with him, but he said I must stay with you, and take care of you and cousin Sallie and Margaret and the Duke, and the garden; but I think he did not know how uncle Paul felt about it."

"What has got into you?" asked Sallie, brushing away the clouds from her face, and brightening as by magic, the whole room with her cheerful smile and musical voice. "Come here, Peter." She opened her arms, and he sprung into her lap. "Master Peter, listen to me; this house is mine, but if it was not for your mother and *you*, my little cousin, I could not live here, it would be so lonesome: then, again, your mother had a right here before I was born. For reasons you cannot now understand, I hold it in trust for her and for you. Always remember hereafter, it is as much yours as mine, and really more your mother's than anybody's else. Mazoni spoke the *truth* when he told you how important you were to us. Now, Peter what makes you talk in this way? for my part, I wish you were *six* instead of one; wouldn't we have a nice, noisy time? And now I think of it, Peter, you do not see enough of people of your own age. I must find some more children to teach with you. How should you like that?"

Peter did not answer, for there was heard the sound of wheels at the door, and in a moment a rapid step in the hall, a sudden throwing wide the door, and the bright, hopeful face of Max Wortemberg presented itself! The first words he uttered were,—

"Where is she? Are they up stairs? Let me go alone, and announce myself." Suiting the action to

the word, he turned again to the door. Mrs. Stuart now first comprehending him, caught his arm, exclaiming:

"Who? Annette? Is it possible? don't you know? Why! Max Wortemberg! Annette is married!"

As when the eagle, soaring up towards his eyrie of domestic rest and love, is stricken by the unerring aim of the sportsman, and falls with bowed head and drooping wings to the earth beneath; so, Max Wortemberg, with an arrow from the quiver where he least could have expected it piercing his heart, settled down upon the floor at Mrs. Stuart's feet; saying in a voice of deep and smothered pain:

"My God! help me! O my God, do not forsake me!" Then he flung up his arms, and they fell helplessly upon her lap, where he buried his face upon them, while sob after sob broke from his convulsed frame. It would be difficult to tell which suffered most at that moment, Max Wortemberg, or Sallie Cranston. Neither analyzed their feelings at the time, or could have understood till long after, when time had sifted the true from the false, how the breaking up of the "great deep," clears and purifies its waters. She had not moved from her place by the table; perhaps he had not seen her at all; of herself she did not think. Pictures were limning upon her heart in ineffaceable colors, but there she sat, her head resting upon her hand; her eyes were dilated, and she seemed transfixed — as cold and pale as marble.

"Tell me more," said Wortemberg.

Mrs. Stuart made a simple statement of the facts, while with motherly tenderness, she drew her fingers

over his bowed head. In about half an hour Max Wortemberg gathered up his strength, arose upon his feet, assumed his usual bearing, asked for the direction to Madame Mazoni's, and bowing, without a word to any one, left the house. With the greatest expedition he travelled to her present place of abode, announcing by telegraph his wish to see her. They met. It was a long and most trying interview.

The young bride had not yet returned from her journey. He asked to see her future home. It was granted. Together this widow and her son, so far as the most devoted affection could make him so, walked along the street of the city, shut in on both sides by costly mansions, till, at last Madame Mazoni thrust a latch key into a door where the name "John Warren," written on a silver door plate, glittered in its new, pretentious brightness.

We talk much of the sorrows of women; we write sentimentally of her tender, oft-broken heart and ill-requited affection, but there is *no* sight so completely overpowering as that of a strong man writhing under disappointed affection.

To-day Max Wortemberg had come to the burial of his dead. He lifted his hat reverently, in the empty home of her who, in being faithless to him, had cut herself adrift from his respect, as well as love. From room to room he walked, uttering no word, but listening eagerly to every explanation. And Madame Mazoni could see plainly, that he was tying together every house arrangement, every object of luxury, taste, or economy, so that in the summing up, he might be able to take an accurate measurement of the man, for whose sake Annette had forsaken him. In a low

voice, and as to himself, he at length gave expression to his conclusions.

"Some natural taste, but not cultivated; he has considered her comfort; *want* she will not suffer; he is rich. Had she been patient, and did her happiness require it, I too could have decked her with 'purple and fine linen.' A gentleman he is not, never can be; that comes by inheritance. He *stole* her from me! the vilest robbery a *man* can ever commit! A gentleman, never! Life looks blank now, without her, but the good God takes count! It is enough, Madame Mazoni, are you ready?"

He smoothed his hand along the snowy pillow of that bridal bed; stood a moment before her dressing table, laid a richly bound prayer book upon it, turned back, stooped down and kissed the covers. They departed.

Once more in his own apartments at the hotel where he had asked her attendance, she became his guest. He laid aside all appearance of personal suffering, and entered with whole-hearted sympathy into the affairs of Madame Mazoni. He paid her the sum she had entrusted to him, and which had been stolen — begged of her to call upon him, if in the future any emergency should render it necessary, then solemnly as to a mother, he craved her blessing, and bade her farewell! Long after he was gone she sat weeping. To her it seemed as though every bough upon her family tree had withered, and life with her had been a failure.

Without a word of parting to any other person, Max Wortemburg set his face towards the wild freedom and obscurity, stretching in its native beauty beyond the blue-ridge and towards the setting sun. To

Madame Mazoni, there came occasionally long letters, which she always answered; but it was a strictly private correspondence, and the good breeding of the parties most interested, prevented all vulgar curiosity upon the subject.

## CHAPTER XII.

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"On, on upon thy way,  
The way all flesh has trod;  
On, with a buoyant step,  
And leave the end to God.

"He hath not left thee here,  
Unaided and alone;  
All nature goes with thee,  
And urges action on.

"Around thee, and above,  
*Within* thee, and apart,  
Are countless goads and spurs  
To rouse thy flagging heart."

## COUSIN SALLIE'S DETERMINATION.

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THE principal subject of interest and anxiety for the next few weeks, was Cousin Sallie. The balance of her healthful mind for the first time in her life was atilt; tremulously, to and fro, the weights swung! Her brain took alarm. The note of warning ran through every member of the body.

From her ruby lips the color faded; the blood settled away from the surface; and palor almost startling to herself, gave a new aspect to her beauty; while the moulding, plastic fingers of destiny rounded thus, some sharp outlines of her strong and noble character. A weary, long time, she seemed lost in some absorbing subject of thought. Abruptly at last, she broke away from it, and started off for the city. Her mind had evidently matured some plan, which she was in haste to execute. Accordingly she made her first call upon Mr. Hale, the former partner of her father.

"Mr. Hale, I came in town purposely to ask you to write my will; tell me, also, is this paper good for any thing?"

She spread before him the paper drawn up by Paul Cranston, and stated the facts. Mr. Hale read through her statement, looking first at her, and then at the paper, seeming to read alternately, lawyer-like, first her face, then the document.

"Miss Cranston, the wager is nonsense; but this

paper — your Uncle Paul has the old-fashioned notions with regard to a pledge; in a matter of honor he is as true as steel. It is as good as his bond! Why, had he — was it after dinner?"

"Do you think he knew what he was about?"

"Miss Cranston! I shall insist; I shall accept this and make good his promise?" Do you know you are losing money all the while through that father-in-law?"

"I have been meaning to speak to you about it, and must, more definitely than I can now."

"Now then, what does so young a lady as yourself wish to do with your estate, in case of your death?"

"Mr. Hale, it is to prepare for the worst that I am here to-day; I *may*, nay I *expect* to remain many years longer in this world; but it is best to be prepared for a different arrangement of events. There will be a crash in our family — I see it, and know it, and must prepare for it. I wish a portion of the land beyond the creek sold; I am told it has risen in value, and, as it is quite distinct from the home estate, it will not give any real pain to the present or prospective heirs. The money thus raised, I wish used, if it becomes necessary, for the completion of my half-brothers' education. The Cranston House, and lands adjoining, are for the use of my mother and her husband during their lives, provided they become destitute, as I believe they will; and at their decease, to become the estate of Little Peter, on condition that he takes the Cranston name, cutting off that of Stuart. I should say, his mother, my Aunt Mary, but I am very sure I shall live longer than she can."

"Stop a moment, Miss Cranston. That last remark

may and may not prove true; some sudden accident may cut you off, and leave her, delicate as she is, many years. You must take this possibility into the account, and say to me, what would be your good will in this matter, if you should be crushed to death in the cars on your way home to-night?"

With that sudden impulse which is as a safety valve to a great deal of *thought* and anxiety upon one given point, Sallie stood up before Mr. Hale and said, "All I possess I give and bequeathe to my dear aunt, Mrs. Mary Stuart; and all which hereafter, by any law of this country, may descend to me, to be hers and her son's, to dispose of as they think best. And to them I commend the care and support of my mother and her husband, and also my good nurse, Margaret."

"Now, then, Miss Cranston, I have your whole view of this matter of property. Come in again in a few hours, and I will have the paper ready for your signature. But tell me, before you go, something about your aunt. It is long, long years since I have seen her; she was a most beautiful girl — the joy and pride of your father. And the little child, your father's godson and namesake. Mazoni always said he would die young; — is he still delicate?"

"Yes; but I hope by the course I propose, he may escape consumption; you will please get what personal property I have into ready money, so that at any time when I wish, I can seek with him a warmer climate, that is, if it should be necessary for us to leave the old home for the better security of my mother's happiness and comfort."

"Miss Cranston, how much do you suppose you can command, aside from the real estate?"



"That question you can best answer. I have trusted you and Uncle Paul without a single fear, until just now — I cannot trust him, because, and simply because he does not keep his generous and honest nature always uppermost."

"The whole case looks badly Miss Cranston, he has never paid over the money left in his hands, which was designed principally for your own wants, so that no emergency need arise, rendering it necessary to make sales of the real estate — thus your father intended. You have drawn upon me for about five hundred a year; but, small as that sum is for you, and marvellous as your economy has been, in order to meet that, I have been obliged to sell out some stocks in which your mother shared equally with you, and to-day, you cannot raise, without that estate, five thousand dollars."

Sallie turned pale with surprise and distress. Mr. Hale continued: —

"I do not see any obligation on your part to walk out of your own rights and home, in favor of your father-in-law."

"It is for my *mother*, sir."

"As for your taking upon yourself the education of those boys —"

"They are all there is to perpetuate the Cranston name; and as I am proud of it, I do not wish to see it become dishonored, or extinct."

"But *you* must live, Miss Cranston; and when you take into the account, the amount of money already squandered by that family, you can but be convinced that there is no manner of use in giving them a chance to throw more away. Why, that timber lot will sell

for ten thousand at least, and the homestead for twenty, or more, — a very comfortable estate for you and your aunt, if you will but arrange it, so as to increase the income for your own benefit."

"Sell the timber lot, Mr. Hale, and invest it with good security, the interest to be used as I told you, for the boys' education; at least, until they choose a business or profession. Remember, Mr. Hale, they have never known a want ungratified; it would crush them with despair, to find themselves in poverty. The interest of the sum you mentioned, will seem very small to them, — the crash may not come for a few years, in that time it can increase a little, for I have set it apart for that expected emergency, and shall not call upon you for it."

Mr. Hale began to enter a protest, but Sallie interrupted him with: —

"I'm very much obliged to you for your interest in my behalf; but I feel that so I must act — thus it looked clear and right for me to do, before I came to you — and now let me add, what is of great importance to me, and I came near to forgetfulness about. There must be no change while Aunt Mary lives. She must not know of any embarrassment whatever. For her sake, let every thing appear as formerly."

With her hand over her brow, and her eyes looking down upon the floor, Sallie still stood lost in thought. It was but for a moment, — the world-care, too early thrust upon her, swept away from her charming face, and she said cheerfully: —

"How the divine providence guides our words as well as our steps! I remarked only a little while ago, and without previous thought, that I would take some

boys for companions to Peter; now, as I mentioned this before Aunt Mary and Peter, it will not excite their suspicion if I carry out that plan; it will serve the two-fold purpose of keeping him from the injury of too much seclusion, and put money in my purse. Mr. Hale, I proffer another request, and that is, secure me four or six pupils to fit for college. In the time taken up by them, Peter will go through the school discipline necessary for him, to much better advantage than alone; and after that is accomplished, we can live on very little,—indeed, when his mother leaves us, what can we want any more anywhere? We will go seek our fortunes,” she added with a great effort at cheerfulness.

Mr. Hale held the door of his office wide open for Cousin Sallie to depart, passed quickly to the window, and watched her receding figure till a turn in the street shut her from his view, then he spread the paper carefully upon his desk, preparatory to writing the will. For awhile, the precise bachelor drummed his fingers upon the desk, absently,—and, as he was wholly unconscious that he did thus rap out from the ends of his fingers a new train of thought to which his mind was all unused; and indeed, in less than half an hour afterwards could have sworn conscientiously, that he never did it—we will take the thief-like advantage of his strange mental glamour, to get a better view of him. A fine-looking man, certainly, weighing three quarters, at least, of two hundred; and remarkably well distributed was this amount of human material, so that to look at him, one would feel quite comfortably assured he was built to last, and took himself the requisite care of his “fleshy tabernacle,” which would be most likely to secure such a result. A good Saxon face; with a

crown well covered with fine dark hair sparsely threaded with lines of silvery whiteness; eyes, sheltered well by the overhanging brow, and of a shade best represented by a mixture of salt and pepper, in equal parts, and expressing not a little of the spiciness of these all important condiments. The docket of beauty had never thought of recording these eyes upon the list, yet they were honest in expression, and earnest when the occasion demanded it. The mouth was firm and benevolent, and Mr. Hale's smile gave the finest setting possible to a full and even set of natural teeth.

The will was written: a very common thing for a lawyer to do—too common to deserve more than a passing record, were it not that while writing it he arrived at the very sensible conclusion that he too was mortal, and double the age of this young lady; consequently there could be no impropriety in making some arrangements with reference to his own estate, in the event of his death. Practical Mr. Hale succumbed to another spasm of absent-mindedness. He bit his quill, and, marvellous to relate, run his fingers roughly through the nicely brushed hair about his temples; things present were no longer perceptible to him—only the picture of his dear friend's daughter Sallie, as she stood with a weight of care all too heavy for her shading her young face—that was all he saw. And, oh! power mysterious, electric, of one mind over another, *to her* he rendered up the most minute and elaborate account of all he had; and, as he reckoned his property, his mind seemed to come into an unusually clear vision of its abundance, as well as the new necessity now laid upon him, of doing good, of giving a true account of his stewardship.

Sallie's noble generosity, her unpretending, almost unconscious self-sacrifice, tore away from his mind the world schedule of profit and loss, and he set about making himself executor of a portion, at least, of his honest gains; while he said to himself, "That timber lot rises in value every year. I will give the money for the boys, when the time comes. I will take the property at a proper appraisal; there will be no other way to satisfy my fair client. Well, here I will bequeath it to *her* in my will, and Peter — ah, I should have made a better father to him, and a better husband to his mother! Well, she had her choice! her son shall not be the worse for her mistake. Was there ever such bravery as she has shown, never to lift the curtain from the picture of her trial?"

Truly, the emotion of love is to man only an episode; it can be counted by the quarterings of the moon in its duration, and renewed without scar or wrinkle. Like old ware electro-plated, it seems new, has almost the *ring* of a pure metal. Mr. Hale of to-day had no remembrance of having ever suffered in consequence of the loss of Mrs. Stuart; in his memory, she seemed old as his mother; an aunt to him, even as she was to Sallie, though she reckoned five less years of actual life than he. Ah, Mr. Hale; kind-hearted, upright Mr. Hale; built indeed to last! The thinking, impalpable creature who dwells rent free, in that nicely kept tenement of clay, lives quite unconscious and secure from the rough winds which sweep with an agonized moan of broken harmony through organizations more frail, because more delicate. Only cousin Sallie you now see, gaze upon

her; it is good for thee. He talks as though she was there. "Wondrous good sense you show about every thing but your own interest." The charm is broken; he throws down his pen! "I believe I have fallen in love with her; but she would not have me! I will not run the risk of losing a place as her friend!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

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"O GREAT and beautiful soul! with whom nothing turns to bitterness,  
and who art peremptory only in duty and benevolence."

OF COUSIN SALLIE AND MADAME  
MAZONI.

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NOTWITHSTANDING the unpleasant information Sallie received with regard to her estate, while conferring with Mr. Hale, and one would have supposed her state worse than before, in consideration of this new phase of anxiety, the *change* even for the worse, was a decided advantage. The whole current of thought widened and deepened its channel.

Poverty is always comparative. To one of gentle breeding, whose every tasteful wish has always been met without considerations of outlay, poverty is that which curtails this kind of freedom of action; that which compels you to turn away from the opportunity of gratifying others as well as one's self, in the purchase of articles, whether of jewelry or gewgaws, books, pictures, or fancy toys, made part and parcel of the habitual surroundings of one's life, through a series of years, until the absence of what constitutes neither bread, meat, or fire, seems akin to removing home from within its own walls, and from under its own roof-tree. The carpet under the feet of a whole generation of children, well worn and well faded, often turned round, the best to secure more service from its remaining warmth, and often newly woven with threads ingeniously brought to match,—becomes an object of so much endearment, that, trifling as it is in value, any

event which should strip it from its long-accustomed place, would take vastly more than the price of a whole wareroom: namely, the old, homely *unconsciousness* of its presence, until it was gone. To the man or woman who earns each day by the labor of the hands an honest support, and sleeps soundly, free from care or fear, knowing from actual demonstration that independence is securely invested in those strong and sinewy arms; poverty enters into their peaceful dwelling only when sickness enfeebles those limbs which have never failed from any other cause to yield an honest dividend. By birth and education, their power and force ultimates itself through physical agencies. Fill them with health again, and the way of life is trod with rejoicing. Labor has become to them, not only independent support, but a necessity. The brain weaves often to the tune of the hammer, or the axe, or the whir of the house-wheel, pictures of rarest beauty; and in many a farm-house, far away, and quite aside from the rush of fashion, and the struggle for wealth, a position, or intellectual aspiration, a refinement wholly genuine, a simple culture, such as grows and thrives on the study of the best thoughts of authors, that clips with a connoisseur's skill, the varied locks of hair from the heads of universal genius; *lives*, in the highest and truest sense of the word, in men and women to fame unknown; to fortune superior, and to poverty a near neighbor without feeling its pangs, or conscious of its humiliations.

Thus far in her brief existence, Cousin Sallie knew but little outside of a certain routine of life. To-day, she had struck hands with another condition of things. To find herself without positive income, even though

her tastes were really very simple, and her absolute wants almost covered by the receipts from Cranston place, was by no means a trifling fact. Of a nature likely to chafe against the bars, even of the largest prison, her spirit could not look without a dumb chill, at the possibility of finding herself bound hand and foot by an empty purse; her wide and generous hospitality curtailed; her outlay for Aunt Mary and Peter, ended, and her constant distribution of small favors laid aside.

In judgment she might have erred, but from her decision with regard to the Cranston estate she did not for a moment waver. In that matter she had acted under the highest tension of long-continued thought; still it had been most religiously consecrated, and though heir to thirty-five thousand dollars, nearly all unavailable in actual income, she had so truly given it up in her will, that she could not have touched it any more than she could have taken the title deeds of some other person's estates, and made a transfer for her own benefit. An emergency gives a fresh start to the mental forces, emphatically sharpens the wits, and the growth of a year is compassed in a few short hours. On that day, Cousin Sallie dined pleasantly with her mother, joked in her most amusing style with Uncle Paul, yet all the while she *felt* as though a breach had been made in the wall of dear old Cranston House; and through it the winds swept with a moan of desolation, under which Aunt Mary would wither and die!

All unused to holding out any other than the golden side of her mind to her friends, every word of that to her long dinner-hour, was brilliant to the utmost extent

of her ability, and it is but just to remark, no emotion of anger, or even contempt, loitered or sprung into existence in her honest heart, as she thought of, or talked to, Uncle Paul. Her delicacy had the genuine ring, she did not look even *herself* at the surface of a wrong, likely at some day to bury them all in its ruins; and there could have arisen no condition of mind in which the subject could have been discussed by her with others. On the contrary, down into her memory, she thrust every thing unpleasant, while to meet the storm and *breast* it, was now the only topic of inward interest to her. Her woman's instinct jumped at conclusions, over which the wise logic of a strong man would have traced, step after step, with most accurate and tedious details, only to arrive at the same conclusion; though through a more legitimate process of mental reasoning. When she entered the cars for home, there was purpose in her step, and color flitting on her face like summer sunshine through the breaking clouds. Her mind had gained its stand point, and was already moulding the clay, wherewith to make good the breach in Cranston House.

It was rest to sit down, after so much excitement of mind, in a public car where nothing but decorum made a demand upon her. Turned towards home, association ripped up the cover of good intention, and *pain* stirred into life with an added element of strength! Happily, the remembrance of those who waited at home, full of pleasant expectation to receive her, rendered it easy to smother the cry of her own heart, even if she could not yet, all at once, keep an ever-cheerful courage over her head. The cars seemed dreary, she could but confess to herself, as though the clouds and

chill air of a November day had settled down over them; and now her own lonely, heavy heart, gazed out from her wistful eyes, at every new occupant of the vacant seats, as though each new entrance must bring some strong power, against which she could lean for support, protection and rest;—rest, even for a brief hour, till she could grapple afresh with her purpose, that through mere exhaustion, was slipping out like a pitiless, unflinching tide. Sallie looked in vain; her help was not there. Her young feet, so tender, were upon the first gleanings from *her vintage*; and like all who went before her, and those who stretch in mist-like vision adown the time to come behind her, she must tread it alone. Out from the depot, the heavy locomotive, with its cargo of dispersed members of families, rumbled, puffing and smoking, as though aware of the vast responsibility under which it labored. No nod of recognition came to Sallie. She turned her eyes to the sky where the heavy masses of clouds, like the purest, softest ermine draped its thrilling depth of blue, and where the whole varied sunlight seemed to smile a benediction upon the green fields and pleasant gardens, through which they wended their way. At the way station stood the familiar coach,—like a faithful friend, ever on hand when most needed. Well seated in it, the driver closed down the sides carefully, saying:—

“There is a wet cloud up among them white ones.”

How kindly he spoke, and how it helped Sallie in her effort to appear cheerful. The driver was right; the cloud broke over them in a perfect torrent of rain; it trickled in through the weather beaten canvass; Sallie set her elbow into quite a pool upon the cushion



at her side; now she heard it drip upon her bonnet, and sprung forward with a sudden sense of the importance of economy, to save it; she lost her balance, and the unfortunate piece of finery, received an ugly indentation from coming in contact with an old man's hat. The owner of the hat looked as though he had committed an offence unpardonable. Sallie's quick wit forestalled him, by first offering an apology, and put him in harmony with himself, by laughing heartily at their sudden escape from a deluge, for the rain had ceased as unexpectedly as it came on.

Before Cranston House was in sight, sunshine was dancing upon every green shrub, making it gorgeously brilliant, with the illuminated drops of rain. The air was fresher; it gave new life to Sallie. She sprung out at her own door with a bound; the old man of the hat leaned out to bow farewell, and to watch her lightly tripping footsteps over the old grass-bedded stones; she heard him say:—

“A light-hearted young lady that; a sunbeam in a house; sorrow has not trimmed her sails yet.”

She slackened her hurried footsteps, questioning with herself whether it were cause of rejoicing, her self-control, or the concealment into which her path seemed to lead, a fit subject of grief and mourning.

“Looking at it either way,” she said, “I am not untrue to myself, to my own consciousness. It simply crowds a certain amount of unhappiness into my own heart, which otherwise would sadden us all. I think I shall be sustained under it—and it is one way of bearing the burdens of others; that command meets this case! I will accept it! Heaven understands me; I don't know as anybody else ever will; but my life in

its results, shall be so plain that even Uncle Paul can read! Max Wortemberg!”

She uttered the name in the womanly, pitiful tone of one crying for help; then with a sudden overpowering impulse, turned her face towards the south, and listened.

Now she lifted her hands up, as though she would cling to some tangible support, and her voice became audible again;—it said, “No one ever told me, and I never asked; but out yonder in the south he lives and toils, and makes rapid progress in every good work. I turn to him like the blossom to the sun for light and heat. He does not know the work his beautiful example has wrought in me, or that which he continues to do, in a far-off land—perhaps he will never know in this world; but of this, to-day, I am sure, no ordinary girl's love is this I feel for him. God shows it to me only in my weak and despairing moments. It seeks no sign—asks no recognition—expects no response. Yet by it I am strengthened; and if I have any good intentions, any high purposes of action, they have been quickened into new life, through him. Blessed man of my dreams! Coming when the sense of orphanage pressed like a crown of thorns into my fiery brain! Coming when destruction lay directly in my path! Coming when the dawn of a new field of useful occupation hove up slowly and doubtfully from the night of a previous state of luxury and ease! I accept it; it is my bow of promise; it is enough; it is well; I am content!”

Cousin Sallie's hands came down slowly and solemnly, and the delicate palms for a brief moment lay in a mutual embrace, while a glow of almost unearthly radiance and beauty, springing from within, rose up-



ward, diffusing itself like light, over her face and form. She turned with new dignity, walking slowly. Her entrance into Cranston House over the threshold, was as a *bride*. Henceforth she could never be alone as she once was. The compact on her part was entire; so complete, so self-unconscious, that it asked, nay, required no return, no response.

"You look better for your visit, Miss Sallie; the color is just what it used to be. I hope you brought an appetite with you. The family are out riding; will you wait for them, or have tea now? the muffins is riz."

"Now?" said Sallie, endeavoring to bring down the thoughts of her mind to the plane of Margaret; "No Margaret, I will wait for company; they will soon be here. The shower must have detained them."

Sallie had reached her chamber; her bonnet and shawl were laid carefully in their places; the closely fitting dress of black silk was smoothed and folded, for she said to herself, "It must last a great while longer; I see no more for a long future; a great deal of substantial *work* lies between this and a new wardrobe; and these gloves, they must serve on extra occasions; I shall fall back entirely on lisle thread, to which there is but one real objection, and that is *personal* merely, therefore not to be heard at all; they do not *feel* pleasantly on the hands; it always makes my teeth chatter to draw them on or off, but habit will outwit a merely sensitive skin. I really wonder I have not thought more about these trifles before. Well, Mazoni would say, 'This is a new study, little one, go *thorough* in it, and regret will be the last feeling to follow.' He is right; I am on the right road, and will not despair." Her elastic spirit was taking its burden steadily upon its

shoulders, her generous heart already running over with an abundance of treasures. "To think how much cold water I can use" — pouring the bowl full and dipping her flushed face in it.

Perhaps her prayers were not in accordance with any established rule, but they were the continual outpouring of her sympathy-craving heart — the dictate of her truly religious nature; even water was an item of upward thanksgiving. A cheap white muslin dress took the place of that she had worn into town; the dripping brown hair brushed and woven into braids, encircled her head in a most becoming crown. Her toilet was hardly completed, ere a gentle step was heard ascending the stairs, and the rustle of heavy silk swept along the wide, long upper entry; — a well-known, and much loved announcement were these signs to Cousin Sallie.

"I knew you would come; my star not only shines in the night to cheer me, but comes near when clouds lower in the daytime."

There was neither kiss nor shaking of hands, the person in question simply said: —

"I felt that you might wish to talk with me, for I have seen Mr. Hale," and settled down comfortably in a chair close by the window, at the same time removing her hat, gloves, and shawl, from her person to the bed.

Madame Mazoni could hardly fail of making an impression upon any observer. She was fifty years of age, inheriting high breeding, manners of the past times; so full of deference and consideration for others, they would have adorned a court; so self-poised, yet so simple, natural, and unobtrusive, the inmates of the

poorest cottage would not have been ruffled at her entrance, or fail to say on her departure — “A real lady that; none of your upstart gentry.” Her dress was black, with folds of lace down the surplice, fastened with a single diamond of great value, and richly set. She wore no other ornament, except her marriage ring, a plain band of gold upon the third finger of the left hand. That plump and well-kept hand now lay gracefully in her lap, while the other rested upon the window-sill.

Sallie had a habit peculiar to herself, of sitting upon the floor and taking one slippered foot in her hands, petting it, as she would a kitten, or even Little Peter, had he been on the floor beside her. Close to Madame Mazoni she now took this position, looking up into her friend's face with expectant earnestness. The hand upon the window-sill came over to Sallie's forehead, smoothing gently the beautiful hair, while the lady said with a quivering chin: —

“I know all about it; it is not best to recapitulate: the wrong-doing of others is best borne and soonest forgotten, by giving no utterance whatever; in the multitude of words there is always *regret*. What you purpose to *do*, is the only duty now before us. I have money, dear Sallie, and as you know without my saying it, it is at your service. What are your own plans?”

“They are not matured yet, so far as pecuniary matters are concerned; we have lived so simply, that I hardly know where we can retrench, without exciting inquiry from Aunt Mary, and I am determined not to make any change while she lives. I wish if possible, to sustain myself without suffering the old home to go out

of the family. If I fail in my efforts, then, I am glad to fall back upon your kindness. At present, in order to keep my mind healthful, it must take energetic grasp of actual things. Let me have some pupils to class with Peter; at least, this is the first plan presenting itself to my mind. To go back to the matter of retrenchment; Margaret and the Duke cannot be given up on Aunt Mary's account, and were it otherwise, I could hardly be brave enough to give them up myself.”

“By no means, Sallie. The Duke and the cow pay their own way; as for Margaret, she would not go, if you told her to. She has been to see me; she knows much more about the state of things than you do, and she is as much interested in you all, as it is possible for one to be. She thinks Mary will rally, and continue perhaps for some years yet. What is your opinion?”

“My opinion is not worth as much as Margaret's. I have hardly seen her to-day; but I have thought that each week robs her of a portion of her strength, and that she is slowly, but surely slipping away from us.”

“But, Sallie, the doctor tells me it is partly to be charged to dog-days; that she was always very much affected by heat. Supposing her to be passing away, are you willing?”

“I can *look* at it now, and talk about it; that is some gain over last year. The other life has been so constantly kept in view by the departure of those we loved so much, that it is to my mind no longer shadowy, but *real*; *this* world much the most dream-like and uncertain. And Aunt Mary — why I would as soon dare now to detain an angel from heaven, as her. Ever since she came to me, it has seemed to me as

though one from the higher life came on an errand of special mercy to myself. Her every-day existence keeps the gate wide open between things natural, and things spiritual, and though she talks so little, I feel every night as full of new glimpses of truth as though she had uttered, what she has only *lived*,—a *volume*. Her life is to me a poem. The first acts, not yet do I translate; yet I know they will reveal a *tragedy*, and that a tragic note will ring a tone vibrating to the end!"

"Does she say any thing of the past?"

"No; I think she has intended to several times, but was interrupted. One occasion, was the night Max Wortemberg came back. No opportunity has since offered."

"Well, dear, leave her to herself. I have never known of her making any statement, aside from the interview she had with your father and Mazoni; and at that time Mazoni told me it was a matter of confidence he could not transfer to me, and of course I never spoke of it to him again. I have, however, some reason for believing she will open her heart to you. Perhaps she thinks her experience may be of use to you. It seems to me often, when I am in her presence, as though she had out-lived it sufficiently to speak of it without distress; that it is no longer a part of her life. It has proved a scaffolding upon which she has risen to a higher,—more beautiful for the throes of labor-pain through which it has been born."

"You must have known her husband; do you object to telling me something about him? Excuse me for asking the question, if you object to it; I have never asked it before, only of my own heart; it seemed too

sacred in connection with Aunt Mary and little Peter. Then again, my own life was so entirely for myself, and our relatives so rarely came to see us, and indeed were so little wanted, or cared for, that the past is to me a sealed book, from which I should be the last to loose its seals and scan its pages."

"Cousin Sallie, it is no more a sealed book to you, than to all of us. To be sure, we knew Col. Stuart; he was what Annette would call a 'splendid man.' An officer in the army, and stationed at the arsenal at the time they first met. He was very much in love with her, and she gave her very life to him. There was no objection raised to the marriage, and no union seemed more full of promise. Of his early history we knew nothing, only that he was of a good family in a distant part of the country. He had travelled a great deal, was accomplished, and very agreeable. He remained at the arsenal several years after the marriage. Peter was born there, and had any one asked me who of all my acquaintances was most happily married, I should have said Mary Stuart. When Peter was two years old, Col. Stuart received orders to take charge of a distant outpost. He left Peter and his mother behind, in order to make preparation for their comfort. I think it was about a year before he sent for them; you were away at school at the time, and your father sent Margaret out with them. The voyage was a long one, and new at that time. We all looked upon it as a great undertaking, and our parting from them was as solemn as though we never expected to see them again. Imagine our surprise then, when the same vessel which took them away brought them back. This is really all I know, and probably I should not have known it for

years, as your father took every precaution not to have it made public; but there are some ladies to whom domestic disaster is the food they do best thrive on. One of this kind called to see me, and brought the fact of your aunt's arrival. That was not so bad. I honestly was overjoyed to hear of her safe arrival, and never for a moment supposed there was any harm done. But she who made the statement, not content with leaving it to work its way by itself, into the judgment of the community, or even into my mind, with a never-forgiven slime gushing up from her own heart, in the form of winks, hints and suspicions, so covered and distorted her announcement, that I felt as though I could hardly breathe. Luckily Mazoni came into the room, fresh from the outer air; I turned to him, half-uttered the question, when with a most expressive gesture he turned towards us both, and laid his finger upon his lip. With him, that signal had great significance, and I never realized it so much as at that time; his face expressed so much, and when she arose to go, he said to her; 'Not another word now, or at any future time, on your peril — remember!' I never saw a lady so silenced before; and I knew there must have been some most powerfully exciting cause, thus to move Mazoni. He then explained to me what I have told you, and the subject has never been mentioned by me since. At her earnest request the subject was sealed, and your father took her to Col. Stuart's mother, who was old and infirm. She was never seen by any of us. She has never to my knowledge mentioned the subject, since her communication to your father and Mazoni; and as for Margaret, she has never seemed willing to hold ten minutes' conversation with any per-

son since, in fear, it seems to me, that she may disclose something about it. I have often thought she, and indeed the rest of us, have set aside the validity of the old saying that 'a woman cannot keep a secret.' But the truth of the matter was, we loved your Aunt Mary so much, we honored her true native delicacy so much, and we thought so highly of him, that in terror of learning something very dreadful about him, we chose to remain mute upon the whole subject. Our faith in *her* never wavered. We *knew* she acted nobly, and had made herself a willing sacrifice to some unknown emergency of circumstances. There *were those* who doubted; who whispered, and looked wise. Flies and crawling vermin, they were! seeking some ulcerated sore, some tainted meat, as the food best adapted to their tastes! I have thought that Mrs. Stuart was conscious of this, and that it was the sharpest thorn in the crown she has so quietly borne. You will remember, Mazoni went for her. It was at that time Madame Stuart died. She had devoted herself to this old lady, while her own health had run out, like wine from a crushed glass. Mazoni went often to see her; he had thought for some time, that there must be a change, and hoped it would restore her, but I fear the restoring process has come too late. He thought that to come back to the old place, and try the effect of old and pleasant associations, would do better than any thing else. And then again, he wished Peter to be educated so as to represent your father in the future. Paul offered, while on a visit to Mary, to take Peter home with him, and see what the boy was best fitted for. Unfortunately, your mother took a dislike to the child; Paul would have done better had not this been the

case ; but his ears were tortured the moment he came into his house, with the misdoings of the boys. Mazoni accepted the hospitality of Paul for the child, because he so loved to keep people who were of the same blood, within the charmed circle of a common interest.

"It was a mistake, he saw it plain enough afterwards, and it was to do away with the unpleasant impression made by that visit upon the child's mind, and indeed upon his nervous system, that he took him with him on his last journey. In hunting over some old letters recently, I found two written to me by Mrs. Stuart during her self exile from us, and here they are, you had better keep them. If Peter lives, they will give him some idea of his mother at a period over which there is very little record of her existence. It seems to me as though previous to the date of these letters, she suffered too severely, to give any expression, whether by letter or conversation of herself, and the very odor of that first note gave me a sensation, such as I can imagine I should feel if I could look into her broken heart. I wept showers of tears as I read ; the very lack of complaint, or moan, struck me as almost tragic."

Sallie took the package of letters with a trembling hand. They were tied with white ribbon, now faded and yellow, as well as the sacred mementoes it bound together. She untied the knot ; they fell apart in her lap. The first thing she noticed, as they lay spread apart before her, was the marriage cards. Madame Mazoni placed them together quickly and wound the bridal band about them, tying it closely, saying aloud : "What God hath joined let not man cut asunder!"

Sallie remembered her words long afterwards ; now

she spread the letters open, and taking up the first in course, read aloud to her friend ; it ran thus :

"To write your name, to even think of it, takes me back a long and weary way, which possibly it is best for me not to look at too often, or dwell upon too much. Let me then with sudden leap clear the dark and turbid stream, dividing my present from the shore on which we stood in such friendly admiring companionship, and tell you how, when *most* social pleasures and relations grew dim and unreliable,—or from the overlaying burden of anguish, forgotten,—the thought of *you* and your love for me, came often into my night, dividing for a brief space the heavy clouds, and helping to cheer my groping footsteps on a little farther. Three years ago ; how long it seems !—its hours have been *counted* ; had we met then, possibly I might have found words to lay before your ever ready sympathy much which it would have been a relief to pour forth from my pressed and smothered heart. I did not see you, I had nothing to give to the public, so I made a *grave* down deep in my own heart, and in that sepulchre were laid joy and love, hope and health, buried forever ! Do you know that it is fifteen years since you took me into your heart, and that I was then but a child in sympathy and faith ? Do you remember how I took every thing with the largest trust, and from the merest shreds and pieces created a world of pleasant fancies ? Ah ! I see now so plainly how you used sometimes to shake your grave head, with look most wise ! Dear Madame Mazoni, let me take *you*, with the few gems of friendship still left—to bear

me company in the desert life now remaining, and believe me, still yours,  
MARY."

"DEAR MADAME MAZONI, — Your note of invitation came last night. Many thanks; but I cannot go to see you at present. Now, I am too weak to do a certain work for myself; time and solitude will do it for me. I wait with the powerlessness, which is sometimes mistaken for patience, the touch of our good friend Time, through whose cycle, I am to come into a healthy state of mind. You ask of myself; there is but little to say. The winter has been sad. I have forgotten how the sunshine looks; I am blind to its beauty and deaf to the sweet songs of nature. To break the habit of one's life is fearful in its consequences; duties are performed but mechanically, as tunes ground out from a hand organ. My heart has been *wrung* till every fibre refuses, from inability, to perform service; and when could a woman work, if her *heart* was not enlisted in the service? Can you, in your serene, unbroken life, understand what a *collapse* is, after a high tension of mind or body? this is the condition in which I find myself; — I, whom Mazoni calls his brave, little woman? Behold, emotion even, is asleep! nay, dead! Write often, but do not blame me for keeping away from the pools and eddies, where society flows together. For the present, all public places, seem to my sore spirit like a cold wind upon torn flesh. *Only wait*; but as I write it, my own weakness adds — put the case in any phase, it looks blank enough ahead.

"The most to be expected is, that habit will render

the burden less recognized; while time will add strength, making it less heavy. Many times each day, and in the night I repeat it, 'God is good.' I cling to it, like one sinking in deep water, and in thick darkness. Every other anchor is swept away.

"I sit here alone with Peter, who busies himself with an apple and a picture book. He is happy. Let me bless you for your love.

"MARY."

"Oh, how I wish you had some more letters," cried Sallie, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Who could believe, living with my Aunt Mary every day, seeing her cheerful interest in all our plans, in Margaret's cooking, in the work about the stables and the garden, that she wrote those letters; that as far as *she* personally is concerned, there is nothing to hope for in this life. Really, I feel as startled at the new hidden views I often am receiving of people, as though society was a species of powder magazine, and one could not press their feet anywhere without springing a mine. Now this father of Peter's; what possible condition of things could have made him forsake his son and wife? I declare, I think I could almost help to hang him; I am so indignant, that through him they are made victims."

Sallie, nestling still close to Madame Mazoni, might have continued much longer to talk; but from the open window came the sound of the Duke and the carriage, while quite in another key, the notes of little Peter's ringing laugh, and the as merry tone of his mother swept in to the occupants of the chamber like an unexpected blessing, after a season of doubt and disaster.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

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"SHE hath neither husband nor child; but her kindness never sleeps, —makes her worthy of the name of mother. A brave creature. Left by herself in the battle of life, she makes good her humble place in it, by working, singing, helping others, and leaving the rest to God!"



## MARGARET.

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THE family met in the capacious hall, where upon ancient chairs, and the wide stair-case they often whiled away the afternoon looking out through the open doors at either end. Happy now they were to come together, each with pleasant things to say; thus brushing from each other's minds for a time, the healthful conservative element of petty cares and drudging duties.

Peter was quite wild with words of the wondrous things he had seen up the creek road, beyond the falls, and into the woods. Would Cousin Sallie go some time? and could she tell who the old man was, that lived in the deep woods close by the best place to fish, and has a boat too? Will Sallie please go some time and fish, when it is not very pleasant, but cloudy, because the fish bite better then, and mother cannot go out such days? And, oh, such beautiful crows flew over the tall woods! how black they are! Cousin Sallie, don't they make a good, *homely* sound?"

Peter brought down his audience with his last question. Nothing daunted, — *love* gives wondrous courage and sense of security, — Peter defended his opinion of the crow; he said if he had but one note, he made a very good use of it; and the nice old man said, he could be taught to put it in words, if he was tamed when young. Peter's eyes turned from one to the



other of the little party, beaming with intelligence; then he began again about the fishes:—

“Cousin Sallie, we must be very *still* when we go for fish. He knows a great deal about fishes; he used to be a fisherman, and says they hear quickly; that when he used to put oysters in the hold of a vessel, it would not do at all to make a loud noise on deck; the oysters die under it, and then they are not good to eat.”

“Well, that is a piece of news in natural history for which I am much obliged to you, as well as this new friend in the woods. I will go with you to see him again, and perhaps he will teach us something more as truly interesting. Where did you go in the shower?”

Oh, we rode under his shed, and that is the way we happened to see him, for he was coming home on foot. All the time it rained we were in the carriage under the shed, but he asked us into his house.”

Peter did not seem half through with his thoughts about the unexpected visit the shower compelled them to make; but the odorous smell of Margaret's hot tea came like a peremptory “roll-call,” not to be resisted by the hungry and somewhat tired party; and as soon as they were seated at the table, Sallie with the bread and butter, spread out her plan of taking some boys as companions for Peter, and, as she said, to occupy her own mind to some useful purpose. She put it on the ground of personal accommodation. She and Peter were the ones to be obliged; she needed *work* to keep her mind bright and healthful; Peter needed the companionship of boys. Could Aunt Mary endure the noise? Could Margaret add so much more to her work? At this point in the conversation, Margaret was rung for.

Simple Sallie; truth-teller entire, as far as she went; but not all! Numberless are the motives which thrust above the surface our acts. Much it depends upon the character of the person who requires a reason, what reply they receive. Sallie had a secret to keep: she must drive poverty out at the door before Aunt Mary knew it had turned its hungry head into the precincts of Cranston place. The motives she gave were true, and those which really laid nearest the surface of her mind. To act without precedent was not new to her; but poverty, or dependence was. Both were stern facts for her to face; yet now, as often before, she did not take time to think of herself. Her central idea was Aunt Mary, and around that centre, like a charmed circle, swept the venerable at-one-ments—so dear, in so much peril of desecration—the common family interests of the Cranston name and estate. But she could not *talk* about it, perhaps it was pride. Her mind had its peculiarities, and this was one. What gave her the most anxiety, what she thought most intensely about, was never a subject of conversation. Twenty years she had not yet counted; how could she then be able to compass things it had taken Aunt Mary many more years to learn? How could she be supposed to feel conscious that much of the reason acting upon her own mind, had performed its work upon her Aunt Mary's, producing the same result in respect to Peter, and the necessity for a more vigorous discipline by contact with his peers.

Cousin Sallie's remarkable delicacy evinced itself still more in her family arrangements. A visitor would have believed Mrs. Stuart the mistress of the establishment. Every thing was invariably referred to her,

and now, as always, Margaret stood behind her chair instead of Sallie's, she having privately given her the order. Margaret, with her square face, did a large amount of thinking. No minister of finance ever studied ways and means with more energy and earnestness. Her world was within the strong fences encircling the old family estate; her idols, the few remaining remnants of a once large family. These filled her mind, and gave constant work to her strong and sinewy arms. Down under this stolid, calm face, beat a great heart, working with its strong human pulsation for the comfort of this household. With her, there was no reckoning, not even in memory. Little thought had she of the good she did, or how much this family rested on her sturdy arm. To-night she said, and truly, she was ready for any thing Mrs. Stuart chose. Her terror of disorder and mud upon her spotless floors, induced her to suggest the plan not to bring them into the main body of the house, with their noise and dirty boots. There was the old playroom over the sheds; a real nice room it was, when the gentlemen of the house were young; it could be cleaned out, and was the most suitable room for a school.

Wholly over-looked had that room been by the family at Cranston House. It seemed a special God-send for this purpose. It was the upper story of a wing, stretching to the east, the lower portion of which served in the olden time when a larger establishment was kept up, for the temporary shelter of horses. There were some half dozen arched entrances for their accommodation. The room above was one long hall, with quaint and numerous little paned windows, ranged on opposite sides, facing the north and south.

Stretching up tall and protectingly over the roof, were immense elms, throwing down from their towering heights, a profusion of delicate and many-leaved swinging tendrils kissing the mossy roof, and swaying to and fro, before the windows. Standing close upon the sunny side, and seemingly upon the same thought intent, were apple trees, laying up modestly, but with a purpose, stiff, hard boughs and branches against the weather-beaten side of the old shed, looking in always to the lumbered hall, with as delicate a freight of blossoms and sweet odors in May, with as rich a treasure of delicious fruit in August and October, as ever won the heart of a child.

As for Margaret, she believed in the fruit-bearing trees, as having a work to do, like her own—for others. She always spoke of them, and even to them in the feminine gender, and if one of them did, some ill-fated year, refuse to discount a reasonable profit, it is to be hoped the unfortunate tree did not hear the continued dropping of fretful, half-uttered words, jerked out in spasms, brought on whenever the *necessity* for a supply of that particular fruit presented the subject fresh before her.

The evening meal being completed, Margaret led the way to the old lumber-room. A strange feeling it gives one to turn the key in a lock rusty with age and want of use; to swing wide a door shut by the hand of a past generation, and rendered useless by their departure. As they all gathered at the door, looking in where the sun only, had kept daily watch, and the spider had spun her web in the unmolested freedom of years,—where the implements of old-fashioned house-keeping,—utensils the very *uses* of which had passed

with those who once made them, had accumulated in wondrous abundance; each face, now so familiar to the reader, then so well known to the writer, would have been a study for an artist, so intent was the expression, yet so widely different. Margaret's mind went back to the time, when in a wing upon the other side of the house, busy feet of many handmaids kept time to the whirl of the spinning-wheel, put in motion by the nicely turned bobbin held in the right hand; while suspended from the left were the rolls of soft wool, drawn from the motion of the fingers and the action of the machine, into gossamer threads, creating the warp and woof of Puritan garments.

The stolid mind of Margaret received but few impressions; rigid and hard they were, and wholly ineffaceable. She now turned her eyes instinctively to the walls, as though expecting to see bundles of yarn still hanging there as trophies of their victory over raw material; while with her hand she began to gather and roll up into balls, the pendant spinning of Dame Spider.

Sallie, thrust with sudden haste into a hand-grapple with stubborn, almanac calculations, springing with a wide bound from a life of thought and sentiment to one of constant application of means to ends; finding within herself no answering remembrances, or pleasant associations to hallow these old, useless family relics; not understanding indeed, how they could ever have had a positive use, mentally consigned them to the wood-pile, and rejoiced over so great an increase to the dry kindling for fires.

Madame Mazoni remembered the handmaids of old, but most of all the lover to whom she gave her young heart, his friends and playmates of this family, and the

dear *home* he found in this old mansion. While Aunt Mary was standing tearless in the door, perhaps mourning most of all, that even grief and disappointment had gone and left her; that *regret* was dead in her heart; that the memory of *all who* with her had lived and sported in the old playroom, and from whom she was divided, called up no other feeling than that of *cloudless recollection*.

Sallie's new-made practicability sounded oftentimes *harshly*, like the ugly creak, and clumsy stamp of new, ill-made, unused shoes. Thus, at this time she broke the silence:—

"Margaret, how much wood have you in the wood-house? Let us take a turn in putting this rubbish down there."

Margaret's love of saving was suggestive. She would like the bobbins for dish-mop handles; the numerous oak covers to dry her apples upon; and the wheels! Margaret would have gone cold many a day, before she could so desecrate these marked mementoes of her youth. She would save them for the pleasure of the young lads of rainy days. They could stand in the sheds and trouble no one.

"Please, Margaret, show me how they used them," said Peter.

The different parts of a wheel were brought together, while Margaret took up a bobbin, and went through the ceremony of spinning imaginary yarn, reeled it and quilled it; explaining to Peter as she proceeded; then she hunted up a shuttle, and explained to him how it was thrown by the hand of the weaver. The light of her youth gushed up into her heart afresh. She became very animated. Peter asked questions about the

machinery, which she answered with intelligence; but as she was on the point of running across the room to show the use made of the warping bars, she suddenly lost her self-possession, caught up a large bar of the looms, and vanished down the private stairs leading to the sheds below.

There came a merry laugh from the door of the hall through which they entered. Mr. Hale was filling it with his ample dimensions. Receiving a short explanation from Cousin Sallie, whose newly awakened, practical life so much delighted him, he proposed to turn *boy*, and help take down the old rubbish, and for the next half hour he gave himself up to the luxury of unrestrained boyish freedom. Off went his coat, away went his hat and gloves, and then a race commenced, in which all joined, till the old lumber-room was empty of every thing but the many threaded webs of the spiders, and a large chest of drawers. Mr. Hale asked the privilege of opening them. Peter, mounted on a chair, was looking earnestly, with his blue eyes, into the curious little drawers near the top. They were filled with old documents. The bachelor lawyer was delighted, and asked to have them entrusted to his care, which was cordially granted. Peter jumped down and ran for a basket, and assisted in placing them carefully in it. Mr. Hale talked to the ladies, but watched the boy. As soon as he had completed the arrangement of the papers, he brushed the dust from his clothes, gave a spring down the private stairs, and ran thence to the kitchen, where Margaret was, that she might tell him the whole story about the warping bars and the looms. Margaret, nothing loth in her own private apartments, placed the clothes frame to represent the former, and

some chairs to illustrate the latter. Thus, this woman of work, this manual labor machine, whose life knew no gala days, aside from her works of love, revived the days of old; lived over again, for the sake of little Peter, the time when young people of her own class were about her, making the servants' rooms merry with the exuberance of their joy. Then she brought a little wheel for the spinning of flax, sat down before it, pressing her feet upon the pedal, thus setting it in rapid motion. Around the distaff there remained a precious relic of a few rounds of flax. Now she did not have to draw upon her imagination, or that of the more ideal Peter. She wet her fingers from the tiny cup hanging from the frame holding the distaff, into which, for old acquaintance sake, she had poured some water, and commenced the creation of veritable thread. Peter was astonished beyond measure.

"Is *that* the way the threads of cloth are made?"

Margaret made a sound half way between a growl and a sigh as she replied.

"It *was* the way when linen was linen, and tow was tow, and wollen cloth grew on sheep's backs."

"Sheep's backs!" exclaimed Peter; "I don't know what you mean."

"No, sure; more's the pity; how could you? *well*, there is not a crumb of a roll, to show you. I wish I had a whole fleece of wool, and then I could card you some."

"Oh, I wish I could understand you. What is it to 'card'?"

Margaret gave another sort of grunt, signifying her heart-felt commiseration of his deplorable ignorance, and going into the farther end of the now lumbered up

woodhouse, hunted in an old chest, till she discovered a pair of cards; which, in the triumph of superior knowledge, she brought into the kitchen. Then from the lower drawer of her dressers, she produced a paper containing a portion of cotton;—she picked the mass carefully,—spread a proper portion of it on one of the cards, and, bringing the other quickly across it a few times, presented to the astonished child a beautifully formed roll,—her own creation from the raw heap of cotton.

“That is the best I can do for you, Master Peter. This kind of wool grows in fields; the good kind we used to spin, was cut from the sheep every year. Ah, there used to be heaps of it in yonder.” She nodded her head towards the west side of the house. “The Bible tells of wool, Peter; go ask your mother; she always helps me out—she knows that book by heart; and ask her too, what it says about the distaff.”

Peter sprang off, like an earnest questioning spirit that he was. Presently he came back with a face so happy. In his hand was a small Bible—open, with his finger marking the place. He placed the book against the cards, resting on Margaret’s lap and read; “She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.” “She layeth her hand to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.”

“Yes, yes, that is it,” said Margaret, with great animation, “I was sure your mother could help you out; you see, Peter, the distaff is as old as the Bible. But them great ugly factories, they are *heathen infidels*! They have left us nothing to do, but mend, mend the cloth they pull and pound all the strength out of. Not much like the linen we used to make; in them drawers

under the dresser, made before your mother was born, and got the stuff in it, to last longer than that you buy new now. Real linen that, Peter; got the shine in it, and was bleached on the grass down by the creek,—them that was here with me, wet it from the stream, every night and morning,—and now, when I put the iron to it, the pretty flowers in the cloth, stand right up, as though they had got back into the field where they grew. Hark now; hear *her* drop down the honey-pinks! them are for me to roast between the “dogs,” before the fire for your breakfast,—that makes five—there will come another one; I always want six; I reckon *she* knows, by this time.”

Up sprang Peter and ran to the door, where sure enough, the five fair apples, lay in the Autumn grass, and while stooping to gather them, down came another on his head.

Margaret swept the old smooth brick hearth, marshalled the apples in a row between the tall iron “dogs,” while Peter, with a pleasant good-night, sped away to his mother, her chamber, his prayers, and his bed.

Presently, the child in his night-gown, with his beautiful curls brushed back from his broad forehead, and still wet with his evening bath, appeared by the side of his mother’s chair where she sat sewing.

“What, wide awake yet?”

“It is so funny about the sheep and the wool and the cards—Margaret knows so many things I never heard of before; mother, was ever Margaret a little girl?”

The idea struck Mrs. Stuart as so ludicrous that she laughed heartily.

“Sure enough, my boy, was she ever a child? Of

my own knowledge I cannot say; as I remember her, she always seemed just as she does now — no younger at all. Let me wrap this shawl about you and then you shall know about Margaret.

"A great many years ago, your grandfather, whose picture you know so well hanging in the parlor, purchased a tract of wild land, and for the purpose of securing a proper survey and a title, he went one summer to visit that part of the country. It was almost an unbroken wilderness, and not being accustomed to a wild life, he one day got lost, or separated from the party of surveyors. After wandering nearly all day, he came out at last near the border of a lake, and close by a hut which seemed swarming with children. The good woman, their mother, informed him that he had come round the lake, and his best way was to stay till morning in the cabin, when she would row him across the lake. She gave him a supper of corn bread and salt pork fried, and he slept in a buffalo skin upon the floor. In the morning, he was awakened by the noise of children over his head, and presently they began to descend a ladder. Their weird looking faces, uncombed hair, and dark eyes, looking out from under it at him, amused him very much, and he said: 'My good woman how many children have you?'

"'Nine.'

"'Nine? bless me, you can't feed them all, will you give me one?'

"'Yes.'

"'Which?'

"'Choose.'

"As soon as they were all down before the fire, he marshalled them in a row, and looked at them for

some time. 'Of what nation are these children, good woman?' No answer at all. 'I should say you are a half-breed Indian, but the father, who is he?' She would not say a word. He turned to a very dark-colored girl, and said, 'Will *you* go with me?' She replied, 'Yes, master.' Then she looked at her ragged clothes, and opened her dirty hands, as though she was not all right to go with him. But your grandfather said, 'Never mind, my girl; go over to the camp with me, and I will take you to the hotel, where the landlady shall rig you out properly.'

"So they went to the shore, and the little girl sat down by his side, while her mother rowed out from land. Then she, too, took up a pair of oars, and with the most rapid motion of her arms helped, like a strong boatman, to near the other shore. When they were over, the mother turned to go back without a parting word, or even a good-by.

"Your grandfather used often to laugh and say, that after the landlady had washed and dressed the child, she led her out to him by the street door. He was in his gig waiting; and as the child had never seen a carriage before, and did not see him get into it, she had no idea how to obey his command to 'jump in,' so she ran behind and climbed up, and almost before he could speak to explain, she sat down by his side. When he started off, for a moment she seemed frightened and clung to his arm. Then he said, —

"'What is this girl's name?'

"'Margaret.'

"'And what else?'

"'No more,' she replied.

"Very kind to the poor girl was your grandfather,

and he soon won her love. Then he brought her here to your grandmother, and said, 'Wife, I have caught a heathen for you to Christianize; will you undertake it?' and she said, 'I will try,' and the Margaret who nursed my darling boy, nursed his mother also, and her price is above rubies."

## CHAPTER XV.

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"A GENTLE woman,  
Whose large loving eyes,  
Like the soft radiance  
Of the starry skies —  
Or autumn sunshine,  
Mellowed when most bright;—  
She is not sad,  
Yet in her gaze appears  
Something, that makes  
The gazer think of tears!"



## MARY STUART.

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EVERY life is twofold. The actual or prosaic, by which we are known to the world of men and women, who have daily intercourse with us, in a business or neighborly way; and the Ideal, the Inner Temple of our being, where we truly *live*; where we worship, and pray and struggle! where we unwrap ourselves from the protective harness of care and business, and see ourselves as we really are, in the highest to which we aim, and the lowest to which we dare! Between these two lives, there is no orderly bridge of communication. Those who know us in every-day life, take no cognizance of any other, while those who are led into the inner temple of our being, find us transfigured before them, believe in us without farther testimony, and like the angels who stood outside the sepulchre, wait till the stone is rolled away!

It is both wondrous and profitable to trace back the states of mind through which we pass. A few things stand along each one's path, like the telegraph posts, sustaining and directing our course, and by them, from our present stand-point, we can trace the first small uprising of a good or evil act or intention, which has, more than any thing else, given color to the creature we now are. The door of Cranston House was open, and upon its broad entrance-stone of granite stood Mrs. Stuart, dressed for a ride. Thin and pale



she was, yet surpassingly beautiful; a beauty so spiritual, the beholder could not expect it to last long; yet it was even youthful; there was no trace of furrow on the brow, or wrinkle spreading its spider foot up from the eyes towards the temple. The hair was abundant and free from silvery threads. It curled lovingly now about her face, as when her step was strong, and the winds of summer or chill autumn lifted it from her youthful rosy cheeks, and sported under its abundance about her neck. Almost upon the opening chapters of her actual life, time had thrust an overwhelming pain into her heart; but now, that same time had laid a motherly hand upon it, and the pain has become chronic,—a habit. Her understanding has the mastery now; these two natures, verily they have become *one*, by the holy marriage of the baptism of tears! And, as she looks out from the shelter of her youth's home, her cry is—"O Hope! span my world again, with thy bow of promise! Left to myself with thee, no evil or poison is seen, feared or sought for. Nature is to me, but another book from God. Through it I talk with him! Emotions of grandeur, and of beauty, stir anew within me, as I read. The trees, in their changes of dress, are my friends, my companions; the veriest weed by the way-side is precious, as an image of beauty, and a token of the presence of Him, who gives to these trifles, trodden under the feet of men, their life and beauty. Nature never jars against this feeling of harmony, even in her wildest moods. No! A harsh word! an unkind look, a suspicion, a treachery! These are the implements of torture, worse than a thousand inquisitions, and against which there is no redress; yet these are wielded by society in its individ-

ual capacity. Never by nature! nay! she woos us to her confidence, to her protection. She never throws us off, or bids depart from her the meanest of her children. Faithful through life, faithful at last, beneath her own green turf she lays us away beyond the reach of discord or neglect, while in all her forms of beauty or of love, in trees, birds, and atmospheric semitones, she utters her requiem over our peaceful slumbers!"

"Sweeter than the tones of the birds on the trees are the sounds of your voice, and like a new epistle from the beloved disciple, are the sentiments you utter," said another voice, while the loving arms of Cousin Sallie embraced her, and her mouth was covered with her hearty kiss. "I will take the next chapter after we get well out on our ride. Shall you be warm enough? There, let me tuck this shawl around your feet."

"Ah, Margaret, you always forestall me in every good work. What! your muff, that you think so much of, for her feet? Why! I think I should like to be sick myself, and you were my nurse. Which way shall we go?"

"Up the creek road; I have much to say."

Sallie turned quickly and looked into the face beside her; it was pale and serene; her eyes searching along the old road, evidently to reach some point in the ride.

"Aunt Mary, are you strong enough to-day? I can wait, what you wish to tell me."

The head was bent forward, the better to mark the course of the wheels in the ruts, and she made no response to Cousin Sallie's question; hardly seemed conscious of her presence.

"Strange it is, but for many years, I always am *sure* I shall see the print of my shoe, wet with blood, clearly

defined along this road. I have to look hard to be convinced that it is not so. What a mystery! It was not a flesh wound, but one in the soul; and from it dripped that which corresponds to blood, and the states of my progression are stained. I confound the inward with the outward. But this is not the way to bring you to my history. It was within the range of my vision now, where life begun with me. Ride slowly."

Sallie put her arm through the bridle rein, leaving it loose upon the Duke's back, and, very much excited, prepared to listen.

"Four miles farther up the river, there used to be a bridge, old, and quite unsafe,—removed now for a much better one. The river beyond the arsenal and the mills is very wide, deep, and rapid.

"You have heard of Frank, a brother of mine, who died young? Well, it was when he was in college, his second year; during the long vacation, that we came this way one day, to ride. We rode farther than we realized. It was early in the autumn, when night falls down suddenly; and when we turned towards home, we saw with alarm directly before us a fearfully black cloud. And when we faced it, it seemed as though an awful silence hushed nature into the faintness of death. It struck terror into my heart at once; but Frank laughed at my fears, and said we should be at home before a drop of rain fell. He urged Jerry, our horse, forward as fast as possible. Suddenly I thought of the old bridge, and my fears almost took away my breath. I looked at Frank, he seemed sober and anxious—all he said was;—

"Molly, how is that old bridge? I did not notice it when we came across."

"Neither did I," I replied, and as women are always charged with making great demonstrations when there is danger, I determined to keep very quiet, and not add to Frank's care.

"We mounted the last hill, from the top of which the view is so fine, and at the base of which rolled and gleamed the river. Half a mile down before us it lay, with its crazy old bridge, over which we must pass to reach home. Before we were half way down, the darkness shut down like a black curtain. We could not see any thing. There came flashes of lightning, wrapping the heavens in dazzling light for a moment, making the succeeding darkness more dense than before!

"My senses were almost lost to me; I tried to think if there were any houses where we could find protection on that side of the bridge, but could remember nothing but a few straggling huts. We looked in vain even for a light to guide us. Frank good-naturedly represented, for my diversion from impending danger, that as they were a hard-working people, they probably had retired.

"On drove he, as fast as he could possibly urge the horse, till at last Jerry stopped. No effort of Frank's could make him stir a single step. We both stood up in the open wagon, and strained our eyes to penetrate, if possible, the space about us for some guide. It was truly awful. I have never experienced any thing so utterly helpless as that night without stars, or sky. We could not see each other! Then there came a flash of lightning, bringing out as distinctly as at noon-day, every hut, hill, plain, and forest; each tree, even, stood out in full proportion; while roaring and rushing

as though it was ready to devour us, was the river, close in front of the horse's feet!

"The light had shown us our danger; I told you I had kept quiet, but the succeeding darkness was more terrible than before, and now my cries rent the air;—but through the thick gloom my eyes could not pierce. It reached human ears; lights glimmered; I shut my eyes through very terror of their coming from, I knew not where, for the darkness had destroyed all distinct, local recollection, and their gleam was like fierce eyeballs, and the river, some awful monster, heaving up its dark shining back, ready to swallow us! Frank meanwhile, called out:

"This way; bring your lights down by the river! make haste! help! help!"

"I put my hands over my eyes. Now there came a voice I never heard before, it was strong, my fears fled before it. Then the careful tread of a horse. Then the voice sounded again; deep toned as an organ, yet soft as the whisper of the Angel of Mercy; it was close at my side, it said: 'Good God! one more step would have been fatal; how came you down here? The river is deep as the ocean.'

"Then he threw the light of the lantern up over the wagon, and exclaimed:—

"A lady out here! Young man you do not deserve ever to be trusted with a lady again."

"That is true enough, sir; but neither disaster or your just censure, can shake the faith of that lady in me."

"Frank then took the horse by the bridle and turned him on the bridge. Now the rain came down upon us in a perfect deluge. I rolled myself up in my cloak

upon the floor of the wagon and cried. The others seemed dismayed, for the darkness did not lessen. At last the gentleman said,—

"Young man, jump into the wagon and see to the lady. Martin, lead the horse."

"Master, I am afraid of this bridge."

"Take hold of the bridle you coward. Is your life worth more than that of the lady?"

"Master she *cries* so."

"Let her cry. Good God! I wonder she is not frightened to death. Keep that side of the bridge and I will this."

"He dismounted and led his own horse, holding the lantern down low, saying:

"Martin, look sharp for the holes in the bridge."

"The last recollection I had, was the long, long, bridge, and the roaring, swollen flood beneath; with the rain pouring down my neck like a water-spout. My next consciousness was of some one taking me up, and lifting, without knocking, the latch of that farmer's kitchen." Suddenly interrupting her history, she exclaimed,

"Let us rest awhile under this tree, and look at the old house once more."

She resumed her narrative: "Look at it, Cousin Sallie, so common-place, so peaceful, it bears no mark, no data of that evening. It may seem strange to you, I think it does to me—I simply state facts—I have long since given up the hope of understanding mental impressions; but to day, I remember as well as then, or perhaps with more distinctness, every face, every movement, every article of furniture in that farmer's kitchen. There was a bright fire, the family were

paring apples, sitting upon the ample hearth. They were startled at our unceremonious entrance. My bonnet and cloak were suspended upon pegs fastened in the wall — I heard the water drip from them upon the sanded oaken floor. The stranger was chafing my hands in his, while, with prompt energy, he gave directions to those about him. There were poles across the length of the room, high above our heads, and strips of *pumpkin* hung to dry over them. Frank stood close under the tall mantle-shelf, looking very sober while he wrung the water from his hair. How much it was like our little Peter's in texture, profusion, and color!

"The farmer's wife, in crossing the room, put her hand up to my bonnet, a beautiful riding hat, now utterly ruined, and said, —

"What a pity! Bonnets are women's weakness, whether high or low born, Cousin Sallie; even our Margaret thinks more of what she places upon head, than the whole of her remaining wardrobe."

"I smiled; the gentleman kneeling on the floor by my side, answered it with one earnest and grateful at my recovery. I did not know it then, Sallie. Love was a stranger to me, unexpected, unlooked for; but afterwards, and now, I know that then my heart crept into his bosom, like a frightened bird, and felt safe; that through that responsive smile of his, there was sealed a compact, real then, real now, true for ever more, as the everlasting hills. So great was the force, the manhood of his presence, that had he gathered me up in his arms and led the way out into the night, I should have offered no resistance or experienced the least hesitation, or fear. As it was, he arose and stood by Frank,

asked how far we were from home, gave his name as Col. Stuart of the arsenal, and on receiving ours, expressed pleasure at being made acquainted; he then opened the door and looked out.

"The stars are ready to light you home. My poor lantern is thrown quite into the shade by such a sky as that."

"He ordered the wagon to the door, and wrapped me up in a dragoon's coat, for which he sent Martin; then he took me in his arms again, and placed me in the wagon. Frank began to express thanks, but he interrupted him with —

"I must see you safe home first."

"He mounted his own horse, and rode by my side, while Martin kept quite in the rear. Frank, dear, beautiful Frank, shivered all the way home. At our own door, the door where we stood this morning, and which has graven ineffaceably upon it a paragraph from every chapter of my subsequent life; I was again lifted down gently, as a father would a child, and our escort departed, asking the privilege to call. My father delighted in offering his hospitality to one of whose distinction he had often heard."

"Many months after this eventful evening, my new love lay quiet in my heart; for Frank, brother Frank, took cold, from which he never entirely recovered. To Col. Stuart he became very much attached, and received with delight the announcement of our engagement. Feeling that his days were numbered, he urged haste in the marriage, in which he was joined by Col. Stuart. We were married. Your grandfather and that joyous, frolicsome Uncle Frank you never saw, were in mercy spared the final desolation."

Mrs. Stuart had mistaken her own strength in going over the experience of her early life. For a time she sat back in her seat quite exhausted, then she went on.

"I see no good to be gained, either to you or myself, by entering too definitely into that period; my body is weak, my mind is more serene and peaceful than my manner will prove to you.

"I refer again to this love given to me, not as any thing I obtained of myself. After so many years I can look at it more truly than perhaps ever before, and I think I may add, with an emotion of reverence. In him, and to him, my life was, and is a vital necessity. A portion in his warp and woof that cannot be disentangled without destruction to both. As I go on you will understand me better.

"True affection is the stepping stone to God,' Mazoni used to say, and I believe it. Some writer I think has said, or else I sometime have written myself, that the heart is our only measure of the infinite. That the mind tires of greatness, of ambition, of worldly luxury, but the heart never grows weary. Love lifts us up with added blessing and strength, makes the soul strong and true, so that it can set its foot upon grief, and lift high its symbol of hope. It gives us the steady hand, the cool brain and effective purpose, so that we can but pass into the future of our life, day by day, as to a home land, no longer strange to us. A great land is that future, mightier than the past; for in it there is hope, and over it we have the experience of the past, to help us. We cannot measure it with a bound, we cannot bind its harvests with a single sheaf! we are sure the future has no end!

"I have a figure constantly in my mind, which seems

identified with me so really, that I will here speak of it. The sunset often throws its brightness back to the farthest visible hills; so it seems to me, my past will be at last illuminated by the reflected light from the future. The few years in which my happiness was complete and entire in Col. Stuart, stretch along clear, distinct, and full of beauty to me. My life previous, and since is almost swallowed up in them. And now, I cannot give you my idea of that period, or describe Col. Stuart to you. Next to my heart I wear an excellent likeness of him, which, when that heart is cold, — not before, remember, — I wish you to remove from me, to preserve for little Peter."

She drew the little case into her hand and sprung it open. Both gazed upon it without comment. Very fine looking the original must have been; but there was an expression about the mouth, over which Sallie's eyes lingered, and her heart questioned; — was it anxiety, pain, or did that compressed lip indicate something to conceal? She was not old enough even to analyze her own suggestions. The features were strikingly like Aunt Mary's and Peter's, but very much more strongly marked; the complexion dark, the eyes deep set, earnest, even stern in their expression. Mrs. Stuart now drew from her bosom a paper, which she opened, and held carefully for Sallie to look at. It contained a curl of crisp, strong-fibred, black hair. The paper enclosing it was a piece of old newspaper. She pointed to the date upon it, and said, —

"You will wonder how any value can be attached to this old worn piece of newspaper. I will explain. One day when I was combing his hair, he cut this curl off, and reaching over to the table, tore off this bit of

paper from the evening edition of that day, laid the hair in it, and, with a low bow, laughingly presented it to me. Neither the paper or the hair have ever parted company with each other, or with me; as it is now, leave it with me at last."

She pressed it again and again to her lips, her cheeks, then returned it to her bosom.

With a new emotion of surprise, and almost adoration, Sallie now gazed upon the dear friend who sat by her side, uttering with a quiet, musical voice, the facts which had once given her heart its true life, only to tear it like thorns, when it should be withdrawn.

With folded hands she sat, looking forward, but evidently taking no note of visible objects. When she again spoke, it was as though she thought aloud. —

"Very pleasant years they were, those *seven* we passed together. There was completeness in the *number*, as well as the peace and joy they gave. Seven years of plenty in the basket and in the soul. Now, as well as then, I feel that they were good in passing, good in their effects. Darkness, like that over Israel when dwelling in Egypt, famine which sinks the pitiful creature in dumb show, never more hungry or thirsty, came when the cup of joy was full, and broke it to atoms.

"I cannot see as clearly that this was *good*, but I can and *do, rest and trust!* Something tells me, the dawn approaches to end this long night. Often now, when weak and weary, I scent the blossom-laden air, wafted on the coming breeze of a new day! The life leaps within me to meet it! Let me wait with patience! Heaven works surely towards *his* and my redemption! Cousin Sallie, believe me, every cup, if it be but the nameless struggle of a thought unuttered, is

*good* for the health of the soul. Give, then, the force of *both hands*, the will, and the understanding to place it to your lips, and 'Drink ye *all of it*,' without fear or shrinking! Nearer, each day brings you to that portion of life, when the strength of individual will is in its full-grown vigor; and thus, of necessity, trials fall thick and heavy. Accept what comes, as a check rein to your merely physical determination, or to your merely worldly happiness, as the best possible for you; as the work of the faithful gardener, who cuts and trims, even though the vine bleeds for a period, knowing well that thus only can he bring orderly growth, from Nature's disorderly profusion.

"Our life has its six days of labor, its six states of change; ploughed with heartache, watered with tears. Be sure, Cousin Sallie, when your condition seems most hopeless to yourself, a voice will speak to you from the inmost, now first listened to, because the din without is no longer intelligible. "Behold I create a new heaven, and a new earth." To you also will come days, when you will rise sadly, and go about your ordinary duties, with a sort of mechanical indifference — hungering for that which those about you *have* to give, and which would be a spur to your activity; faint for the dew of sympathy, which, if other hearts withhold, can never be returned to them in rain. Suddenly, there will come to you, from the clouds, ever towering above the dusty plains of life, 'the dew of Mount Hermon.' Then it will be that the soul from its own fullness giveth, asking nothing in return. Forgetting almost its own existence aside from the throbbing heart of society, rapping its strong, fevered pulsations close against its own. Upon the phases of its past life,



it gazes with eyes no longer dimmed with the tears of personal considerations, but with a new interest, unceasing in its efforts, as though it were the continuation of some other life — watched with anxious trembling, as the feet press on dangerous places, with earnest upbreathing, as the struggle deepens, and the conflict thickens — and now with a wild throb of joy, as the dangers of temptation, are passed in safety. What matters it, if blithsomeness of the heart becomes intermittent, and mingled with tears? Like the evening and the morning, they make up the perfect day.

"I said just now, that my night draws towards its new dawn. There was a time when this night began, — and of that I must speak, though I dally with words, to push farther from me the necessity.

"Quite unexpectedly, Col. Stuart received orders to move to a distant outpost. The effect upon us both, at the announcement, appeared unreasonably serious — or rather, as the result proved, it was the foreshadowing of the death-warrant to our happiness.

"This new fort was quite upon the frontier — reached through great difficulty, having just been built. Many objections were raised against my going out with him or going at all, until he could make some preparation for our comfort; so, at my father's earnest request, Peter and myself returned to Cranston House.

"A year later, with Margaret for my maid, we took passage in a fine ship built for the route; we knew that the journey would be long, and dangerous, at least that was the generally expressed opinion; I only counted the length of time. I *feared* nothing between me and my dear husband. If I needs must, I could have walked over burning coals to him, begged for him, yes,

stolen for him, if pushed by his necessity to do it. So entirely was my being merged in his, that I had no distinct individuality, apart from him. All other friends — and I had very many whom I loved, but before the memory of Col. Stuart it became negative — like stars, were not lost, but dimmed by the light of his presence in my soul! So I said to your dear father, standing before him, pleading this course against his wise and shrewder judgment. So I said *then* — I can say nothing different now.

"Our words come back to us sometimes with such force, they break us down. *These* laid me so low, that when lifted again from their weight, I was no longer the blithsome Mary, whose ringing laugh went echoing through the house and fields.

"Look yonder, Sallie! See how the sun's setting lights up the east with a ruddy glow. Some people look only to the rainbow as the harbinger of promise; thus the rainbow never speaks to me. But there, and always, as often as the west throws its parting kiss to those distant hills — it is a promise for me, ever fresh from God! In this eastern glow he seems to say, Col. Stuart will come to *you*; you cannot go to him."

## CHAPTER XVI.

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"HARD is my doom and thine; thou knowest it all.  
Could love part thus? Was it not well to speak,  
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.  
The slow, sweet hours that bring us all things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought the *night*  
In which we sat together and *alone*,  
And to the want, that hollowed all the heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
That burned upon its object through such tears  
As flow but once in life."



## OUT UPON THE GREAT DEEP.

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"For a few days after we sailed, I was very sick; then I began to rally, to feel the atmosphere of my husband borne on to meet us. Hours I lay upon my berth, seeming to live with him, and rest in the security his presence and love always gave me.

"Perhaps you will say, this was God-worship, but it will be because you have not learned by heart, the difference between love conjugal, and love divine. The former makes the truest and strongest basis for the latter. One should never lose sight of this, whether they marry or live alone in this present life."

Cousin Sallie made a sudden movement, as though she would speak, but did not. The demonstration was not lost sight of by Mrs. Stuart, but she continued without noticing it, giving Sallie time to recover.

"We had a large state-room, and being unacquainted with the passengers, we kept very much by ourselves. The captain, who knew my father, gave us every attention. As soon as I was strong enough to leave our state-room, he always came and led me to the table, giving me a place at his right hand. There were a great many passengers. Gradually I began to look around and scan the various faces. There were many fine-looking men and women, but I do not now remember but one face, which drew with decided force my attention. Nearly opposite me she sat; a short, fat

woman, faded and worn-out looking, but still showing remains of considerable beauty. Her eyebrows were black and heavy; under them, well set, but cold-looking, large, whitey blue eyes. That shade of eyes, with the strong contrast of black eyebrows, had always impressed me unpleasantly, in the face of a woman. Still, this person attracted me, or really interested me; I don't know but both. Somehow, when I looked at her, I thought of Col. Stuart.

"On we went, over the great deep, through storms and winds and every variety of climate. We became accustomed to the motion of the ship, and from this novel kind of life began to glean new sources of pleasure.

"In the pilot's room among the sailors, or with the officers, little Peter with his faithful Margaret, could be seen; she, strong and sturdy as an oak, he, like the sensitive, ever-varying columbine, swaying beneath its branches.

"Sitting by my window one day reading, — the heat was intense, — I threw the book aside, and laid my head out on the frame of the little casement.

"We were becalmed; the great ocean seemed to have gone to sleep; the sails were reefed, and the ship lay calmly on its bosom, like a child in its mother's arms. Some distance from me stood Margaret with Peter, and near them the short, stout woman. They were talking; I had seen them thus before, but now for the first time, it struck me strangely that she should seem to seek Margaret rather than the ladies of the ship's passengers. In herself, she was one of those people who, at first, one would be likely to think was not of the first quality. Then you would question in

your own mind with some doubt, whether she were really *delf*, or *porcelain*.

"Usually, to a discerning mind, the first ring tells the *china* from the *earthen*. In this case, there was a common sort of look. This talking with Margaret was the ringing sound; it *was not* china, — so I made up my mind with a mental reservation. Perhaps I am unjust to her; my tender heart makes me a poor judge; it seems better to be china. Knowing Margaret so well, I had no fear that any stranger could obtain a particle of family information from her, so I had no anxiety or suspicion on our own account. I simply watched them because they were in the range of my observation.

"At length, Margaret suddenly slipped Peter down upon the floor, and grasping the railing with one hand, wiped her face with the corner of her white linen apron with the other. In doing this, she turned more towards me, and I never saw her so pale before. She did not appear to be saying any thing to excite her; it was evident some remark from the other struck home unwittingly, for her companion, still unconscious of Margaret's emotion, was talking continually. I drew my blind, for the sun came in. Through it, I saw Margaret point to a seat beneath my window, and again taking hold of Peter's hand, they came and sat down there. Up to this time, I had no wish, or interest in hearing what she was saying; but knowing Margaret so well, it now occurred to me that she took this way expressly for me to hear, for she knew very well nothing could be said there, with my window up, and I not hear as well as she.

"Wholly unsuspecting, wholly fearless of any possi-

ble contingency whereby I might be annoyed, or suffer through this woman, I inwardly smiled at Margaret's *finesse*; and, still leaning upon the window, took up the book again. It was a French work I very much admired; and the passage at which I had laid it aside I now turned back to for the purpose of reading it again. I completed the second time the passage—strange to say, the shock which followed, graved it upon my memory with a pen, as of red hot iron. Let me repeat it to you.

“Every soldier has his war cry; for this one it is ‘country,’ for that, ‘home,’ for a third, ‘mankind,’ but they all follow the same standard, that of duty; for all, the same divine law reigns, that of self sacrifice. To love something more than one’s self, that is the secret of all that is great; to know how to live for others, that is the aim of all noble souls. O beloved and gentle Poverty! pardon me for having for a moment wished to fly from thee, as I would from want; stay here forever with thy charming sisters, Pity, Patience, Sobriety, and Solitude; be ye *my queens*, and my instructors. Teach me the stern duties of life; remove far from me the weaknesses of heart, and giddiness of head, which follow prosperity. Holy Poverty! teach me to endure without complaining; to impart without grudging; to seek the end of life, higher than its pleasure, farther off than in power. Thou givest the body strength, thou makest the mind more firm; and, thanks to thee—this life, to which the rich attach themselves as to a rock, becomes a bark of which death may cut the cable without awakening all our fears. Continue to sustain me, oh *thou*, whom Christ called *blessed!*”

“I again completed reading this beautiful and significant passage. Outside, the first words spoken, were by Margaret.

“And so you say Col. Stuart, of Fort Leary, is your husband?”

“My book dropped upon the floor, and my senses sprung to their utmost tension! *Faint* No, indeed! people don’t *faint* when the waves open to receive them, to swallow them up, or the fire encircles them with the hissing serpent tongues of fiendish destruction! No, no; at such a moment, the instinct of self-preservation pushes us to herculean tasks! With the hearing power of a hundred ears, I listened:

“‘Yes,’ she replied.

“It is twenty years since we were married; I followed the regiment for his sake; he was younger than I, but I loved him; I declared I would have him. I had a brother in the same regiment; I moved him to help me. Stuart was green in the ways of the world, I knew if we could entrap him so that he felt bound by the law of honor, he would die rather than leave me; and besides, he had told me he loved me a great many times; I was only taking him at his word. My brother was up to most any kind of a scrape. He put it through, and the knot was tied strong by a true priest. His friends in the army parted us after awhile. My brother was hired by them to put me out of the way, so he has since told me, and he did it to the best of his ability, and that was not small; so that for fifteen years I couldn’t learn any thing of where it was. Well, last fall my brother died, and at that time he told me the whole story.

"Got any children?" Margaret growled out.

"Not as I know of."

"Know of! goodness gracious! I should think that was easy enough to remember!" And Margaret suddenly caught little Peter close to her breast, holding him with a singularly defiant air, wholly lost upon her companion, over whose face stole a sad memory, for which I, even I, could bless and pity her.

She reached across Margaret's lap, and took one of Peter's hands in hers; most carefully she examined it, turning it over and tracing its dimpled outlines — and while my heart shook hands with hers, feeling sure, by this token, that she had gained, either lawfully or unlawfully, the emotion known only to a mother's heart, I listened with, oh! what agony, for her reply.

"Their hands are all alike, I reckon; this little boy's is after the same pattern of his,—my baby boy!" She, stooping, dropped a tear into that little palm; it fell upon *my child*! it was an offering from her heart, to *her own* offspring! and the father of *both* was the same.

"There came a brief silence; far off from that quiet ship, her maternal memories had sped. Oh! could I but follow her, and tear the curtain of awful mystery from the conjunction of evil planets which had tangled the web of my destiny with hers! My *pity* saved me from the sharpest anguish of jealousy; but oh! how could I give to any one the smallest fragment of his love? Again Margaret spoke, in her hard, cold way, "Baby? something of a large baby I should think, if it is fifteen years since you saw the father."

No direct reply came.

"They took him away from me; they say he died;

better so, but I never believed he did; they said so, dear little baby boy; a stout strong child. Perhaps I will find both father and son.

"Suppose he is married again," said Margaret, with a composure that really astonished me. The short woman brought down her hand upon her pocket with great emphasis, and said,

"This certificate will hold before any other."

"Like as not he wont know you."

"I've got a witness aboard who can identify him and me. I've changed some, to be sure," she added, simply; "but he will know me; he is a very bright man. He is not married again, unless they told him I was dead; even then, I have the first right over any other."

"Right!" said Margaret, with some outbreak of gathering indignation. According to your own showing, your first right was that of a thief; and as for hunting the world over for *any* man, suppose you had an *honest* right to him, it is paying rather dear. However, it is none of my concern; only it would have looked full as well for a woman to *wait* till she was sent for; never did I see a man yet, that could tempt me to follow him a yard; but, as I said, it is your affair, the men are *well enough* if you don't make too much of them!"

"Every word up to this point I heard distinctly as the toll of a bell, when it sounds out, one by one, the death knell of all our hopes. Despair shut down in mercy, for it laid me in total silence and forgetfulness upon the state-room floor. Margaret heard me fall; she came in and bolted the door, closed and fastened the blinds. In the upper berth she seated playful,

happy little Peter, and to beguile him, placed a basket of oranges within his reach. Then she knelt down by me, and with the executive ability she so wonderfully possesses, drew off my clothes, and took me up tenderly and laid me away in my narrow bed. When, after much effort on her part, I opened my eyes, she was weeping; it was the first time I ever saw her shed tears. My senses looked up from their temporary suspension with a sharpened, staring rigidity.

"Little Peter held an orange in his dimpled hand down over the side of his crib, saying, 'Maggie cry! mamma sick!' I stared at her, and at him, and his dear little offering of what to him seemed a panacea for every grief—an orange; his right hand became *two*; another, larger, *stronger, darker* in color; a child's head, with curls the color of the raven's wing, nestled by my boy! I cried, 'I have *two*! he has *two*! my heart can, will take them both in, it has room!' Then like black night, the truth came again and shut out consciousness. Kind heaven steeped my senses in oblivion, that I might not see *all* of the wide spread desert upon which my future must make its way. For many a long day and dreary night in that ocean home, faithful Margaret kept her sad, lone watch over me, and acted a mother's, as well as nurse's part by little Peter.

"Dear, thoughtful Margaret! I remember now with how much significance she placed her fingers over her lips, as she turned to admit the ship's physician; and the better to secure me from any communication whatever, with him, laid aside her own taciturn manners, and talked a great deal about the heat; upon every other possible cause for my illness she was dumb. He told her there must have been some shock, some im-

mediate, exciting cause; she still insisted that the heat was enough, and more than enough to take the *senses* and *life* out of anybody. Margaret put her face in a mask then, and it has never been wholly laid aside since. He could get nothing from her; and the short woman was too wholly unconscious who I was, to suspect that her conversation had any thing to do with it.

"After our return home, she told your father that she sent for the captain, and he came in to see me very often. This she did as a preface to the request she then made, which was, that we might remain unmolested in our state-room, and return with him, she supposing I should never recover even consciousness again.

"Sometimes it happens that severe sickness brings out the mind clearer and stronger than ever before. Like the image in the block of granite or marble, seen only by the eye of the artist, and worked at by him, with the patient force of a purpose ultimated from that image yet concealed; so the Divine Providence cuts and hews with the hard, sharp chisel of circumstances, until the sacred soul-image is brought distinctly forth from the rubbish in which it had been smothered, no longer to be part or portion with that which once made its home, its tomb!

"It had been a long while—that oblivion of the actual;—that rest from all anxious thought and fearful consciousness of a broken life. Dimly, I remember it, and with no cognizance of pain, either of mind or body. It seems now to me, as though another child beside Peter bore me company. I know just how he looked; and I so loved him, that to-day, it seems to

me, as though I had been the mother of two sons; and I miss him of the raven curls, for he was the first-born of his father, and bears his image.

"I opened my eyes one day, not only to the sight of my chamber in the walls of the ship and its only inmates, Peter and Margaret, but also, to the clear, full force of my more than widowhood! You may think it strange that I placed so much confidence in the statement of this woman; but I did believe every word she said. There were nameless little things in the past which came back to me to confirm her statements. Trifles they were, not thought about at the time, but pressing home conviction to me now with a force no argument could overthrow! My agony was beyond all measure or computation. I felt as though, like 'John of Patmos,' I had been banished to an eternal island home!

"I looked at my precious, only boy, from whom it then seemed an absolute reality, that an older brother had been torn, little Peter, playing with his shoes on the foot of my berth, and warbling forth the words, 'Please, mamma, wake up; please, mamma,' and I said to myself, it is after banishment from what constituted our temporal heaven—from so-called 'Society,' that the angels minister to us! How calm I was! There were no tears! no sighs! The inhalation of air, was without sound or effort. What *was* this life without life? I pinched my fingers,—they were fair and colorless as alabaster; but the blood did not rush back, rebellious at the pressure. My eyes seemed to be looking up from a grave, upon things no longer belonging to my existence. My head turned upon my pillow, and these stony eyes gazed for a long time in one direction with

objectless indifference, then turned and looked into another direction, till every seam and knot upon the walls of my place of outer banishment, were as seared into my memory, as exile into my soul!

"In all this, Nature found the servants of her restoring process. A condition was thus formed for the basis to a wider range of thought, for the waking up of the reason, the final action of the judgment. Great as was this personal torture, it was nothing in comparison with that I felt for my husband. How my soul mourned over his humiliation, and future misery and distress. How powerless I saw myself to alleviate it; at last I said,—

"'Margaret.' She jumped from her seat with very apparent pleasure, and came to my side. 'Is the proof convincing to your mind?'

"'Deed, Miss Mary, it is.'

"'But there is a *possibility*, Margaret, that it is a mistake.' She shook her head. 'Will you do something for me?'

"'Deed, Miss Mary, I'll give my life for you.'

"'How soon shall we be in port?'

"'In a few days, the captain says.'

"'He was to meet us in port, and on board ship, Margaret.' I could not possibly speak his name, even to Margaret. She was standing near me, with her left arm across her body, and the elbow of the right resting in the left hand, while her right hand spread itself like a wall up the side of her face; you know how peculiar that position is to her. As I spoke, she started, and the right hand, took the form of a fist, from which the strong sinews of the arm tightened, and stood out, with a force sufficient to have conquered any thing

coming within her reach. It was momentary, but the picture was very vivid to me.

"Dear Maggie, can you manage to have that woman on the seat near my window, so that her meeting with him may be in our sight? The sweeping proof will be their recognition of each other. If it is so, it would be better for him not to see us at all."

Margaret promised to arrange every thing. After awhile I said again,—

"Margaret."

"I am here," she replied.

"Do you realize how this will place our sweet baby in the eyes of the law—fatherless? Margaret, fatherless!"

"The fist arose again, and the face, usually so stolid and calm, became so fierce it startled me.

"Sure, marm," she said "the heathen—"

"O Margaret, hush!"

"Excuse me, Miss Mary, I feel *murder* in me; it is not here he is, my fist is too full, it would empty itself on him and be easier and lighter for it. I will have to hold myself not to throw him into the sea."

"Her words opened to me the first actual sight of the *trial* upon which my steps now trod; the first glimpse of my *cross*, which must lay next my tender flesh, and, be covered forever with a severe, inexplicable mystery.

"Don't speak disrespectfully of him, Maggie," I cried "He was my husband, and is Peter's father; but the law sets aside my marriage, and makes Peter wholly without a claim upon him. The child may die before he is old enough to realize this humiliation; but if the facts come before the public, Col. Stuart falls in dis-

grace. Margaret, his honor is in our hands; I love his good name better than my own; and I, if I become a mark for the shaft of censure—oh, it matters not! no increase of burden can come to me, there is indeed nothing left about which I can be sensitive but his name, and that of the child we both inherit. Will you not, for my sake, and for the sake of the boy, keep his honor bright and sacred?"

"Deed, Miss Mary, the boy has God's mark on him, don't fear; I said I will give my life for you,—it is me always means what I says. 'Taint nat'ral I could like Col. Stuart any more; but there can nothing ever make me blab if that is what you want. My old mistress taught me not to lie; now how is me to help it? Mind, Miss Mary, long as I live I will keep this secret, but then its a *lying living*, all the time. I wouldn't never believe a word I said myself, again; but when I die, and go to old mistress, I must explain to her, how I come to disobey her orders. She said the devil was the father of lies; and *he* must be one of his children, else why he make me into a liar forever?"

"Without interruption I let her go on, and when with great sobs, she stopped and threw her apron over her head, I felt the still, hot, burning tears coursing down my own cheeks. *She* could sob, and find relief thereby; I, alas! had not yet life enough to be thrown out in any such way. I now remember but one distinct, suggestive thought, then impressed upon my mind; and it was, of the immense amount of widespread suffering, which often, perhaps always, grows out from *one wrong* act.

"A young, thoughtless man had committed what 'society' might be likely to call, an 'indiscretion.'



We, who were writhing under the natural growth of that 'indiscretion,' not at all implicated in its committal, what could ever compensate us for *our sorrow*? or how could its mark ever be erased from memory; or its stinging pain from our hearts? Ah! how many years, counted out in the numberless segments of days and hours, have I waited for the answer to questions born into my memory in that hour, while Margaret veiled her face and wept.

"So earnest was the purpose of my mind to secure her co-operation in my plan, that I continued to place it before her.

"We will return in the ship, Maggie. My brother Peter must hear the *truth* from your lips and mine, after that, let it be buried forever. Little Peter will grow up with the name of Stuart. Who knows, Margaret, but some time father and son may meet. Let us make him worthy, — a worthy gift from the Mary he used to love so well.'

"Darkness came again over my mind, and when next I awoke, it was with a sad, pitiable condition of universal distress. Turn which way I would, there came no relief. As I look at it now, Sallie, she who lay so long in that grave-like berth, seems to me a distinct person from my present self; a person from whom this one was evolved. The one in the ship stirs my pity. I sorrow for her! I forget all her defects, so well known to me, in my deeper sympathy for her grief. She was bearing a heavy *cross*; under it she staggered. What a picture it is in my mind. She, Margaret, and Peter, — away out on the pitiless *sea*, with the harsh orders of the officers ringing in their ears; the creaking of the rigging breaking even the temporary sleep; the

huge, crested waves, like some living monster seeking to devour them, and more than all else, the no more *any object* to look forth after, as a beacon of never fading hope. How much, now they seem like some dear friends of mine, who thus suffered, and have passed away!

"One morning I was awakened by the strange noises which herald the arrival of a ship in port. Margaret asked me if I thought I could sit up. She said it would be better for me to see for myself. She accordingly placed me in a great chair, close by the window. Peter was asleep with his pretty feet hanging out from his crib. Down under my window, in a flutter of expectation, sat the short woman. It seemed like mating the eagle with a farmyard fowl; to bring my noble Col. Stuart to claim companionship with her. Margaret brought the prayer book, open to the morning lesson. She knelt by my side, while I read; it prepared me for the faggot; for was I not already bound to the stake?

"Now there came the rush of passengers, the ingress of friends to greet them. Margaret, still kneeling, placed her arm round me, as though she would sustain me, and leaning forward, looked for me through the casement. *It was he!* She held me firmly. My beloved! mine! mine! Up leaped my heart to meet him! 'bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh!' Oh! *agony* of *rapture*! Margaret tightened her grasp. On he came; tall, graceful, manly, his face beaming with bright, earnest emotion; his hat in his hand, his hair moist with perspiration, curled and shining in its raven blackness. To the right and to the left he looked expectantly. Within six feet of the bench outside my



window, he stopped with well-expressed horror. The fat woman, with a good-humored smile sprang up to meet him, and caught his hand. I never have seen any face so expressive of bewildered pain. Up and down the cabin he looked, oh, how earnestly, for another face; stricken, by the rebound of his own act, forever from his sight.

"Never before did I realize, as at that moment, how much he loved me; never before, see him in a position where he was not sufficient unto himself! As before, my ears were strung to the tension of hearing even the faintest sound or whisper.

"Don't you know your wife?" said the fat woman.

"Down upon her he looked, while the pallor of death encircled his mouth, and spread away into the raven hair with frightful whiteness. Then the eyes took a quick, sharp survey of the busy scene. It was a place for proprieties. He gave another frightfully earnest gaze over every thing in view; he looked directly at the window of our little room. O Sallie, how hard it was to me, not to answer that questioning face! but from that memorable window, that weak, palpable barrier, there came to his great necessity, no sign. Alas! the wall his own thoughtless hand had reared between us was high as the power of the legal wisdom Christian ages had accumulated! Then he drew the hand holding his, within his arm, and quickly turned away."

## CHAPTER XVII.

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"My earthly losses, are my heavenly gains;  
My buried loves, are angels in the sky;  
Rich rest is wrought, of all my well-borne pains,  
My faults, bewailed, turn to humility:  
Humility so deep, that I can see  
In this, my brightest *hope* of heaven to be.

"On rocks that fill my path, I *upward* rise,  
Adversity's keen air, but makes me *strong*,  
Dispels low vapors, that might shut the skies,  
And bears aloft and clear, my joyful song.  
And my *poor*, faded *hopes*  
Fall withering  
To warm the heart  
From whence life's issues spring."

## THE RETURN.

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MRS. STUART stopped from exhaustion; Sallie was weeping bitterly. She drew the reins from Sallie's hands, and for awhile they rode on in silence. Then she said, —

“ Weep on, Cousin Sallie, it is like the early rain to you, so young, but if you have any feeling of bitterness springing into life towards Col. Stuart, pray for the mantle of *Charity*, and, ‘going backwards,’ cover that history of facts I have given you, underneath which, there rests at present a fathomless mystery. If human suffering was a state to be rid of, otherwise than by the internal struggle of each soul for itself, would I not gladly take upon me, all grief which he now bears, through some wrong or mistake of his early life?

“ Up to this point of my own history, my life had known no complicated pang, in which even the reason itself seemed involved. On the contrary, it looks, as I glance back, like one gala day, in which friends and outward circumstances seemed combined to give me joy, and duty walked hand in hand with my pleasure. Now, duty and happiness, right and wrong, were thrown into misty confusion. For many long weeks I lay in a state of helpless, half-conscious existence. Margaret became another self to me; perhaps if I had not had her to lean upon, life would sooner have ebbed back into my own consciousness; as it was she took all

responsibility upon herself, while over the great deep, the ship cut its way, homeward bound.

"The first person who came into that little room of ours, on our arrival home, was your father. His entrance broke the stagnant current of undefined existence. How surprised I was to find that I loved him still. In his arms he bore me from my berth, but with all his goodness and love, he could not lift with me, my former self. I left my youth behind me, forever more. Only one request I made, and that was, to hide me and my secret. Then he travelled with me; how he indulged every whim of my diseased mind, and at last, when I had learned by habit to live under things as they were, he took me to Madame Stuart. The old lady knew nothing of my having been to her son until I appeared before her. She heard the truth from your father; after that the subject was never mentioned between us. She took me to her heart and said nothing but death should part us.

"As I now remember it, for three long years there was no alleviation of this pain in my heart and my head. Even words, seemingly harmless in themselves, hurt me, so intense was the soreness of my spirit, and there was a fearful dragging about of my person, as though it was a dead body. In summer I walked about with Madame Stuart, or rode around the country as you and I do now, or busied myself with household duties, or culled flowers with little Peter. But during that time I never read a volume of any kind, not even the Bible, with the exception of Christ's sermon on the mount; that I read each day, and always with interest. I wondered I had never seen its wisdom and beauty with clearness before. Thus isolated, face

to face with Him, in that wonderful, all-sufficient exposition of truth, my soul stooped down meekly, accepted the burden He thus showed me how to bear, and proffered strength through which I could stand up under it, and thus each day found me at its close, conscious of the shortening measure to the end of all necessity of trial.

"I speak of this person, Sallie dear, as though it was not *this* I, because she really is not. It was pitiful, so *young*, so hopeful, so full of the capacity for social enjoyment. A shadow, better felt than described, had gathered like a spring mist over the sunlight, and the warm days gave out a chill, and the sick heart, like a tired child, found its old haunts upon the hill-side, or the green turf, disturbed forever more. Then it was that He showed me the 'Ladder' resting its lower rounds upon the earth, but piercing with its top that citadel within which is a state of *security* from all mistakes or misapprehension.

"Years after what I have told you, when old memories pressed back upon me, and my soul amidst the ghosts of other days became 'exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' I used to rush out with sudden impulse beneath the stars, or turn my feet to the woods, among the old trees that stand firm and brave amidst so many storms and chilling winds, and with an over-weening hunger for sympathy not to be found, I told my thoughts in a whisper so gentle, even echo gave no answer back! Sometimes seated on the rocks, gray with age, watching the going down of the sun, or the uprising of the moon, or the evening star with its warm glowing light, or, turning me to the colder winds of a different point in the heavens, gazed at

cheerless Mars, till I have buried my face in my hands, and sent up from a breaking heart the cry, 'God comfort me for I am very desolate!' Sallie dear, whatever comes to you, remember you can never find a condition more entirely beyond the reach of human sympathy. Then will come, noiselessly, the 'Dew of Mount Hermon'."

"But, Aunt Mary, is there nothing to be done? are you willing to die without seeing him?"

"I am willing to leave all thought about it, in better hands than mine; resistance to the Divine Providence, has died in my heart; his regeneration and mine are best continued by this temporary separation. Outwardly I see much that we are all spared by his not being permitted to return; and indeed I think the power of sorrow has exhausted itself, is no longer mine!"

"Sorrow!" said Cousin Sallie, "it is all sorrow, and nothing else at all, from the beginning to the end, either past, present, or to come; there is no green thing, except that dear boy, and for my part, I don't feel reconciled. It is a case of wholesale ill-usage throughout, in which the wrong is all on one side, and the suffering all on the other. Sorrow, to be sure! the word has a meaning to me it never had before."

"Yes, it has a meaning, and I have read it, Cousin Sallie, conned it by heart; but sorrow is mortal, when it arises from a condition outside ourselves; it belongs to a purely *natural state* of mind, and passes away with it, when its work is done. To-day, I have for your sake stirred the fallen leaves of the past,—but they are dried and withered. To be sure, in doing this, I have opened here and there, to a fresh and green blade of

grass; and above it, where the boughs swing bare and lifeless, buds are resting till their fulness of time; but these"—and she scooped her hands together as though they were full—"are *dead!* you see! dead! They were fresh once; only half grown! There came a frost, out of the ordinary time of frosts—earlier, and they *died!* It seems unnatural, but it is only a *seeming*. God's time is the best time always; and that is why these young buds of hope, these blossoms of sweet odor are nought now—withered—dead! I throw them to the ground from whence they really sprung!"

"Shall I ever tread such a way?" asked Sallie.

"Not this way probably, but *your* way, the one best fitted for your nature, and to bring you at last to the same stand-point."

"Then I must take up Peter's query, and say I do not see the justness or goodness in making us at all."

"It is not time for you to see. Light comes to the honest questioner, as the gradual dawn of a new day. Your creation previous to your birth, was an unconscious struggle and development; to your memory it is lost, but not at all lost in its results. So, this present condition of out-growth, will, when it is completed and evolved, be remembered, if remembered at all, without pain; for the labor, toil, and strife which create pain, will be over. Now, on the threshold of this natural life to you, it seems, and is, the most important of existence, indeed, the *whole* of life as it comes to your consciousness, for, whatever you hold as actual of the heavens, is but the reflex image of that which now makes up your true life in the body. As you advance, you will find that every emotion of pleasure, in itself, good and orderly though it be, will

grow best, by the final loosening and removal of its purely natural covering. Sallie, dear, it comes of pain, simply because our life is so much in the outward. Like vested estates we live in, and believe ourselves to have inalienable possession of the surroundings to which we are born, and to which we cling. For a long time we do not see, or live for that which these outer things represent; and thus, of course, do not co-operate in the work which is being done for us."

"That reminds me of Mazoni," said Sallie.

"Yes, dear, Mazoni and your father; how glad will be our meeting; they came to the development of the truest manhood. I always think of them as more really *living*, than when they were in my presence."

"But tell me some more of your own experiences; did you never hear from your husband?"

"Your father received letters; the woman told the truth, — but not all, — so your father said, and where I am powerless *to do*, to act, I am slow to question; it is but idle and frivolous. Your father would have told me if there had been any thing best for me to know. It is but justice to Col. Stuart to say he believed her dead. This unfortunate marriage occurred when he was young, and supposing it broken by death; indeed, so entirely had he outgrown it — well dear, it is not worthwhile to say anything more about it. Perhaps you and Peter may see him some time; there can be no harm, or impropriety in it after I am gone. I have no fear but that he will be kind to this woman. He would not do himself or me the wrong of unfaithfulness in a duty; for in the most thorough performance of our work, or in the most patient acceptance of temporary waiting, we soonest and surest reach the pathway where we

shall again find ourselves side by side. None of these disorders of a disorderly state of society, or, to speak personally, of mind and heart, can effect more than temporally our union. What God hath joined together, man can, and does put asunder for the term, be it longer or shorter, in which the natural rules the spiritual; but once beyond the jurisdiction, not of man's power, but of our own hereditary or voluntary evils, and we find ourselves face to face before a tribunal which can sift the hereditary tendencies from the actual love of, and voluntary appropriation of, the same, we shall have burst our 'swaddling band,' and jumped forever free from seemings, shams, and uncertainties.

"There is truly nothing to fear but our own *evils*. Let us work with a ready purpose towards our redemption from the love of self and love of the world, seeking to restore within ourselves that true heaven which is measured by the charity which truly loves God and the neighbor."

For a moment Cousin Sallie's memory led her captive. Her thoughts were reaching forth towards Max Wortemberg. To her, he seemed far away; but she felt a new glow of life and hope for the work which lay before her. Mrs. Stuart seemed to reply to her thought.

"Many persons, especially women who have no prominent wealth or beauty or special charm of manner, and who thus live single, allow themselves to become isolated from the thought, even, of true companionship. Now, this is not the best kind of development. Your husband, Cousin Sallie, is somewhere in existence, working his way, however slowly, towards you. Do not commit the debasing crime of

legalized prostitution, for the sake of a home and temporary companionship. Be faithful to that principle which lies entirely secure from, and superior to all contingencies; be true to that relation inevitable to yourself and *him*. His you are in reserve, though your eyes never behold him in this life, or beholding him, some obstacle, over which you have no control, and with which you *sin* to interfere, stands evermore between you. Do not doubt, or question, or hurry; now and then there will come, as an encouragement, some clear glimpse into the motive power of the wondrous, minute, and all-pervading divine agency. Do not touch that machinery upon which hang eternal purposes; not even with the least of your fingers. Behold, *God* creates the new heavens, and the new earth, not men."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

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"CUI BONO? — faithless words;  
It is enough for thee,  
To know that toil expands  
Thy weak capacity.

"What good wouldst thou desire?  
Thou couldst but pause, at best,  
And fold thine arms, and find  
Fulfilment only rest.

"Cui bono? — feel thy frame  
Grow strong with every hour;  
That slow and progressive force,  
That sure and conscious power.

"Feel every pulse enlarge,  
Each sense more exquisite,  
And thought lift clearer eyes,  
To meet a purer light."

## SALLIE'S WORK.

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WHEN Cousin Sallie again returned to her chamber it was with a sense of exhaustion, as though the mental and emotional effort of a month had been crowded into one afternoon. Well for her it was, that every hour must now be given to children, books, and the general oversight of her establishment. This healthful play of the muscles, this constant attrition of mental surface power, did not annul all heart-thought. No, she put the exciting history she had learned, into her work-basket as one does a difficult piece of embroidery, a dissected map, or solitaire board, employing, and expecting to employ odd moments upon it, until she could arrive at some result satisfactory to herself at least.

Another occupation of leisure moments, was to pore over maps. A most accurate survey she certainly made of the North American coast, and over it often seemed lost in thought. Her drawing was still the large map of the United States. The associations clustering around it, naturally enough made it a pet map; over it she delighted to work, while her active imagination wove the delicate pencil-marks into the theories of her future plans.

Almost always, little Peter was at her side, making wise, often sad remarks; suggestive, not so much of precocious, or remarkable mental development, as of

the peculiar habit of thought growing from his education, isolated entirely from children, and under the instruction of women. To her he was becoming a necessity of her happiness, even as she was to him, a guardian, protector, and teacher. His ingenuousness, his sensitive perception of love and kindness, his taste for the beautiful, but, above all, the inherent religious tone of his character; how much he really was to her, how truly *he* the teacher and she the taught! She learned at least to know the busy fingers of a child, the patter of young feet, the bubbling cadences from a child's lips: it is as though you took the carpet from the floor of the common sitting-room, when they are not.

Now, Peter pointed Cousin Sallie's pencils, now begged the favor of rubbing out the useless marks, now he chose the colors for the states and territories. Often she watched with sad and superstitious awe, his fingers, as they travelled over the map, resting upon the words "Fort Leary." To her it seemed as though *there* oftener than anywhere else his hand stayed its course; would *he* ever know the history finding its sequel there? One day she said, —

"What are you going to do when you are a man?"

"Go and teach the people, Cousin Sallie."

"Ah, is that your idea, or your mother's?"

"Hers, my mother's. She does the thinking for me; when I am old I will think for her I suppose."

"Well, very good; point out the place where you will like to go, and let me see how near it comes to my plans for you."

"Plans? my mother says we must not really plan, but follow God's lead —"

"Yes, yes; a nice distinction, worthy of your good mother, and one I hope you and I shall be guided by as really as she has all her life; but if you point out a certain course, unselfishly, in which you see an honorable duty to perform, is not that following His lead?"

Peter without answering, lifted up his arm, dropping his fingers down towards the map, over the surface of which his blue eyes gazed seriously. At last he slowly brought his finger down upon a far-off portion of the country, and the eyes turned to Sallie's face for approval.

"That is among the Indians, Peter; could you live *there*?"

"Why, yes, with you and mother and Margaret."

Peter's world was small, but entire and sufficient to him.

"What could you do there?"

"Preach the Bible to them, Cousin Sallie; that is what I want to do when I am a man if it is God's will. It says, 'go into all the world, and preach the gospel.' I like Indians; do you think it was right to move these tribes so far from home? I can tell them of a great many people who have had no *homes*, from the time when Israel dwelt in the wilderness, to the Lord who did not know where to lay his head. Yes, it is a pretty-looking country."

Sallie was *measuring* with her eyes the distance to Fort Leary, but she replied, —

"It is your history lesson that has stirred up your sympathy for the Indians."

"No, not at first, it was Margaret. She knows all about red men, and she gave me a book called 'Wort's Letters,' she found it in the old chest of drawers, he



did not think the Indians were very well used by our government, neither does Margaret."

"But, Peter, that may all be very true, and you not be able to make it a subject of commiseration with these tribes. They don't love home as you or I do, they love to roam, and more uninteresting creatures can not be found, I suppose, than these wild men of the West, don't you want to choose again? Come, shut your eyes and point."

"No, no, I will leave it as mother told me to, till the time comes."

Thus, in harmony with each other, the residents of Cranston House, now numbering ten, passed the next few years in a state of comparative freedom from incident or change, save what naturally comes with the changing seasons to all families.

Sallie's mind and time were so filled with constant occupation, that she often looked with wonder at the amount she accomplished, and if the care really was too much for her, she herself being sometimes conscious of it, time could never have passed more rapidly to any one, or leave more pleasant impressions as it passed. An occasional visit from Paul startled them all with an undefined sense of insecurity, and occasionally he stirred the antagonism of Sallie and little Peter till they were frightened at their own impetuosity. Peter could be ruled by a look from his mother, but Cousin Sallie's clear head, and high sense of justice, long ago tested by the knowledge of what he had done, gave an impetuosity to her replies not always justified by the subject under discussion.

Upon the whole, however, she grew in grace, wisdom, and beauty; her cosmetics were of an infallible

kind, and the fresh look of honest, earnest thought, and affectionate interest from her eyes, her smiling mouth, the elastic step, to which love for others lent the spur, presented her, with the added age of a few years, more beautiful, more elegant, than when she was first introduced to the reader.

Sallie was not only the teacher of the boys, but their companion at play. Good at throwing ball, hunting hens' nests, or even turning Margaret's old wheels on rainy days, or, in the long walks when the days were fine, and study—the study of books—seemed irksome. Some of their pleasantest rambles were to see Captain Barlow, Peter's friend, better known to the country people as "Old Man Barlow," and who, much to Sallie's surprise, turned out to be her companion in the coach, when they introduce themselves to each other through the agency of a shower and the precautionary movement made by Sallie to save her bonnet.

A man of history is Captain Barlow, as really as Cromwell, and a greater man, in that he had a chivalrous respect for the "powers that be." In every memory, where his name had at any time been enrolled, he made his mark, and to Peter and his companions, as well as Cousin Sallie, he became an object of great interest. Of ordinary size, a serious, thoughtful face, singular configuration of head, crowned with stiff, close-cut, iron gray hair, Captain Barlow gave the impression at once that he was a descendant of the Pilgrims, and kept in his heart and life the earnest, stern, Puritan faith of his fathers.

In battle he had stood without flinching, received honorable praise and promotion from his general without the least flutter of vanity, held the place of warrior

conscientiously, believed in resistance to wrong, and asked no reward for fighting his country's battles.

At the close of a hard week's study, no compensation, or reward of merit, could equal the promise of a visit to this old man, when given by Sallie to her pupils. That class — Sallie's pupils, — struggling then for the preparatory honors to entering Harvard, now entering, with a zeal she helped to stimulate, the arena of the the different professions, will always remember Old Man Barlow, his one ruddy, healthful, laughing daughter, and his fine sons — built with the weight and color almost of bronze, and the tenacious endurance of the sturdy oak.

These were prominent among a host of pleasant memories, connected with their years of study at Cranston House. Sallie threw the whole force of her character into the circle of this new kind of home duties. She considered their amusement of as much moment as their food. She made parties for them, went to concerts with them, and overcame her own repugnance to general society enough to secure and accept, for their sake, invitations to parties in the city, and among families of their own class in the neighborhood. To show how pleasant and healthful the tone of her own mind was, while her labors were varied, and her cares many, an extract or two may be here copied from a letter to Madame Mazoni.

"Tuesday I accepted an invitation to a party, I and the young gentlemen, including Peter. It was at my mother's, and consisted mostly of children, and it is so long since I ventured into crowds (never since my father's death), that I believe I was a greater curiosity

to most of the party-going people than any wild bird would have been. It surprised me to see how beautiful everybody looked; and the dancing, — how charmingly children do dance! By the way, quite absorbed in looking at them, I stepped forward, the better to secure a good view, for the rooms were crowded, when through the pier-glass, I caught a glimpse of your favorite, Mr. Hale, looking at me, instead of the dancers. Very bad taste, that; don't you think so? In the crowd, I had not noticed him before, and so, I quietly drew back behind the folding-doors, and settled down comfortably in an easy chair. In the swaying of the multitude, I soon heard his voice close by me, saying, 'This chair by you seems ready for me; shall I take it?' It was amusing — his manner; in a little while such a manner would have convinced me of the *truth of a fallacy*; namely, that I *was* a person of *importance*. It really seemed very pleasant, his delicate, sentimental praise; I did not think at all whither it led, till looking up, I saw Uncle Paul opposite. There was a suppressed twinkle in his eyes, as Mr. Hale gave me his arm to go down to supper. I fancied he said to my mother afterwards, 'that would not be a bad arrangement!' Thought overleaps time, you know, and my conclusions are as rapid, as they are impatient of delay — so, as soon as everybody in the supper-room was deep in the destruction of creature comforts, I gave a hint to Peter, who telegraphed to his mates, when we stole off to the dressing-room, hooded and cloaked in a hurry, and as soon as horses could bring us, we were seated round our own bright fire, where as a well-earned reward to the boys for their obedience to my somewhat unreasonable request; Margaret set out

a supper of her own getting up, which they said was much the best, because they were not crowded. Ah, the appetite of a boy! it has character, and sanctifies any food, given without grudging! and I pity anybody who does not love boys; they lose half the pleasure and freshness of life!

"Once in my own bed, I let my mind range over the ins and outs of what my quick sight saw in the future. Tired, not so strong as formerly, by nature averse to care, not particularly beautiful, most twenty-five, make up one side of the case. 'How can you hesitate?' says worldly prudence. Up springs a little earnest spirit in my heart, saying, 'You dare not do it; it would be the basest perjury;' and my whole being responds yea! Thus settling the matter, running over in my mind meanwhile, a list of groceries to be sent for in the morning, a bill at the bookstore to be paid, I go to sleep. Get up bright and early next morning, quite convinced that the place I fill, cannot be vacated,—thankful that my duty lies so near me.

"At ten o'clock, I am summoned from school by Margaret, to see a gentleman in the parlor. With an absent, listless air, I entered the door, expecting to see a stranger, as no name was given. There stood Mr. Hale, looking at my father's portrait. He turned round as I entered, and held out his hand. I gave mine; he retained it and looked at me; it seemed for a moment as though my father's eyes looked out through his, so benignant was his gaze. I withdrew my hand and sat down in Aunt Mary's little rocking-chair. Then, standing by me, he told his errand. I knew it before he spoke a word. No woman, reported to be rich, fails of receiving many earnest applications for her hand. But

this time, I *knew* it was no mercenary motive which drew Mr. Hale to me. The conversation was an honor to his head, and his heart; and how I wished that I could love him. But, dear Madame Mazoni, I did not realize before how utterly impossible it was; there was not a particle of emotional power mine to give; it had been all transferred! 'Where?' you will ask. Well sometime I will explain, not now. I did not take this view of myself before; it frightens me. Well, indeed, one must keep *true* to one's self; I cannot give my hand without my love. Till he asked this question, I thought I liked him very much. But I do now wish he was some kind of a relation to me. He promised to remain my friend, and begged me to forget that he ever coveted more. His chin quivered as he said it, and I would in very sympathy for him, have torn my heart from all other tenacious clinging, and given it to him gladly, if it had been in my power. Ah! now I begin to get a glimpse of Annette's state when she turned and gave herself to John. But then, she and I are so different. Give my love to her."

## CHAPTER XIX.

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"WHEN, on the fragrant sandal-tree,  
The woodman's axe descends,  
And she who bloomed so beauteously,  
Beneath the keen stroke bends,  
Even on the edge that wrought her death,  
Dying, she breathes her sweetest breath,  
As if to token in her fall,  
Peace to her foes, and love to all.  
How hardly *man* this lesson learns,  
To *smile*, and *bless* the hand that *spurns*,  
To see the blow, to *feel* the pain,  
But render only love again."

## THE SUMMONS.

---

PETER was seventeen when his mother began to slip back again into the feebleness and cough, with which she was first introduced to the notice of the reader.

It was spring. At first, to the anxious inquirer, Mrs. Stuart said it was the weather; then, that it was the winter's long confinement from the out-door air; and, sometimes, with playful gentleness, that it was old age and indolence, coming, hand in hand, to take her work from her.

Upon Sallie's clear mind, it dawned with the same fearful force as before, but not as then, brightened with the hope of a short reprieve. No: it struck home to loving, affectionate Cousin Sallie, as inevitable. She *must* prepare to let her go! Yet how *she* could give her up, was not so much the question stirring her generous heart, as how should she break the blow to Peter.

Her first entrance into practical life, had turned the the balance of her mind as much on the extreme, in that direction, as her earlier existence had swayed it in the unreal land of dreams. Now, with the equalization of years, and the wholesome influence of such a mind as Mrs. Stuart's always acting upon hers, she had found the true mean, between these two conditions of mind, and where they properly meet. Without her impetuous outbreaks of expression, Sallie, as a com-

panion, would have been tame,—so well balanced was the understanding and the will. Her *life*, taken as a whole, spoke home to the heart of Mrs. Stuart, and indeed to all who knew her, as a life formed on the basis of love to the Lord and love to her neighbor. With her lips she often fought at things as they were; in short, very original sentences, in which were combined much good humor, a tinge of bitterness, some sarcasm, and a very clear perception of right and justice. But, if her tongue could take sides with the injured, if she dared be brave against the strong, and for the weak, it was only with the word of her mouth; in her daily life her acts were like the sunshine, poured upon *all alike*.

Now with Aunt Mary growing thin and failing in strength, it seemed clear that the school must be given up. Her first class were ready for college; so was Peter, but he did not incline to go; she was glad of it, though she left him to choose. When the spring vacation came, she and her pupils parted company.

The household settled back again into the routine of years before. Peter, now a young man, took to business and study. Cranston Place looks vastly better to-day for the patient industry of his minority. Aunt Mary and Sallie were out of doors a great deal with him, busy with the spring preparations for the farm, and Jonas, Captain Barlow's youngest son, held the plough while Peter led the horse, but not the Duke. No, at this time the Duke proved the only rebel in the establishment. Attached to a plough he would not move, only with his fore feet high in the air; or to a lumber wagon, he would spring clear from it at a bound, and then stand with head erect and nostrils

distended, ready to make good his retreat if put to such a use again. Margaret said it was as good as putting marsh mud with superfine flour, to tie the Duke and a plough together. As usual, her course of action upon the occasion was not talked up; she went away for a night, and when in the early morning she came into the avenue it was mounted upon a dirty-brown, short, stout-legged pony, which she had hunted up among the farmers of the district, and which she named "Cheene" in honor of an Indian pony she used to ride when a child.

The Duke still proved himself as good as a younger creature, for all purposes of pleasure riding; and as Cousin Sallie gave the most of her thought and plans to but one idea,—the comfort of Mrs. Stuart,—every pleasant morning, saw them in that most cozy and domestic of all vehicles, the one horse chaise; extending their rambles into the wild by-paths, where the quiet suits so well the tightly strung nerves of the invalid. It will be impossible to transfer upon paper the charm of manner, the touching picture of *herself*—so graphic an illustration of the subject of her discourse—with which Mrs. Stuart dropped truths rich as "honey from the honeycomb," thus helping her faithful and most devoted young relative, to lay up subjects for future thought and use.

Turning towards home one day, she pointed along to the venerable stone wall, lining the Cranston domain, and said,—

"Don't suffer this to be taken away; it belongs to the old times of the family, I have seen your father and mine sit here upon it after a pleasant walk, until the sun went down, and in warm summer evenings, talking even

into the night. I love these old landmarks, they have as many pleasant associations as an old road. There is safety in keeping to the paths well worn by the feet of those who had the wisdom of much experience. Too great desire for change seems to me something like a Goth and Vandal invasion, making, in its untrimmed rudeness, a clean sweep, not only of the 'oxen and sheep,' but of the beautiful 'temple' also. Build new walls, Sallie, upon the waste places, but never lose your love for the work of those who preceded you; good of their kind, let them meet with no resisting force, except time, and the rough handling of the weather.

"Society is in a fever heat. The material for overturn and change, is so multiplied, that a species of insane dissipation has taken the place of a perhaps too slow process of previous thought and action. I am looking at it now, more in reference to the race, than the earth upon which men expend so great an amount of energy. Whether they run too fast or too slow, society is in a transition state, and for it I have the fullest hope and faith.

"We have but to look into our own life to believe that each year brings us to its end different creatures from what it found us. Hereafter, Cousin Sallie, when knowing more of the evil there is in the world, you feel disheartened, it will be well for you to take the family of man in the aggregate; as one grand man, we can always get a better view of the whole; and then, like the sickness of one person, we take courage in the hope of good results, from proper medicine and nursing. I look into myself, and find that certain conditions bring into life and activity certain defects; here

then, is a duty so near, so palpable, I must work and overcome; the evil is conquered. Meanwhile circumstances change about me, when lo! a new conflict arises with the new condition of things! I have slain the 'Hivite,' must I not also the 'Hittite?'

"Thus, step by step, we are led in the regeneration. If we are discouraged, there cometh the whisper of blessing upon those who overcome. If impatient with the tardy progress of those on the same march, there ringeth out, too clearly to be misunderstood, the words, 'These forty years have I not led thee, and proved thee in the wilderness.' Erring in my own progress, do I not hope, nay, rest in the belief that the 'recording angel as he hands it in, will drop a tear upon it, and blot it out forever?' and shall I be so unmindful of the mighty struggle, between right and wrong, in the hearts of others, as not to hope for them also, even though they combat less bravely than I.

"We all start upon the race of life with our faces towards the earth. It is a state which has its uses, and in it we are permitted to rest for a period; but being simply a natural condition, it must of necessity come to an end. Through much that is hard to bear, that seems cruel at the time, we suffer ourselves to be lifted. Permanently, the eye that looks down or along the verge of its own level, finds no rest; it turns with heart-hunger at last, to the 'hills from whence cometh our strength.' Then only are its wants really met."

"Well, Aunt Mary, it certainly seems to me as though circumstances are fearfully mighty, ruling our outer life in a great measure, like a hard, iron-shod destiny, stepping on, whether we will or no. Look at me, lifted by its shifting, whirling, out-going force, like

a straw before the wind; fairly driven hither and yon, without power of successful resistance, until I find myself caught in some eddy, where, on taking breath, and looking about to measure the condition of things, I find every landmark before familiar, even my own basis of thought, new and strange."

"You make a very common mistake, that of being filled with awe, if not terror, by the immense machinery of circumstances. 'Dost thou not remember, Sallie, that the great tossing waves, which turn the ship withersoever they will, are but as a drop of that fathomless sea, which He, who calls us children, holds as securely as in the hollow of the hand?' Personally, there is but one view on which you are to act; and that is, you are to work only with those circumstances thrown immediately around you, and failing the power to do that, you are to wait. Meanwhile do not trouble yourself with *results*. To say that destiny is iron-shod, is a cold way of expressing any form of life. There is another ground on which my own feet rest without fear of sinking. A trust in the Divine Providence, so minute, that the words, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without permission' are filled to overflowing with life and beauty.

"How glad I am to get back home; we rode too far, or else my strength is slipping away more rapidly than I thought. Let me say a word more, dear Sallie; whatever is to be the result of my sickness you are not responsible for it. Do not feel too anxious; it will be better for us to speak freely about it; our talking will not affect the final result. This only, and at all times, we are sure of, that our greatest good will be ever in view, in all the appointments of our life."

In the afternoon, when the dew, night's tears, had been wiped away from the eyes of nature's children,—the grass and the flowers,—another kind of out-of-door recreation was found for the invalid; and thus, in pleasant companionship, time was beguiled of its many weary pains, its certain approach to that separation from which there could be no evasion. Between Mrs. Stuart and Cousin Sallie, there was an entire understanding. Margaret needed no note of warning; but Peter, ah! neither of them could shade his young, hopeful face, growing ruddy with out-door exercise, and lighted with large and generous purposes, of good intentions towards these, his friends. Had not his mother always been an invalid? This he knew so well, and had known so long, that it gave him no anxiety; on the contrary, it gave him a certain kind of pleasure, the prospective satisfaction of making up in himself for all she had otherwise lost. In the afternoon she followed him along the fields; she rested, without expressing a sense of fatigue, upon the rocks pushing up here and there among the grass, and talked so pleasantly, that, like the pleasant ripple of the creek, it had the charm of music to the listener. And though always there run along through every sentiment of her mind, an undertone that swept the cords of life with a moan, her listeners were too young, too full of sympathy with nature in her spring decorations and hopes, always to notice whither these strains tended. But there came a night when Sallie waited in vain for the usual turning of Aunt Mary's feet towards the house, and drawing her arm about her waist, she said,—

"The sun says it is time for invalids to be housed."

With sudden energy the fair, frail woman turned her



large, earnest eyes upon both her companions, then up towards the beauteous sky, then to the orchard through which her way led, and replied, —

“Not quite yet. Let me wait a moment among the orchard trees, standing in bridal attire. They are so rich in new charms, I can almost believe they are conscious of their life and beauty; that they, as well as we, rejoice in Him who gave them a being. I look from them up to the stars and the moon, and I say to myself, ‘you are very kind to come always with an unchanged aspect, to gladden us down here; but *you* never know disaster, or loss; as you are now, so were you when I first saw you, therefore you cannot sympathize with me, as does this excellent old apple tree, from which the rough winds, or the pruner’s knife have torn its limbs in every year of its life; and now a stroke from on high, the unerring shaft of the lightning has riven, from its topmost bough to the hidden roots.”

She drew herself away from Sallie, and placed her arms around the old trunk, and turning again to Sallie continued —

“Your ‘circumstances,’ over which you quarrel, — look at this, and learn. From under a pressure of what you call ‘frightful circumstances,’ see how superior life is to them; from within this rough and broken bark, warmth and sap gushes up, and forth in sheltering leaves and branches with buds of beauty and promise. Learn a lesson, my children. A sad thing it is, not to trust each other entirely, but to distrust God is wholly disastrous. Remember this when I am gone, and thrust out of your thoughts any problem of life, or humanity, which builds a wall between you and your entire trust. ‘He that believeth is indeed saved;’

saved not only from his own evils, but from despair over the evils of others.”

“But Uncle Paul; you never tell me any thing about him, and he is a great puzzle to me.”

“A petted child in his youth, Cousin Sallie, a disappointed man, he has not sworn fealty to evil; he does not really love it; there is *much* he would like to *forget*. It is a violence of the heart, the state in which he lives. *We* see only the facts; what the force of temptation, how often resisted, or how much was actually overcome, it is not ours to analyze, or measure. Wise words were those, ‘Judge not,’ so far as our opinions upon the motives of others are formed. Sooner or later, every earnest, progressive soul will, of itself, without the aid of others, learn the true measure of its own *weakness*; will find forced home to itself, the conviction of how, other things being equal, the right condition and the desire meeting at the unguarded moment when the Watchman of right-doing was off duty, or slumbering at his post, the escape from actual and irretrievable wrong would have been almost miraculous. In reference to Uncle Paul, what can I say, to relieve your mind? or perhaps I have already admitted too much. I really was thinking of the race *man*, rather than of him.

“For years I have endeavored not to assume the responsibility of other minds; once, at your age, (I smile now at my young conceit) I felt bound to defend and excuse all my friends or relatives, as though they were not enough in themselves to touch the bottom and stem a current, never so deep. Now, it seems vastly better to be ready to give sympathy, — either for the griefs of others, or their sins; —

both are but different forms of soul-sickness, and oh it is so much pleasanter to look at the *good* when we scan the characters of others,—the succeeding self quiet is ample compensation, even at the expense of being called stupid, and wanting in discernment.

“Men, roughing it with the world, assume a hardness or rather, cover over emotion, like this tree, with a coarse bark, which by no means prevents the sap of kind feeling from its natural flow; it only gives protection to it. With goodly aim, strike into the heart of that hard and often disagreeable animal, man, and you shall see how the right occasion will find the right response;—and woman, too, wheeled around in a certain routine of fashion and petty doings, feverish and restive, with the earth heat of multiplied activity, expending her surplus of free action, in building theories, which, like the cobhouses of children, topple over with the first rap of the hammer of applicability on their foundation;—is it strange so many of us shrivel and deteriorate, or, like good lemonade left too long untasted, become sour? Better wear the shoe of iron you speak so often of, than settle into the soft meadows, where damp and mildew eat away the heart. Let us take a broader view, and get away from personality. In every heart there is a ‘Holy of Holies,’ wherein are stored up ‘Goods and Truths,’ protected by the Lord from desecration, and, like a little leaven, to work change in the whole moral being, in a good and right time. Harsh invective, and cruel censure, never yet prepared the way for the descent of these Truths into the actual life. On the contrary, the door of good intention is oftenest opened, and a new path entered upon, by the assurance of others that we are equal

to it, and it is expected of us. An orderly home, wherein all the family relations are complete, gives the best possible growth of character. Self-love has broken up these relations as interfering with its ends, and the larger portion of us are thrown off from the true way of life; thus, many spirits are found in paths you and I cannot understand, because with those conditions we have no natural taste. We have only to wait for that bright morning, when lives now broken into fragments will be ready for us and all the world to inspect. Till then, let us trust, where we can’t unravel. What a mark against us, that we cannot bear the least slight or neglect from those who have shown us years of kindness, or receive in the spirit of generous friendship, a *rebuke*, sanctified from the hand of the bestower by years of faithful love, not to say much self-sacrifice for our sake. Or an ungenerous remark, spoken, perhaps superinduced by other exciting causes, and repented of as soon as uttered, will often open a breach between parties who have dwelt pleasantly together for years. My dear children have yet to learn, how rough handling comes quite as often from a loving heart, as from an open enemy.”

The setting sun shone in upon the group, and lighted each face, as though the truths uttered by one of them, had kindled a new grace and beauty in each soul;—they looked almost transfigured. She, the most remarkable one of the group, still clung to the tree, while her eyes clear, blue, out through which her soul seemed gazing, was inspired with new strength, and the eloquence of words and gestures, gushing forth from a loving heart, had the life and force which finds its only springs in the death of human expectations.

The color flitted in her cheeks, a snowy whiteness gave a celestial beauty to her whole face, and was so widely unlike death paleness, that neither Peter nor Sallie thought of it as at all indicative of sudden exhaustion; to them she seemed so beautiful, so full of life-giving power, that they lived by it. While she, living so at one with the Divine, knew that the hour was near and her time short.

She drew an arm of each around her, and with unusual evidence of weariness, turned towards the house; her limbs soon bent beneath her weight, and her arms hung heavily, long before she reached it. They made a chair of their clasped hands, and thus she finished her last airing in the grounds of the old ancestral home.

The voice sank to a whisper, in which she asked to be taken to the old oak parlor, where, from its size and dampness, there was almost always a little fire upon the hearth. There, upon a sofa she lay until her usual hour for retirement, with her hands clasped and an earnest, wide-awake gaze about the room, with which she had been familiar from her birth,—at the old furniture clustering, with a whole life's associations,—at the family portraits upon the walls,—and often at the two living pictures of a later generation, in the presence of whose love and kindness her life was ebbing out.

Margaret, in discontent with the fire, which, the better to relieve her strong conviction that the end was near, she found relief in changing and fixing, kept strict watch over the fair creature, who lay patiently waiting the change *she knew* was coming, coming, 'but not so very near,' she whispered.

"Light the candles, Margaret, make the room look

like home, by bringing in the old cheerfulness. When the hands of the old clock point at nine, take me up stairs, please. I am very weak — tired, I think it is — I talk too much; woman's weakness you know; but I have much to say, and time hastens! Am I too heavy for you? Many's the time, Margaret, that you have carried me, borne my burdens, — and well I know you will be sorry to give up the privilege, because you are one of my best friends, faithfulness itself, Margaret — God bless you!" She reached up her hands and drew them caressingly over the old, familiar face, — toyed with the folds of her brilliant turban, then took the unresisting hands in her own, and said,

"I always thought, Margy, dear, I owned by right of inheritance, a share in this tight-built, little skipper; some there were who left me, stranded! They floated out with the tide! — I cannot see even their receding keel! the incoming waves covered the track that marked their course. Margy, my dear, sit closer. You always thought you were ugly to look upon; but you are very beautiful to me! You know that little brown bug, out over the spring night, or the autumn darkness; when the nights are darkest, Margy, darkest! remember, spreads its wings close to the ground, where the crushed and fallen lay, — emitting from under them a tiny light, saying as plain as words can speak, — 'I'm close by, take heart, I shall not leave you, — shall not rise till you do.' Such has been your faithful service to me and a good account I can report to your old mistress, my dear sainted mother. You were my sheet anchor when my youth was lost in that ocean home! — never forget that, Margy, never think you are of no importance in life — your use to me has been

beyond measure! And when you think of the fearful death, which there came to me, remember also, that no *good* dies; — but the angels sit and watch by it, till it rise again!

"Come, my darling boy — my precious young elm-tree! read the evening service and then she will take me to my own room."

The young voice repeated with modest earnestness the words of comfort; Mrs. Stuart's eyes were closed, her thin fingers clasped across her breast; she broke the silence in a whisper, —

"The prayers for the absent and for the sick, my son."

Peter's voice trembled, but he repeated these petitions without faltering. Margaret had sunk down upon her knees, by the side of her dear mistress. Sallie sat immovable by the table, with that earnest out-look from her eyes, — seeming to over-reach the present, and take in the future with the grasp of a martyr! Again the whisper came.

"Darling! the prayers for the dying!"

Peter gave a sudden start, looked up! Conviction struck home irresistibly! — the boy threw the prayer-book he loved so much upon the cushion of the window seat, and with a bound through the window, landed upon the lawn beneath! Softly, he closed that window, as though his own great pain could not make him forget the invalid's comfort — and was gone!

"No, no, do not follow him; he will have better help than we can give — it is as I thought, how should the young creature realize my near departure, and he so full of plans for our future comfort? I give him to you Cousin Sallie, tell him how like idolatry my love

for him has been, and that I did appreciate, I did see the whole of what he purposed to accomplish for my sake. Leave him to himself now; when he returns let him come to my chamber. Now, Margy, dear, take your baby up-stairs, — I always loved those little rides in your arms. Slowly, Margaret. The old hall, with its broad easy stairs, I love it; how many faces there were of us, once thronging its open doors! Let me put my hand along the bannister where they have all pressed theirs so often; we *slid* down it in our childhood, fearless of consequences, lavish of the strength so abundant. At last, we climb wearily, and with a ready trust to the good offices of some friend, faithful as our Margaret, but gladly, too, for the atmosphere of safety and repose, fills the chambers of an honorable ancestral *home*. How good the bed feels and the pillow; — Sallie, dear, you have a peculiar faculty of fitting it to my head and neck; both of my faithful attendants, must go to bed, you will not be called I think; there must be days of pain, and nights of weary watching, ere the 'bridegroom cometh.' You must save your strength till it is more needed."

And her eyes followed the active movements of Cousin Sallie, who, all the while, not daring to trust herself to speak, was arranging with an eye to the artistic tastes of her aunt, every article in the room — folding the discarded wardrobe, and at the same time, sending her mind forth, to take one of its own peculiar, broad out-looks, at the past, the present, and the future.

There are some minds who are never conscious of progress, either intellectually or morally; whose way, nevertheless, is always on the rise, who advance dreamily and slowly perhaps, with an occasional bound from

one high point to another, it may be, of no greater altitude, yet saving the drudgery of many intervening steps, and presenting to the mind a new and improved aspect in every direction.

Sallie's mind was of this cast; to-night she had taken a great leap, and now she stood quite by herself, calmly looking about with a most touching sense of loneliness. Already to her, the tie was broken. Mrs. Stuart gone! Strange, how entirely she had leaned against this delicate woman; but so she had; and now the prop had given way, — was gone!

Truly heroic, Sallie did not ask, What shall *I* do? but pale and silent, her mind saw the family group, — only three: Margaret, Peter, and herself; and the house so wide and spacious. At that moment their misery seemed so great, it entirely shut out the consciousness of her own. With what rapidity she thought; over every possible condition of future events it swept its way; but her reverent awe in the presence, for the first time since her father's death, of that sad, stern, yet most friendly messenger, totally set aside personal considerations.

Graceful, beautiful Sallie, whose touch left an added charm to whatever she blessed with the labor of her hands, in a sick-room, seemed to catch the halo of ministering spirits, and step with a tread so light, with a motion so pleasant to the eye, it was better, her presence, than any medicine, so the doctor said when he bade Mrs. Stuart good-night; so thought Margaret, as Sallie with gentle violence, drew her away to her own sleeping apartment, promising to call her if she was needed.

## CHAPTER XX.

"UNVEIL thy bosom, faithful tomb,  
Take this, *new* treasure to thy trust,  
And give these sacred relics room,  
To seek a slumber in the dust.

"No pain, no grief, nor anxious care  
Invade thy bounds. No mortal woes  
Can reach the peaceful sleeper here,  
While angels watch their soft repose."

## THE DEPARTURE.

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FOR more than a mile; Peter walked with rapid step, and a bewildered unconsciousness of any thing, except that the night air felt cool to his burning, hatless head. Those who have tried it, know what a safety-valve rapid motion in the open air, under the stars, is to a full heart, and aching head. Where he was, Peter did not know, or ask. The road grew damp and dark with the tall woods on either side. At last in a little opening, the water glistened; a boat nestled close to its moorings; he was tired and jumped into it. There he sat, till the blur cleared from his reason; and the voice he loved so much, uttered in memory's ears, the wish, "Prayers for the dying."

Peter was by nature, keenly sensitive. Education had done much for him. Love had oiled the wheels of circumstances, so that they did not grate too harshly upon this delicate nature; while his youth, his buoyant spirits, his trust in God, gilded with the bow of promise the clouds hovering over him and his mother. His first great struggle with himself had come; and his heart, like a young rebel, revolted at the first onslaught.

Dying! He could not have it so! She was all he had, or ever had in the world. Such mighty plans as he was maturing to redeem her life from its sadness; such a home as he would make for her in a far-off, new country, where the very memory of the sorrow of her

youth should fade away in the sunlight of his prosperity.

"I thought I should be doing God service in protecting her, and teaching the people; there is no use in doing any thing now, without her smile of approval. Cousin Sallie taught me books, but my mother was the one who made me *think* and remember." Peter broke forth into a great cry and flung himself into the bottom of the boat.

"Prayers for the absent." Memory brought the voice of his mother through the distance and gathering darkness to her boy, crushed down in that boat; the distance seemed annihilated; he felt her close beside him! "*Absent*; it is for *him*." Peter sat up and listened. The moving, gushing waters answered, "*absent*;" the sturdy pines and hemlocks murmured "*for him, for him*;" and the excited lad replied, as if to justify her to these witnesses of his grief, and to assure himself,—

"Yes indeed, she has always taught me to pray for *him*, and for the sick and dying!"

Peter grew calm in presence of her beautiful, unselfish love; it filled him with admiration. Now his mind swayed to and fro, between the sense of loss to himself, and the gain to her; between the broken plans of his young life, the withered hopes of hers, and her final escape from them. Like many older persons, Peter failed in his plans, in that he centred them in *this* life. Up to this hour he did not know it. This life, with his mother by his side was all he needed; to lose her, to think of it as possible, made him wicked.

"What shall I be when the restraint of her presence is removed?" Peter felt very humble; he thought of

a great many lessons of patience and trust he had given to Cousin Sallie, with a feeling of absolute loathing. Again the tears rolled down over his cheeks in unrestrained freedom; and the winds hid away in caves and hollows, from his great sorrow, while the tall, evergreen pines stood sentinels around and over him, and the voices of their sombre tops whispered, Hush! to the sounds of night, and to the troubled boy.

Now, a human voice, almost divine, in that it was manly and strong as well as devout, broke across the darkness like the voice of old, to another sinking Peter; and for the first time since he jumped through the window, he became fully conscious where he was. Habit led him to the boat of Captain Barlow, and it was his voice, cutting its way straight to Peter's heart, in the words of a favorite hymn he had often heard him sing, while resting at night upon the tongue of a cart, close by his own door. It ran thus:—

"Blessed be God for all,  
For all things here below;  
For joy and pain, for sin and thrall,  
Blessed be God for *all*."

"Blessed be God for shame,  
For scandal, and disgrace;  
Welcome reproach for Jesus' name,  
Like flint, Lord, set my face."

"Blessed be God for want  
Of raiment, health, and food;  
I live by faith, I scorn to faint,  
For all things work for good."

"Blessed be God for loss,  
For loss of earthly things;  
Every sorrow, every cross,  
Me, nearer Jesus brings."

"Blessed be God for pain,  
Which tears my flesh like thorns;  
It crucifies my carnal mien,  
To God my soul returns."

Peter listened as though it was a voice from one whom the Lord had led through the hells, and placed beyond temptation. It hushed the tempest in his own soul. Gently, as he had often done to his mother, he knelt down in the boat, repeated the prayer, then bent forward, bathed his head and face in the stream, and silently took his way home. Help, he had received as his mother said he would, better, far, than they could have given.

When Mrs. Stuart awoke from a short and troubled nap, the clock was striking twelve. The light in her chamber was screened so as to give a softened picture of its outlines. Sallie was asleep upon a lounge; Peter close by his mother's side, gently fanning her burning cheek. His eyes were closed, his mouth tightly compressed, as though the heart beating below it was passing through a continuous struggle. Silently she lay, and with the full outgush of a mother's love, a mother's unerring intuition, watched the conflict. Oh, it seemed hard to go and leave him, so peculiar in himself, so alone without her. Yet when he opened his eyes to watch her more carefully, she pushed back into her heart the sympathies that were so rife for him, and in an off-hand tone addressed him; then as if not quite certain how to reach his mind with the least danger, she said cheerfully, —

"Never fear, my boy, there will come a better time to you."

He asked somewhat bitterly, "When is your good time coming, my mother?"

"The night is nearly spent and the dawn approaches. I am afraid," she added, "that I have not lived a *true* life before you, my boy, else it would all appear good to you. Indeed, I have had a great amount of happiness; *you* have been a source of unalloyed joy to me; and now, as I look back, the light of love, and goodwill, stretches over all the past, dispelling the darkness even of the lowest valleys. My boy, listen to me; the pain has all gone from my heart, the weight of years I do not feel, it has gone."

"You have gained the victory," said Peter.

"No, no, darling," she whispered, "I have done nothing about it, — it has been withdrawn, — it has come to me, — the fulness of peace! Ah! now I think I see, — the weight was drawn down upon me from something *within*, — that something is gone, — and with it the weight; I thought so before, but now what ease I have! what peace! Our life how wonderful, — and this is but its preface, a short page or two, then comes the opening of a most charming drama, — in the progress of which the interest will increase without measure, because the part of each one is *true* and real. What do I see? Peter, my boy, I shall not go from you. I see now, — I understand, — the union will be more complete, — time and space will no longer fetter me. Where you go to your duties, there be always sure my mission is also."

Peter's face relaxed into an expression very like a smile. He drew his chair nearer to her and said, —

"Tell some more, mother, for I have found out how much I depend upon you for motive power."



"It will come through other agencies when I am not here. 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting,' my boy; be brave, 'quit you like a man.' What a glorious gift life is, and companionship,—one as immortal as the other. I said, *be brave*, you will go out like Ishmael of old. The eyes of his mother were directed where to find for him water, that he might not faint and die. So this poor, stricken Hagar, from whose thin finger the wedding signet has been rudely torn, and who passes under the edict of a world's banishment, shall go invisible before her boy, showing him the springs of truth, to which that water corresponds."

Mrs. Stuart's voice came in quick, sharp whispers, thrown forth with a rapidly failing breath; yet the clearness of her mind was wonderful, nothing escaped her, and the expression of her face was radiant with light and joy. Her beautiful eyes turned from one to the other of those about her with loving intelligence, and a ready response answered every kind attention.

"Turn me a little, Margy; thank you, dear; the pillow,—yes, that rests me, dear Sallie. It is heavy—the blanket."

Sallie turned it back over the foot-board. Now she examined her nails, and seeing the purple rim around the edge, she looked up suddenly at Peter and believing he understood the action, she said,—

"God is good; his time is the best."

Peter assented with a nod.

"Come close to me, my boy, now repeat—'The Lord is my shepherd.' Ah, you learned it as soon as you could talk." He repeated it. "The other we have so often repeated together—'I will lift up my eyes to the mountains.'"

In a clear voice without shrinking, he, strengthened by its words, went through it. Then her hands caressed his face, while she repeated, "The Master calls, the Master calls, you will say good-by and let me go." She pressed her lips to his; it was the kiss of the dying. Around the room she gazed, as though taking leave of all its treasures. In a little while she said,—

"The sheet is heavy;" Margaret, and Sallie lifted it up from her heaving chest. So clear and living was her power of reason, that thus, in dying, she watched each process with intense interest.

"It is new and strange, but so wonderful in its order; please bring me the lamp."

Sallie brought it close to her head.

"Ah, now I understand, it is not the lamp. Ah, no! it is the odor of natural decay! my friends, the work goes on so rapidly, that when the day begins to dawn, the stone will be rolled away from this sepulchre. Dear Paul! Dear Paul! give him love, my children; *love*, that is what he most needs. His self-dissatisfaction is very great. Tell him,—tell all how much I loved them,—and that the bed of my last hour, was full of peace!—free from fear! My noble Cousin Sallie! a royal nature,—you might be proud of your good life;—but you are not. I wish you had less self-abnegation;—it will come equal;—your work is before you,—mine closed;—the Sabbath has come. Yours will dawn at last,—cloudless, glorious! My sweet Sallie will adorn her soul in bridal array! complete, entire, full of that inmost life which time cannot rob of its beauty. What, weeping! all of you! say it to us,—what is it,—'Rachel weeping for her children'?"

Sallie commenced Longfellow's sweet psalm, and while Peter and Margaret responded with sobs, she uttered every word steadily to the end.

"Thank you, dear; turn me a little — it is heavy." Sallie lifted the nightgown from her heaving chest.

"Have you any fears?" The eyes of the dying woman looked suddenly up to the questioner, and she exclaimed, —

"None, none; *they* died out long years ago."

"Do you suffer?"

"Oh, no!" was the quick reply. "The angels are here, taking care of me now."

Again she said, "Please turn me a little — so, a little more."

Her breath came quicker and shorter, and the voice gushed forth with it.

"Peter, my darling! — Sallie! — Margy! Blessed Father, I thank thee!"

Her head dropped down into her bosom, like that of a stricken bird, and the spirit was loosed from its prison house!

Sallie, kneeling, with her arm sustaining the pillow, closed the eyes, and printed a kiss upon the lids; she then drew her handkerchief from her pocket, and softly pushing back the loosened hair, bound the head, so beautiful, so beloved, even now that it was but an empty casket. For several moments there was no sound in that hallowed chamber; then with one accord the final preparations commenced.

When Sallie threw open the blinds, day had lifted night's curtain; a clear, cheerless horizon upheld a canopy of sombre clouds. The far-off city broke the

distant sky with its clearly defined outlines, and the nearer fields and meadows glittered with the moisture of night's tears! It was the morning of the Sabbath, and the spirit thereof came into the open window, like the odor of that precious ointment, or the soothing oil, which, poured upon the head of an ancient servant, ran down even unto the skirts of his garments.

"Come and look," said Sallie. Peter and Margaret drew near. "Is it not beautiful? *She* said she should enter into the porch of the temple to-day."

"She said she should have plenty of flowers; I am glad she loved them so much," said Peter, taking up her last bouquet from the table, and placing it in his bosom, he turned away down the old staircase, over which so lately she had been borne for the last time.

Sallie watched him with pitiful interest; Margaret shook her head despairingly. There was no time for comment. Peter went into the family sitting-room, opened his mother's piano, awoke the silent keys in grand and solemn strains, to her favorite chant, "I will lift up mine eyes to the mountains."

Margaret was never known to be unprepared for an emergency. Captain Barlow was sitting in her kitchen asleep. The music roused him; so did Margaret, for she needed his services. Margaret produced a white cashmere dress that she and Mrs. Stuart had prepared privately for this occasion. It was a loose robe, fastened at the waist with a silken cord. The hair she arranged as it was on the day of her marriage, twisted lightly, with the ends curling about her ears and temples. Her own tastes were kept in mind, through all their arrangements, and when the sun greeted the walls of that chamber, the vases were fresh with morning flowers,

the couch where she lay, trimmed with them, and her aspect was that of an angel sleeping. Sallie led Peter from the piano to this room.

"Look," she said. "If I ever had any fear of death, I can never have it again. She has often said, it was a beautiful gift, to be born, to live; and a gloriously opening epoch in existence, to die. Looking at her now, I can do more than receive it into the understanding; it strikes home to my heart. You and I, Peter, must live by the beauty of her example."

"I am glad for her now, Cousin Sallie. She said she should be close by us; it seems as though she is here."

## CHAPTER XXI.

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Quit you like men. To be misunderstood is so common, that it should be expected, and prepared for; — so natural, that it should bring face to face with it, the largest magnanimity.

## PAUL AND MR. HALE.

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FROM this elevated state of consolation, the two cousins were brought down to a more discordant, and therefore lower plane, by the arrival of Uncle Paul.

Death left a signet of calm peace upon Cranston House. With Paul a chilling mist entered. He was too late to see Mary alive, and he blamed everybody for it. Not in words, but in manner. Indeed he always gave them the impression that they were culprits; that they had a set of reserved motives for all cases of action. One would suppose, to see his movements about the place, that every thing was his, and all these imaginary, covert movements were to thwart him in his just rights. Thus acting with a cold disregard for the feelings of others, he unconsciously stole from them the power of appearing to advantage. To blame Miss Sallie, had become the settled habit of his mind; and now, he remarked to Mr. Hale, that the foolish plan of a school in the house had doubtless hastened this sad event. That Mary never could bear noise or confusion, but was too weak of purpose, to oppose or set aside the stronger will of Sallie, who was always restless, full of whims, and fond of change; determined to carry out any plan she took up, at any hazard, so long as novelty gave it a charm.

At first, Mr. Hale made but little reply, or opposition to so unreasonable and false a view, for he under-

st od Paul's prejudices, and knew full well how much they would be likely to deepen with the rapid progress of dissipation. But when Paul added that he should not be surprised at any wild scheme she might now engage in, the gallant old bachelor faced about with a rebuke almost fierce, and not easily forgotten, or forgiven, by the self-opinionated Paul. In conclusion, Mr. Hale said, —

“As Miss Sallie's legal adviser, I am bound by honor to keep her plans to myself; but of this you may be sure, for the facts are in my keeping, she has never carried out any plan, which her father did not foresee she might become obliged to, and about which, he did not offer some suggestions. As for the school, her money is strangely missing, as no one knows better than yourself. Are you so blind as to suppose she could have kept up this establishment, unencumbered, without a larger income than her interest money? The facts of the case are, you never see your niece or nephew with your best judgment; you assume at the outset, that they are in the wrong, whatever they do or propose. They are naturally sensitive, and somewhat in a false position, and appear under a cloud your own prejudices create. Now, although I have no family, in my profession I have had a great deal to do with ladies, and I must say, I never have known any lady prove more unselfish and devoted to her family and friends, more faithful to principle, than Miss Sallie; I repeat it, the proof is in my hands.

“And lastly, this case of Mrs. Stuart's; the doctor tells me her death has been delayed, solely through the care and watching which she has here received. As

for the school, I happen to know that it relieved her of much anxiety with regard to Peter. Her strong wish has always been, for him to enter the ministry. She knew this could not be without a good education, and this he has gained through this school. Miss Sallie was truly indefatigable in her own efforts, and she has from the first, procured the best assistance. The President told me the class she fitted were altogether better prepared than any others who entered at the same time. Certainly this does not look as though she was very changeful. To keep house, and keep school nearly seven years without intermission, or so much as *one* journey of pleasure during the time, or, excuse me for adding — it is the privilege of a lawyer, — any especial encouragement from her family, puts a veto upon your theory of restlessness. And to do all this simply from love to that family, and the family name of which she is so proud, proves her to be a woman of the highest order, of the utmost refinement and delicacy.”

“By George! Hale, you are in love with her.”

“So I am,” exclaimed Mr. Hale, with dignity.

“*You are!* thunder and lightning! Why then don't you propose?”

“Propose? I *did*, long years ago, but she only made me love her the more, by a total, unqualified refusal.”

Paul Cranston's eyes, misty and faded, with the long steep and muddle of wine, suddenly shot forth a gleam of their former intelligence. The right hand with which he was plying his nasal organ with snuff, dropped with a sort of spasmodic jerk, scattering the

powdered and highly scented weed over the whole length of his linen shirt bosom.

"Hale, I expect to believe your word, for I know you have a natural knack at telling the truth, but this *is* a stunner. Am I expected to believe our Sallie refused your hand?"

"You are. I am proud to say I loved her very much, and still love her, and would make the same proposal over again if I thought it would be any more successful; but I do not, and I best retain the place of her friend, by asking nothing more."

"Why, Hale, I thought you had more *pride*, than to retain the place of a friend, after you had been petitioner for a closer relation and were refused."

"How do you make out that I am not proud, from these premises? I'm sure if a woman was worthy of my love, and by the beauty of her life won it, I should never feel ashamed to acknowledge her power over me. I do not understand that man who feels chagrined by the refusal of a worthy woman. It is her privilege to decide as her heart dictates, quite as truly as it is the exclusive right of man to press his suit; and for my own part, I am a better man to-day, for the fact of having felt this emotion, and talked it up with Miss Sallie, as I was made better long years ago by a similar episode with that charming sister of yours, Mary Cranston."

At Copely's portrait of his mother, Paul Cranston seemed to look. Mr. Hale had turned the tide of thought to other times. That mother's picture! The magic wand of memory uplifted by those saintly hands that caressed his infancy, and the sweet look of love from those, to him so sad and reproachful eyes, held up

before him a picture no eye but his could see; a tableau so real, how could he refrain from speaking, from craving pardon; how could he come back to the *now*, from which his own rash hand had cut the *past*, and scattered it in broken fragments over the earth? Before those eyes he was a boy again,—in the old school-house, where Puritan asceticism ran counter to all adornments, or even ordinary comforts; and beside him upon the same form sat a gentle, patient girl—his *slave*, in that she loved him better than herself;—wearying over the, to him, senseless figures of a sum in fractions,—or, out on the pasture knolls, trudging patiently by his side with a basket on her arm to hold the strawberries their united hands were sure to gather. Then, as now, Paul required, and received, the homage of *service* from his friends. Then, as now, *self* was first to be considered.

Again the picture changed. He stood alone in the graveyard, and before a simple stone marking the place where she slept. His eyes read the first line engraved on that marble, his heart said it was a lie, and none knew it so well as he.

With the forefinger of his thought, he drew a line of erasure through the word "consumption," to him it was red like blood; over it he had written the words, "broken heart," and still the ink was red. Paul moved, he wiped the real finger laying in his lap, from which the snuff had just fallen, to rid himself of that thrilling moisture. Where is the record of that act? Mr. Hale did not notice,—Paul was quite unconscious of the movement.

Let us mark the changes bad habits have made upon him. Larger than when first introduced to

our notice, he fills the capacious oaken arm-chair, as his large stomach, well lined with butcher's meat, and washed down with strong brandy, does his lap; the head is silvery grey, and the cheeks loose and of a bloodless, mottled whiteness; the hands, still beautiful though stained with snuff and tremulous with incipient disease. To Paul, the expression of his mother's eyes softened; in sympathy, his filled with tears. It was in the morning, and as yet, he was partially master of himself.

"Mr. Hale, I am not only a damned fool, but a damned rascal!—a child of the devil! That saint could not have been my mother! I must have been a changeling in the cradle; that is the only way to account for her failure to make something respectable out of me. I'm sure she tried hard enough; I will exonerate her; I shall go straight to the devil, but I will exonerate her from all blame, even in hell."

Mr. Hale, the precise bachelor, the polished man, who could no more soil his tongue with ungracious words, than he could his snowy linen with ink, or his hands with crime; walking with measured tread across the spacious parlor, halted with dumb astonishment before Paul Cranston.

"You shock me very much, very much indeed. I do not understand."

Mr. Hale's eyes checked the words of his mouth, for they were taking a close inspection of the afore-said Paul, seated before him; and with unfeigned surprise at the marked change a few years had made in his personal appearance. He, the man of fashion, of place, of attractive manners, of remarkable manly beauty! — Mr. Hale, seeing him every day, having an

office in the same block, and on the same floor, had had his mind too much concentrated upon the duties of his profession, to mark any thing not directly in the line of his legal vision, until to-day; and now, the gradual depreciation of the whole man, the loss of tone and force, and even of respectability, struck him with increasing surprise and pain. Paul Cranston, the acknowledged centre of a circle most to be desired, and most enviable, actually working his own way to its circumference, soon to be thrown off like a dead body, given over to corruption, and forgetfulness!

Kind Mr. Hale's next remark was from the plane of thought his eyes had suggested.

"Bless me, Paul, what is the matter? what can I do for you? you are a young man yet, let us hope for the best."

"Do? God! I should have done it for myself. Young! why, I am older than my father was when he died; he, seventy-five. I tell you, it is too late! the whole current sets strong with my habits, and *will* annexed, and I must drift out with it. I have lost the power to breast and stem so deep and strong a tide. Don't talk to me, I don't want to hear you! The die is cast! My own hand has done it! I *wont* be pitied. Talk about stemming the habits of a lifetime! Try it, Hale! try it! As for me, I *will* be borne on the receding wave; it costs no physical effort, and I must go to my own place. Ah! Hale, the destruction of the sinner is his *sin*. Remember *that*, and if you ever try to teach others, let it be with my mother's old proverb, 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,' for your text. But even then, you must expect sometimes to fail, for you see where I bring up; and I

exonerate her. I am more sorry for her now, than for myself. She will wish to see me again. Nobody but a *mother* could *know* me, so soul-stained as I am; and I shall be worse before the end. The fiends have me, Hale! I and they;—the deed is ready, time only waits an opportunity.”

Mr. Hale's utter helplessness, his look, almost of terror, would have been ludicrous anywhere but in that house of mourning, and before ruined Paul Cranston.

Even Paul's mouth relaxed into a faint smile at the bewildered stare of his friend. That smile! you should have seen it; subsiding into a display of two rows of teeth still strong and fine, ground into each other with the fearful tenacity of a spasm. Even his ravings were a relief, and to be preferred to any thing so inhuman. Thus he went on,—

“Sit down, Hale. What has got into me? What do you think of this? I, upon my honor, have not looked at that saintly face until to-day, since—since—I became a drunkard! There it is out; I have spoken it; I have endorsed it; I have sworn to it. Every week I have come out here, and brought company with me; yes, company, with whom each succeeding visit has drawn the bond tighter. A purpose so evil, *you* would not understand it, if I explained. In such company, how could I look at *her*? haunting the old home with a deed of darkness buttoned up in my breast. Well, there were but two of us left, and you know what Mary was. I often said to myself, when I started to come out here and look round, ‘I will not see her.’ Bah! her soul drew mine into hers, whether I would or no; and that deed of the devil, leaped from my bosom, over my shoulder and was gone, as soon as her

lips touched my cheek; but my boon companions knew their man; they waited my home escort, outside the grounds.

“Well, to-day—yes, for a whole week I have been feeling as though I must come and see her, for you see she stood between me and my purpose; she rid me of it temporarily. God himself could do no more, because I have sold my birthright, and am no longer a free man. I come; the only angel between me and destruction, has mounted out of my sight on the wings of the morning. Hale, do you remember what a round family used to gather in this room? And now, the only representatives of the Cranston name, are myself and sons.”

Paul arose from his chair, and drew himself up with a mock dignity, such as makes human sympathy weep.

“Look at those portraits; three generations; and a niche left for mine. Hale, don't you desecrate that gallery, by placing mine there after I am gone. *Myself* I do not wish to perpetuate; and my sons are not the stuff to keep bright and loyal, the family name. Hale, I wish you would marry Sallie, and raise some purer scions on our family tree.”

“You speak as though it was optional with me; I'm sure, if it rested on my will, Miss Sallie should be my lawful, wedded wife before the blossoms fade.”

Paul again sat down in the chair facing his mother's portrait.

“It is astonishing how she watches me! Poor Mary! I take to this, now she can't help me any more. Do you know the genius woman is the most overwhelming study in the world. In this presence, I believe her an angel; in my own house, I as firmly believe her an



imp of darkness. But our Sallie—she is a *trump*. There is nothing left in the name so worthy. I have wronged her beyond restitution, and shall more. Ah, I wish she was your wife. But there it is again; I cannot read them; I only know that they are divided into two classes, as wide apart as light and darkness, those who have principle, and those who have not. *Privately*, let me say to you and her (pointing at the portrait), men do not often take up bad habits, who are happy at home. Sallie was all the sunshine we ever had in our house. I suppose you all think it was my sin that drove her away. Well, better it should go so, though it is a lie! I don't honestly believe Fannie ever felt an emotion of unselfish love in her life."

"Paul, Paul, hush!"

"I will not! How it relieves me, this talk! Hale, I can trust *you*, and you at least, shall have the truth, so that when you make up your opinion of me at last, you can give me the advantage of *every doubt*. A man does want to meet a cheerful face sometimes, when he goes home, and hear some other conversation besides the tedious details of the cook's mistakes, and the waiter's blunders, the children's noise, or a long catalogue of aches and pains, and remedies it is necessary to have procured. He does, once in a while, if it were only by way of variety, crave a little genuine outgush of heartfelt love and sympathy; and let me tell you, if he does not receive it, ten chances to one he will go where he can find it, or drown his memory in the cup of intoxication.

"How can I help coming to the conclusion, sometimes that if I had found a loving, affectionate heart to sympathize with me, and a *truthful* nature in whom to confide, and a charitable disposition to meet my

infirmities with its mantle of forgiveness, to-day would have found me a wiser, better man than I am."

How much longer this singular conversation might have been continued, we cannot tell, for it was closed most abruptly by the entrance of Sallie to consult her uncle about the funeral.

Paul started as she appeared, so striking was the likeness to his sister Mary. Truly, death gives to every cheek among whom he enters, a softened pencil touch of spiritual beauty never traced there before. Sallie, in her neatly fitting morning-dress, her hair so nicely kept and tastefully arranged, shining with the free use of the brush, and a glowing tinge, as though the sun had lingered among the braids, and left the first kiss of the morning upon it; Sallie, fresh from the chamber where, at one with the angels of God, she had been at work,—she with the material, they with the immaterial; she, soothing and relieving the body, they, withdrawing and raising up the spirit; she, entering with a sympathy born of the occasion into the orderly stages of that wonderful translation, release, fulfilment of a new heaven and a new earth in the soul!—No wonder her face shone with a light never seen there before, and that, for the time at least, whatever in the past or present there was of a discordant nature, should have rolled back from her present exalted state, even as the clay had fallen from the passing spirit.

Behind Uncle Paul's chair she came, and gently clasping her arms around his neck, she bowed her head beside his and kissed him; while with a whisper, she repeated the last words uttered by Aunt Mary for him.

"Even to the last, Uncle Paul, she kept repeating, 'dear Paul! dear Paul! I love him so much.'"

And then with her own handkerchief, Sallie, still clinging to him, wiped the big drops that rolled from those leaden, misty eyes.

Again the door opened, and upon its sill stood Mrs. Cranston, her sharp, pale face suddenly flushing with a beet-root redness. Was it jealousy? did she not discern how the gulf between these two was filled by the departed? how the devoted affection both felt for Mrs. Stuart, made the bridge upon which they could meet, heart to heart? A chemical precipitant was Mrs. Cranston, and into whatsoever she might chance to be infused, the result would be, a total separation of the elements into their original, distinctive particles.

Paul, seeing her, with that unmistakable expression of face, sprang with a bound, such as a startling noise sometimes gives the body, into the distinctive, now habitual, antagonism of his nature. The tender interest of Sallie, the solemn presence of death in the house, the emotion called into play by the long gaze at that living picture on the wall, the old-awakened memories, finding vent in that strange confessional made to Mr. Hale, all swept away from him like the delicate gossamer of a spider's web, torn into atoms by a sudden gust of wind. With a tenderness Sallie never forgot, he unclasped her hands, kissed them both, murmured so as only she could hear, "Her mantle has fallen upon you," and then, with a defying air, he walked to the side-board and drank a fearful draught of brandy; before two hours, so often had this been repeated, that he was laid away in his bed to sleep in forgetfulness till the sun of another day awoke him to the horror of a headache and the consciousness of his own degradation.

## CHAPTER XXII.

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"Let there be light!  
Devotion on her bended knee,  
When doubt and darkness  
Will not flee,  
Lifts up this earnest prayer to Thee  
Great Infinite;  
And reason, blighted by the fall,  
When truth heeds not her earnest call,  
Offers in fervent, feverish grief,  
This, her petition for relief."

## LOOKING FOR THE DAWN.

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NERVELESS, pale, and unhappy grew Peter through the monotony of the winter. It was natural that to his friends his early death should appear to be thus fore-shadowed; a crisis was indeed upon him, a change approaching. Past states were closing up their accounts; a new condition must follow, what would it be?

Peter himself did not reason, his mind was torpid, new thoughts, the seed of new action which should supersede the past and allay its pain, took no hold upon him. The future, and all thought in connection with it, slept.

The death of his mother, what a heart-wrench it had been to him, checking all aspirations for success! Spiritless he arose to the duties of the day; absently he gazed into the bright fire through the long evenings, rousing up often to answer his Cousin Sallie, only to relapse again into the silence, to her all the more pitiful from the evident inability to conquer it. Lifeless she knew he was not. There was, at times, a fearful flush upon his cheek, and the sparkle of recognized memories in his eyes.

As usual, Sallie began to form her own conclusions, to face what she believed inevitable — his death. She was mistaken; this was to Peter the autumn time of his youth, the end of a certain condition of things

which had attained its completeness. Quite unconsciously he was stepping from the protected, subservient state of minority, to the brisk action, the wider freedom of manhood. Under all the advantages of what is known as worldly prosperity, and family completeness, the change of state incident to any transition from one life period to another, tinged with morbid fancies the most healthful mind. There is loss as well as gain, and the most generous soul, even, relinquishes with regret what it has once possessed, and incorporated into its affections. To Peter, how much more, over whose life a mist had rested from his earliest recollection! Like every other landmark in his existence, manhood was ushered in with the quick, sharp pain of unexpected waking.

One companion Peter had, who served as a link between the past and present, and to those around him seemed a part almost of himself. It was his cat "Proudy," the gift of Margaret, the pet of his mother, now a matronly, sober pussy, wise in her way, and happy as kindness could make her. The day found her following the sun from window to window, in the warmth of which she stretched herself in cat-like grace and idle repose. The evening saw her in meditative mood upon the rug, drumming, with measured noiselessness, her cogitations from the extremity of her tail. If Peter walked the floor, so did "Proudy," giving no sign of her presence, except occasionally a gentle rub of her mouse-colored head against his feet; if he took his lamp to retire for the night, she followed as a matter of course, and by the habit of her early training, took up her quarters for the night upon her own cushion by his bed. Having no sister, no brother,

no companionship, really, aside from Cousin Sallie, this humanized animal, received from him more than the "crumbs" of affection which usually fall from the hearts of a full household upon its pets; she had through the very absence of other ties, crept into his heart, and made good her place there.

Peter's life, so short, was still the sum of human experience to him, and as he became more morbid in the tone of his thought; constantly he read backward in his own history. Dating from his mother's death, no rose color gave beauty to the pages he conned. April clouds, and lead-colored November days, met him at every point; even the rest and security of his pleasant home with Cousin Sallie sunk out of sight, was temporarily lost to his excited imagination; or beyond it, he took up the story of his first consciousness, the subdued smile, ever looking down upon his infancy from his mother's face; the explanation of that patient suffering given to him by Mazoni, the pitiful first home-sickness he experienced on that memorable first visit at Uncle Paul's. No spot in life's panorama seemed now so terrible to face as that. Better now, than then, he understood the sad desolation encompassed in his child-life, as he walked shyly in the midst of that splendid mansion, the glitter of its costliness thrown back upon him, with the freezing chilliness of northern glaciers; even now, it was harder to read — to face.

To repeat — *that*, he could not! never had done. Then, the weight of his uncle's whip upon his shoulders! To-day, stung by the intensity and isolation of his thought, — to-day, as then, he felt it, it was there!

The injustice inflicted in childhood, is never forgotten! But God's providences do not leave us *old*,—*that* is the work of our own evils. With the lengthening days of spring and the attending first soft throb, the renewed pulsation of nature everywhere, there crept into the heart of Peter a warmth, quite strange to him. He began to talk about the future. He not only ran his fingers along the keys of the piano, but his voice gave melodious utterances to words, at first full of earnest, imploring petitions; swelling before the buds did, into songs of love, gratitude, and hope! The unlooked-for dawn approached! The sky revealed itself!—and the leaden hue of many a preceding morning, gave place to a crimson and gold glow, betokening a clear sun, and a long day.

The boy had become a man, and was reaching forth his newly awakened capacities with surprising joy! Hope lured him forth like a star, while imagination lit his future with the bow of promise.

Peter was going away, it was as though the voice of his mother uttered the command. Uncle Paul desired it. Cousin Sallie was unselfish and reasonable, she would not oppose it; and Peter had come to it, as to a new necessity. Achievement! he felt it stir within him with the force of long pent, and rapidly increasing waters!

"Cousin Sallie, shall I trim the shrubs along the avenue? Next week we must plough, Jonas and I. I can give all of this week to the flowers and the borders where we plant the house-flowers."

"I will go with you; wait till I get my sun bonnet and trowel."

And the anxious eyes of our friend Margaret followed them with the accompaniment of a most significant grunt.

"If it should happen that I am not here, you had better engage Jonas for the whole time; he is perfectly honest, and Margaret likes him; you know she don't like every laborer."

Sallie, as she dug the softened earth about the roots of her petted plants, laughed her own merry, musical laugh. It had not been heard for months, and it was like the return of the spring robin. Peter joined her. They looked into each other's eyes, and laughed again,—not so much at what Peter said, as at their mutual knowledge of Margaret, who was always stirred into the most singular antagonism, by the necessity of having some man-servant to share her labors.

"If John had been as young as Jonas, it would have made some difference, perhaps. Good Margaret, she has had control so long, it would be like taking away her breath to interfere with it. We are all so young, you and Jonas and I, that without any compromise of her long-established rights, she is most happy in letting us do as we please. My picture of Margaret is very beautiful."

"So is mine," said Peter, "but John saw her by a false light, and thus seen the best picture in the world, is a mere daub."

"Tell me what he said about her, Peter."

"Said! why, that he would defy the Devil to live in the house with her comfortably, any length of time!"

"The self-conceited puppy!" exclaimed Sallie. "Peter, just hear; he wanted to marry her." Peter dropped his pruning knife, "and to her he made the

contemptible excuse for leaving, that you were too particular, and too impatient!"

Peter broke forth into a fresh peal of laughter. It was a good indication. The friction of years had brought into more healthful play his mental skin, and his laugh was the merry peal breaking forth, only from the innocent heart.

*Courage*, all ye, who lead an orphan's life! There is many a Sallie who is motherless; while she who bore her, still vegetates on the earth; and many a Peter between whom, and his father, there is no glance of recognition! Yet to such the *All Father* brings down the glance of his eye, and *watches*;—reaches forth his hand and guides!

Peter spoke again. "I should not have thought he would dare ask her to marry him, she seems so entirely one by herself."

"Well, he did, and that I can understand better than his speaking so unhandsomely about her after a peremptory refusal on her part."

"You can't judge that kind of man, Cousin Sallie, because your standard is so high. I suppose he felt very much as though she had insulted him by her refusal; and the only justification he could make to himself, was to lie. I dare say he classes it under the head of excusable lies. My mother did not believe in them, but I find many people do."

"Your mother was right; the *truth* or nothing. I won't talk about John; my charity gives out the moment any thing so disagreeable comes up. I wonder if you will ever be so hemmed in by selfish considerations as to fall into this habit. Suppose you should fall in love."

"No danger of that, Sallie; there is nobody like my mother: if there was, and young enough for me, I should certainly. It is best that there is no one, for I am too quick tempered to be trusted, or to trust myself with the happiness of another."

"I don't think you are too quick tempered, I'm sure; if I had given my opinion, I should have said you were amiable."

Peter's lip curled; manhood was upon him, and man revolts at the term amiable. As yet, he did not understand the true difference between amiability and weakness.

"If I have appeared so, it has been because my mother kept her foot upon my evils when she was with me. Now, left to myself, with occasions constantly arising in which I have no precedent to guide me, I shall fall into outbreaks, that will prove me not so amiable as you think."

"Well, Peter, I am at a loss even now, to decide which is best for a man, or for those about him; gentleness, or force. To combine them equally, as your mother did, seems most difficult. You have both; which shall rule? or can you put them both into the traces together?"

"In the opinion of Uncle Paul at least, I have won the reputation of having no energy, or 'pluck,' a favorite word of his."

"Oh, he don't mean all he says."

"I never heard him say it directly, but I feel sure that that is his opinion; and my dreamy life this winter gives him reason to believe it true."

Sallie sprung up from the ground with the force of a new thought, and bent her inquiring gaze on Peter.

"What is it? I never can grasp but one idea at the same time. I remember you just now presented *two*, both most important. What is it about going away? Don't think of it Peter! What am I to do without you?"

"I know, — but it must be. You think, so do I, that my mind has been asleep for a long time. If it has been, there was a vein of thought running through it, like a thread of light, and that still remains. If I follow this clue, I must go away. I will not hurry, because there is something for me to do for you, here. You will see it as I do, Sallie. We will get ready for it."

Again Sallie had taken up her trowel, and renewed her work, with her head so bent over it, that her tears fell into the ground over which she wrought. So securely had she settled down into the rest she found in, and accepted from, him, that all thought, even of her own plans about going away, had sunk under the waters of oblivion.

A selfish purpose has no real life until it becomes a *passion*. Then, its force is in exact ratio to the previous thought, and importance attached to it. Then, too, like a prairie fire, it eats up every green thing, branch and blossom; leaving the heart but a blackened corse. Where promise doth not appear; and even conscience stands back appalled and silent.

To the old home Paul Cranston came oftener than ever; but his mood was silent and reserved. No longer quiet, or even idle, he rarely sat down in the house. Out over the place he walked; sometimes started suspiciously, but never conferred with any one.

His *purpose* had become a passion, and glowed before his mental eyes, with a red heat.

His thought was alert to guard the steady light from every other person, and to lock every avenue to his plans from every other mind. Poor man; he, from his stand point, could no longer see how these harmless people, to whom all deep designs were unknown, and all need for concealment unnecessary, did not pronounce judgment of malice aforethought against him, whatever he might say, or however he might appear. They only felt that he was unhappy, and that he did not love them.

Mr. Hale had the care of all Miss Cranston's property. He came out often — sometimes in company with Paul. The week for farm work had come; and so had Mr. Hale and Paul. They walked all round, and discussed wood, timber, fruit-trees, grass, the time for planting, and the comparative value of lands. Amateur farmers were these gentlemen, both; having fine country places, in the vicinity of the grand old city, stretching along yonder, a few miles from Cranston House, like a picture of one's life — it seemed to those who grew up within the sight of it, and drew their real life from its glorious institutions.

To walk round Cranston place, was not a trifle; but of a spring morning nothing could be more charming, and the theme of their conversation — agriculture, could be stretched to cover with a delightful "glamour," any extent of country road or private drive-way. The walk was of course suggestive of improvements; and here these sensible men sprung astride a "hobby" which, with a bound, landed them outside the range

of their usual reason—while, by word of mouth, thousands of dollars were sunk in the wildest improvements, where no result would appear in the shape of honest profit for the outlay, except in the gratification of questionable taste!

After forty, man would forstall his approach to the wave of time which will so effectually cover him, as to leave no mark to tell he *was*, by building his own monument, in stone and mortar, or wood and brick; or, it may be, in the trees he hath planted. After forty, woman would rest in something stronger than herself; the world vanishes to a point; that one centre is the heart of her husband; the crowning halo encircling him, his and her children!

"Hale, what do you say to a better curve to this side the avenue, and a removal of this wall, for a wire fence?"

"I should think it would be an improvement, if I had not named it once to Miss Cranston, and she, as well as Peter, said it would be in bad taste."

"What right has *he* to a voice in the matter?" said Paul, firing up. "A mere pauper, content to live on her too generous hospitality."

"Your sister's son, and *she* the prospective heir of Miss Sallie."

"Very well; that was all right, as long as she lived. Do you suppose her pride, if no other feeling would not prevent her keeping any other name heir to this place, than that attached to it from its foundation?"

"*He* has only to drop the last, and then it is all right."

"Has she made her will, Hale? You must know."

Mr. Hale was seized with a sudden fit of sneezing.

They turned the corner of the house and the rich lands of Cranston place, made the wide and charming picture before them.

"That is the first time I ever saw a Cranston lead a horse attached to a plough. And now I think of it, this state of things must not go on any longer."

Mr. Hale smiled, that Peter was thus acknowledged as a Cranston. Paul was annoyed.

"He is the most disagreeable vagabond I ever saw. It takes away half the comfort of coming here. Why don't he go to work?"

"He appears to be at work," said Mr. Hale, with most provoking quietness. "Just now you were out with him for disgracing the family name by leading the horse to plough."

"What I mean, is to go off and stand on his own feet."

"He seems to be standing on his own feet, so far as I can judge, and very firmly too. That is the Cranston step, if it is behind a plough."

"Yes; but he has not the Cranston 'pluck,' if he had, he would not stand there, as tame as a girl, and as passionless as a milk sop."

"I reckon you will change your mind, Paul. Towards *you*, he is both respectful and submissive. I have watched him a good deal. You are his superior. I have always noticed that you Cranstons are remarkably well bred to your *superiors* and *inferiors*. If you ever should quarrel, it will be with your peers. So it will be with him. Watch him with his equals; your boys for instance, — and you won't call him a milk sop."

While we talk, oftentimes, our words are the tiny messengers of new trains of thought. Thus it was



with Mr. Hale, and as he finished his period, he faced Paul, and looked steadily in his eyes. Paul's sunk before that calm gaze, and, as if to assure himself that the earth beneath his feet was not hollow, he poked the greensward with his cane, and drove its steel point into the tender roots of the spring grass.

Mr. Hale's legal acumen was astir. He understood men best, where personal interest was concerned. He had gained a point. Whatever it was, it evidently had both bewildered and pained him. By some curious and newly awakened power, he seemed to be reading Paul, as one does a freshly cut page, before overlooked. His question was surprising to Paul, yet he answered truly; as, how could that pair of eyes draw out any thing else but the truth?

"How soon do you expect your sons home?"

"Next week."

Paul had swung himself round, and stooping, ran his hand along the soft fur of "Proudy's" back, who lay stretched at full length upon the door-stone. Their eyes did not meet again. Paul, wondering how in the world Mr. Hale found out that he had sent for them; and anxious, supposing or fearing, lest knowing thus much, he might also discover more.

Two lawyers! Every motion was now a sign to one; a hand-writing on the wall, to the other. How near their thoughts lay to each other! It needed but a flash more, and Mr. Hale could see. What, he did not know; but the motive of a creature to be born, he *could* see. Was it a monster, or an angel? he hoped the latter. He threw the possibility of the former from him, and, with the natural good nature of his mind, hugged to his heart the usual habit of his thought with

regard to Paul, that the evils of his character lay entirely upon the surface. A more amiable, than just conclusion. Sympathizing with Paul's evident embarrassment, he did not ask what he intended to; namely, why he had called them home; but went back again to Peter, even as their walk turned back from the door-stone to the wall, whereon he seated himself. It was the very wall which the taste of the two gentlemen, had doomed to a removal; but which the two cousins held sacred, as having been sanctified by the earnest appeal of Aunt Mary.

With a significant gesture of his large hands and arms, indicative of his desire of sunshine between them, he drew his knife from his pocket, and, severing a limb from the overhanging branch, commenced to whittle, while he thought aloud to the willing ear of one he loved very much — Paul Cranston, on the wall beside him.

Honest Mr. Hale; the health of your mind, saved you from much temptation. The calm, even flow of your blood, betokened an animal mechanism not *too fine* for strength, or *too coarse* for beauty.

"Paul, one of my theories is, or was, that you men with families, must be the happiest fellows in the world. You have not only your own ties to bind and interest you, but a home with wife and children, where other families love to come, and widen your social nature. Why don't you make the most of it, and be happy? If you did but know it, my kind of life, with less cares, has, also, less inducements to noble effort. And as I grow old, I feel not a little selfish regret, that at my death no special mourner will follow me to my grave. I shall leave no gap. What regrets can you

have to balance mine? I often wish I had a half-dozen boys to experiment upon, or to prove me the truth of my own theory. There is nothing surprises me more than the present fashion of early training. I must laugh at you fathers, a little; there seems to be so little foresight in your plans. You act as though it was not a national duty to fit them so they may best fill your places in society. You send your sons *abroad* to pick up an education, as best they can, expecting, I suppose, that they will come home well-prepared American citizens. You indulge every whim, and each year they live adds many an artificial want, until their brief life is completely buried under the weight of habits, which have destroyed all simplicity, and, indirectly, all independence. And the yearly outlay of a gentleman's son, is about as much as would have taken formerly, to set up a business for a man with a family. I know very well, that nothing is strictly extravagant for the rich; because it spreads capital among the poor, and all this would seem very well while the money lasts; still it is anti-American. We all more or less pass through all phases of condition from riches to poverty, and rarely can a rich man ward off from his children a different fate. With an education, such as I have been speaking of, where is the barrier to ward off crime, when misfortune comes, and the habits of excess have become stronger than the will?

"On the other hand, there is a lad out yonder, who is the same relation to your father as your sons. Explain to me if you can, why every thing he does, is subjected to the inquisition of your judgment, and the very bread he eats, even the education forced upon him by his cousin is grudged, and if you could have your way,

he would be taken to Kamtschatka or the South Sea Islands or some other corner of the world."

"Hale, don't you like to see gratitude in dependents?"

"No, I don't in children; they are born to the inheritance of helplessness and dependence, and the last thing I should wish to inculcate in a child, would be grateful thanks for the faithful performance of my duty towards him."

"By George! I've a great mind to tip you off this wall, Hale; you would let daylight into any thing, even the cell of a Jesuit. Can't a person have fancies?—or prejudices if you will? must a fellow come in contact with those who are disagreeable?"

"If they are his relations, *yes*; if they are unfortunate, *yes*; and if they are thrown by God's Providence into his immediate neighborhood, *yes*!"

Mr. Hale whittled energetically. Paul poked the ground with his cane.

"Did I not tell you, Hale, awhile ago that I was going to the Devil? and that being the case, of course, then, I am nearer his dominion to-day; that is settled, but I tell you, with the full conviction of my future, if I thought he [flourishing his cane towards the team] would ever be master here, it should be with me stretched across the old hearth-stone."

Mr. Hale arose from the wall, and with a manner in which grief, offended dignity, and a recoil were blended, strode on towards the house. Paul was still by his side, and even took hold of his arm,—while along that scathed heart, ran a momentary throb of sympathies, like the one gasp of a feeble new-born infant,—the true element of life was wanting and it died.

In the parlor, Paul kept his back to the portraits and

his eyes upon the hearth. The bewildered state of his mind, awoke only to the words of Mr. Hale to Sallie.

"Miss Cranston, these are the papers, you will please keep them in a safe place."

Sallie turned down the old desk, and Mr. Hale thrust them carefully into an arched drawer, forming the centre of the desk.

"Miss Cranston, in case of fire be sure and make these your first care."

"Oh, don't suggest any thing so dreadful as fire; Cranston House is secure I hope from such a destiny."

"Lock that drawer, if you please, and take good care of the key."

"What, take it away from its accustomed place in the drawer? Why, the result would be, I should forget where I kept it."

"In that case the papers would be safe as long as the desk was."

"Ah, but you forget the possible fire, — never fear, we do not lock any thing here."

Paul never spoke until the subject was changed, and when the time for departure came, and Sallie, as was her custom, put up her lips for a kiss, he did not present his, but gave her his cheek. On the door-step Mr. Hale observed him pale as a fainting man. The new-stirred memories had died.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

—— "Whereto serves mercy,  
But to comfort the visage of offence?"

"In the corrupted currents of this world,  
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above;  
There is no shuffling, there the action lies  
In its true nature, and we, ourselves, compelled  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,  
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?  
Try what repentance can, what can it not;  
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?  
Oh wretched state! oh bosom black as death!  
Oh lime'd souls that struggling to be free,  
Art more engaged! Help angels! make assay!"

## PAUL'S PURPOSE.

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EVERY year June comes to greet the withered cheek of age and sorrow, to clothe with a fresher hue of youth and beauty, the young and happy. Country houses are always attractive to dwellers in cities, when the blossoms come, or the early fruits, with the cream from young grass to garnish it, adorns suburban tables.

June, sweet June! Love does indeed "take up the harp of life," when the new-mown hay scents the air, and perfumes the cleanly chambers of every farmhouse, and fashion pays genuine though short-lived court to rustic simplicity. Sinners all are the residents of out-the-way nooks, when the necessity for fresh air no longer exists, and the love of pastime calls social city wanderers home for the winter, and "society" demands that summer, with its convenient friendships, and, it may be, its loves, as well as early delicacies, should hibernate till the season rolls its accustomed round again. Even autumn, with its gorgeous coloring, its incalculable richness of abundance, fails to keep the fond creature of fashion, because nature in that phase is not understood; and the heavy dews, glittering like choice gems, the fine gossamer, spreading its network over the turf everywhere, erects an insurmountable barrier between Dame Nature in her robes of royal red, orange, and purple, and the admiring friends of her

bridal time. Fashion's child succumbs to the delicate drawing-room slipper, the fine frills of linen enwrapping her person, and nature lights up her picture gallery with the glory of autumn light and shade in vain for her and her class.

It was June, and Cranston House was full. Its doors were wont to swing upon oiled hinges, they now stood wide open; an honest welcome greeted every comer, for the heart of its mistress was wide as her domain. A nice-looking place it was; the most of its furniture was older than any of its visitors, and so rich, as well as substantial, that the thought of want could hardly be expected to suggest itself. In fact, if it had, who could remember when want was associated with the name or place? In the store-room, to be sure, there was many a lengthy discussion between Miss Cranston and her most faithful friend, honest Margaret, upon that most pertinacious theme, that greatest of bores, the always recurring *subject of ways and means*. And the color came and went in Cousin Sallie's cheek, with the anxious beating of her heart, as she saw, through Margaret's more close calculation, that the demand was greater than the supply—the fountain growing lower than the stream.

Of Paul's affairs she knew but little, and she could not ask. Her work, her duty lay within the four walls of her home. It was enough for her head, her hands, and her heart,—woman's work all, and for those she loved better than herself,—woman's mission. Paul did not go to his country house for the summer. It was strange! had the crash come? Who was there to tell her if it was so? Sallie never read the papers; her

life, her world lay within mere advertisements. Then she had learned long before, that it was better not to be too curious to arrive at any knowledge where the probabilities were, that knowledge would be more disagreeable than ignorance.

Something urged her to make them as happy as possible with her, and thus curtail the expenses of two establishments as much as possible. All the day she gave to the wear and tear of caterer, to the whims and appetites of as mixed and as singular a household as could well be found. In the quiet of her chamber, when the house was at rest, and the stars were out keeping their watch, she kept an earnest, sacred vigil, and transferred her thoughts, wrought on the anvil of an anxious, aching heart, to paper. She trusted her manuscript to Mr. Hale, who having the *ear* of a leading partner in a popular magazine, transmuted it into gold. Paul, in the ease and luxury of a pinch of snuff, the magazine, and all the comfort drawn from, or supposed to be contained in one large chair and two small ones, read, commented, admired, and wondered. The truth never occurred to him, how should it? To him, Sallie was a "trump,"—he often said so; a "brick" he might have said, for she was being slowly ground to powder, as the servant girl grinds it, to clean her knives!

Sallie's table was laden with choice food, and her guests were happy; no one questioned; Sallie kept her own council. Mr. Hale alone, looked anxiously at her; perhaps it was because he dared not help where he most desired to. Her half-brothers were a treasure newly found. Room in her heart there was for them all; but Peter kept the largest share of course; for had they not suffered together? And where is the

bond so strong as that twisted by the writhing fingers of pain?

Look into any street of the city, where there is sufficient attraction in the way of auctions, military parades, "fast teams," or even fights, to attract the well-grown youngster, who, without the necessary supply of feathers, repudiates being any longer called a "chick," and dependent upon the shelter of his mother's wing, and you will find plenty of lads to represent Philip and John Cranston. Grown out of jackets, yet not quite ripe for coats; a feeble, failing attempt at corset smallness around the waist, by means of strap and buckle; a jaunty cap, adjusted in a jaunty manner upon the head, setting off, as well as exposing, nicely oiled hair, and not bad faces, because youth has its own charm, even under the difficulty of numberless educational mistakes;—uncomfortably particular about the fit and daily renewed stiffness of the collar; a little awkward in gait from the quite sudden lengthening of the limbs, having outgrown the elastic bound of boyhood, and not attained to the force and regular beat of manly carriage. Full of the conceits of foreign travel, it must be confessed, they were sometimes disagreeably self-opinionated, but then the creature who is neither man, nor boy can find abundant apology in all wiser heads and older hearts for a stated period of uncomfortable demonstrations.

Sallie's mother seemed contented at the old home; certainly she had every reason to, but it was a little surprising; and her excuses for liking to be there, her apologies for staying all savored of the ungainliness of of her mind. The element of truth was wanting! truth to herself, truth to others. Alas! the habit of

years given to misrepresentation had made it impossible. Latterly, the current of her mind threw up a spray in new colors. For the theme of her conversation, she took to religion; for a theory, to benevolence; while the drinking of mulled wine became the principal occupation of her leisure hours. The effect of it in the morning was delightful! it loosened her tongue, softened the asperity of her temper, without robbing her of her wits. The evening rarely found her up. Oftener than any other way the watchful eye of Sallie, and the strong arm of Margaret took her out of sight long before tea-time, and consigned her to a bed of forgetfulness, or the wild ravings of a hysterical consciousness! Even then she could glorify herself as a martyr, and between the paroxysms of delirium prate of a holy life, and the duty of charity to the poor!

Meanwhile the surface of things, with the exception of an occasional ripple of disturbed feeling among the young gentlemen,—was smooth as the lawn before the house, and harmonious as the varied tones of nature. Generous hearts are, perhaps, oftenest the most impetuous and unreasonable, and a quick temper, is interwoven with the largest magnanimity. Whatever we have, or are, within ourselves, is an inheritance. If it be an evil, hard to see and harder to overcome, what better can be given us than pity? How can we better help each other than by the love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, and hopeth all things?"

Under the peculiar training of the Cranstons, it could hardly be expected that some of the wrong feeling existing in the minds of the parents towards Peter should not be transmitted to the sons. Naturally sensitive,

even with the firm mastery time and real principle had given him over himself, Peter found it harder than any thing he ever attempted, to hear without comment, or apparent notice, certain flings, and sly home thrusts, aimed at himself. Even Paul who delighted so much in "pluck," was often amused at the word sparring, where-with the young people at Cranston House, exercised themselves; while Sallie, to whom the very construction of Peter's mind was as an open book, left him to his own strength and skill, and not without a certain pride, feeling sure he was equal to fighting his own battles.

It was on this wise one night when the sun departed. The lawn had been newly mown, and the sweet odor, such as no toilet artist, even in high-scented Paris, could extract from nature, crept into every window, and greeted every face. Upon the veranda, at the west end of the house, Philip and John had flung themselves in idle listlessness.

"Hallo, Peter; will you go fishing?"

"Not till I get this grass raked up."

"Why not? Jonas can do that."

"Jonas has his own work to do."

"Rake up all that grass? it will make it too late. Will you fire at a target?"

"Wait till this is done; then I will, if there is time."

"Why, it wont rain; what is the use? You have done more than enough to pay for your board already."

Peter colored slightly, but used his rake without comment. Philip tossed a penny upon the floor awhile.

"I say now, Peter, you have more than earned your board; or do you have wages?"

"If I earn my board it is more than you will ever do

I reckon, and if I have wages, you will yet wish to share them with me."

"Ah, how do you know?"

"I judge from appearances."

"You do? I take it a man don't work unless he is obliged to."

"That depends upon what kind of a man he is; I am obliged to, and do; you are obliged to, and do not."

"Where is my obligation, I should like to know?"

"It's on the way to you, you will see it if you look."

"What right have you to say that to me?"

"You began the conversation I believe."

"Well, will you shoot?"

"No."

"Then I will shoot alone," and springing some three rods from the piazza, he aimed a pocket pistol at the old apple-tree standing in full leaf close by the shed, and fired.

Peter, taking no notice only of his hay, had his back towards them; the noise brought him suddenly round, as he did so, something rustled through the tree and fell with the unmistakable weight of a dead body to the ground. It was "Proudy," Peter's friend and companion from his boyhood. The rake fell from his hand, and one bound brought him to the foot of the apple-tree, where poor "Proudy" with one gasp, stretched her body to its full length and died.

With the exception of Mrs. Cranston who slept, and and Paul who stood immovable in the door opening on to the piazza, the whole family encircled that tree, gazing in silence and a sort of terror at the wantonly stricken pet of years. What a comment each face was upon the thoughtless cruelty of rude boyhood.



For the first time in his life, Peter was at bay. Grief, those only can understand whose hearts cling to pets, sunk down deep within him; while out through his eyes, dry and glittering, looked the spirit of defiance. The rich color of his fine complexion, concentrated its forces in a burning red spot on each cheek, while a frightful paleness left the compressed lips and chin colorless as marble. Immediate retaliation spoke, both from that twitching of the lip and the compressed fist. It was but a moment, then there burst from his tongue the long-pent consciousness of wrong, in high, sharp words, falling in lash-like scorn and withering eloquence, upon the ears of his dumb and astonished listeners.

Catching Philip by the collar, he hurled him out upon the lawn, and with the strength of a lion, he swung him round and round, while his tongue lashed him like a scorpion. John rushed to the assistance of his brother; single handed Peter fought them both. Once and again he threw Philip and flung John upon him. Then he drew up to a height he never seemed to have before; like a young trained Spartan, with his arms folded close across his breast, his shoulders braced, one foot advanced, watching ready to meet them as they arose.

Paul Cranston stood in the door opening on to the piazza, but he knew as well as any one else, that he could not walk; consequently, he could not fight. Luckily for him his senses could swim above a vast amount of brandy. Unable to venture on the ground, he could yet see and think and reason. Let us do him justice, his heart sided with Peter; alas! that Peter, to whom that one fact would have been a palliation of all that went before it,

should never hear it from his lips. Very much astonished, and on the whole rather pleased at the variety presented in the view, stood Paul Cranston, filling the door. Not a movement had Miss Sallie or Margaret made from the apple-tree. An exciting picture it was, with the heavy green, above them like a canopy, the pretty pussy at their feet—the shadows stretching aslant the lawn, where the young people were settling their accounts by the higher law of oppressed right against wrong.

Beautiful was Cousin Sallie, the outside calmness only proving the intensity of her emotion. Her form, rounded into the symmetry of mature life; her face earnest, with an eye to the combatants, and to Uncle Paul. She thought,—her look expressed it,—“This will prove to him that Peter has what he calls the spirit of a man; all the reasoning in the world could not so have convinced him; but oh, it is awful! blood against blood! Dear Cranston House! those of thine own name, are like Sampson of old, razing thee to the ground; and will be buried in the ruins.”

Panting and sore, Philip at last cried for a reprieve. Peter took no notice, otherwise than to throw him again. Then Philip called out,—

“We are gone; you have beaten; we give in.”

Peter caught up his hat from the grass, and making a haughty bow, replied,—

“I grant you mercy. This, I suppose, is a bout at modern chivalry. I here bid it and you, an eternal farewell. Henceforth I am for *right* against *wrong*.”

Now his face was turned towards his uncle. With another bow, he said,—

“Until now, Athens has been my shrine; henceforth



I choose, I turn towards Sparta. Blood is not thicker than water. I would not trust my own grandfather if he was here. All the love and goodness left in the world, has fled to the hearts of the *women*. Henceforth I will trust no *man*, ask favor of *no man*! Cousin Sallie, you always told me to trust to the principle of native honor and magnanimity in every soul; I will *never* trust any *man* again, only with a loaded pistol in my pocket! Only with a witness, and his written word, under oath. Work for my board! A few days will prove to you, who has been the loafer. Work for wages! There will be a strike for pay; a choice between paid labor and starvation, among the male heirs of Cranston House, before the autumn cry of the whip-poorwill; and when you hear that note you will remember my words."

Down by Cousin Sallie he now knelt. Poor "Proudy," before he touched her, the excited boy flung his arms around Sallie's feet; then, taking the beautiful creature up gently in his arms he fled round the corner of the house, to the narrow walk leading away towards the shadowy east, upon the outskirts of the grounds, where deep among the mighty kings of oak, hemlock, and pine, the family of Cranston for three generations, were laid away in peace; while these stately monarchs chanted forever a dirge-like requiem. Upon the fresh turf over his mother, Peter laid down his burden, and falling beside it, he lifted up his voice and wept. The spirits of violence and retaliation, could not live a moment with Peter, on his mother's grave.

What a reaction fell upon him. How he sorrowed for his anger and his sin; this outbreak of the accumulated grievances of a life. How he loathed himself,

and called upon his mother wildly for help. Then as his eyes rested upon poor "Proudy," he began to justify himself to her; but the moan of the night, gave no answer of approval back. Then Peter took up his spade, and with a stern effort at calmness, wrought out a narrow home for his beautiful playmate, close by his mother's feet. His hat was on the ground, and his coat. The dew fell amidst the massive curls of his auburn hair, clustering around his forehead, mingled with the perspiration and tears coursing down his cheeks. The home was ready. He seemed to ponder for a moment. Then he started with the fleet run of earnest intent, towards the house. In a short time, panting and quite out of breath, for nature had been sorely taxed, he appeared bearing Proudy's cushion, and her drinking cup. A nice bed he made for her, and, wrapped in his pocket-handkerchief, stained with her blood, he gently laid her away. The cup turned down filled the space at her head. The grave was filled, and the turf pressed down over it.

Peter's passion had spent itself; and with it had departed the last remnant of boyish vacillation. Tearless, he again knelt with uncovered head upon his mother's grave, and seemed lost in silent prayer.

Outside the paling, within the shadow of the pines, knelt two females, — Margaret, with clenched fists, and a stolid face; Miss Sallie, weeping a silent shower, as though her heart would break. Each in their own time and alone, found their way to the house, and their own rooms. Each wakeful, thoughtful, sorrowful. Miss Sallie took her Bible and sat down to read; she could not, her mind refused to take in any impression outside of the events of the evening. She walked the

floor. Then imagination took up these little items,—these sharp needles that had so wounded her, and grotesquely blended the gorgeous and sober gray warp and woof of a month at Cranston House. Through the torture of her affections, her grocer and butcher were paid. Those who read, admired. The publisher paid the usual price per line. "What did it cost poor Sallie? It wrenched the delicate figment of physical life. It brought antagonistic forces to bear upon her, each of her own kindred, her own blood. In a narrow strait, betwixt many, she stood. "Who shall deliver her from the body of this death?"

Peter fastened his door, and went to work. Every thing belonging to his mother he packed up with the greatest care; then his own books, and lastly his clothes. Then he relieved his nerves, by walking round his mother's room, and placing every article of furniture as she liked to have it. Stooping down, he kissed again and again, the pillow where she slept. Pale and sharp, as with pain was his face; but his fine blue eyes looked out calmly, as though they had taken account of stock, and were in no danger of failure!

Cranston House never knew a night of so much brain work and mystery! Margaret looked into Mrs. Cranston's room. She was asleep. She listened at the door of Philip's room; she could hear the regular breathing of both. Though it was precisely the condition in which she wished to find them, and to have them remain till morning; the indifference which could let them sleep made her angry. Mentally, Margaret swore! she never did any other way! Carefully she trod down over the stairs, and looked into the parlor. There sat Paul in the arm-chair apparently asleep.

Two candles were burning upon the table near him; a decanter of brandy measured the distance between them. The evening paper lay upon his lap. She closed the door carefully, and returned to her kitchen. How strangely the same events stir the depths of different minds! Each of these people were carrying out the dormant purpose of years!

Margaret hunted in her closet, and produced a pair of woollen socks,—she drew them over her shoes—she raked open her fire and hung the kettle down over the bed of hot coals. She made a sally out into the shed, and returned, bringing in a tub with mortar in it. This she softened with her water until it was ready for use. The fire was again raked up, and when Margaret, the tub, and her light vanished down stairs into the cellar, the kitchen looked as though she had gone to bed.

The cellar under Cranston House, was quite a work of art, divided and sub-divided into most elaborate and convenient apartments. The wine cellar contained within itself, and under it, another cellar, where the choicest wines and foreign liquors were kept, and it now remained untouched, as the grandfather left it. The entrance to it was through a trap door, set the width of a brick lower than the floor of the common wine cellar, which was paved with brick.

For reasons before alluded to, Margaret talked but little, unless as now, she felt that it would be impossible for any one to hear her; then she exercised the human capacity of speech, addressing her remarks to the silent objects about her. Relieving herself of the tub, she opened the trap door and went down. She had not felt so much at home for a long time. Even

the smell, musty, mouldy, and old, took her back to the days she so glorified, of Cranston completeness and prosperity! She tapped the casks to see if they were full and safe. Every one gave back the right answer, for no one understood the peculiar language of things better than Margaret. With great satisfaction, she said,—

“All right—here *is* a little more room; let us fetch down a little more; it goes so fast these times it cannot be inquired for. Moses! if I don't have one basket of that port—yes, two. Below was reckoned by the old master, as a thousand dollars worth, let us make it fifteen hundred!” Even then, after repeating it two or three times, it did not seem so much as she wished! A miserly spirit, wholly unselfish was awakened within her. She spent an hour in moving and carefully arranging her stolen treasures, thinking, honest soul, that thus only could she make any large saving, for Sallie and Peter.

“It shall be opened first, on Miss Sallie's wedding-day—she does not know about this place. I'll keep dark;—and then for Peter's—dear! it will be just like my luck to live forever; them that was younger has gone afore me; I'd like to stay till *them* is out the way, so to take a good account to mistress,—such doings; oh, what would she say; I'll never tell her how it has been. Law me! them drops o' Indian blood, keeps this old Margaret tramping these many years. That woman, ah! trouble came into this house when she came, a young, proud bride—mistress saw it! But there, them's the kind what lives!—she is steeped! no, she can't die, steeped in the strongest and the best! I can't cheat *her* in the wine, if I weaken one glass,

that'll make her ask for two more! Ah! you purty dears! didn't grandpa say put them away, Margaret, for his twenty-first birthday, the morning Peter was born! Yes, I reckon she *will* put them down lower, out of sight.”

Margaret fairly broke down, as she took the sacred basket in her hand and descended for the last time, and, squatted upon the floor, she clasped her knees with her hands, rocking to and fro, uttering a succession of short groans. Then she made a rush up the little private stairs. Down went the trap door, and upon her knees, old Margaret commenced to lay her brick and mortar smoothly over it. And the muffled tap, tap, of her trowel, soared even to the chambers of Cousin Sallie and Peter, both awake and busy.

Peter completed his plans, and knocked at Sallie's door. She opened not only her door, but her arms, and embraced him. Then she held him from her in unfeigned surprise, for he was dressed for a ride. He answered the look.

“Yes, I had better go at once; it will be easier for me, and less humiliating all round. I should like to ride the Duke to Captain Barlow's, Jonas can bring him back to-morrow. The captain starts in a few days for the West, and I have decided to join him. That, you know, has been my plan, it is only hastened a little.”

So calm he stood, and firm, it was a new revelation to Sallie. They sat down side by side, and held each other by the hand. Sallie's mind, seeking to loosen itself from him and let him go, intuitively grasped at the word “West” as a clue to him who, never spoken of, was rarely out of her thoughts.

Tap, tap, tap.

"I have heard that sound before, to-night, Peter, what *can* it mean?"

"Never mind that, Cousin Sallie, I have heard it. A rat perhaps. Why, are you really afraid?" and the young man put his arm around her.

"But I smell something like cotton burning, don't you?"

"No, indeed; you are nervous; you will feel better after some good sleep."

Peter spoke up cheerfully; alas! their hearts were both heavy, and they put as far off as possible, any thing like last words, which would make them conscious of the approaching separation. There came another gust of burnt odor into the room, when, with a smothered cry, they both ran across the long hall down the stairs. Peter was first at the parlor door, and pushed it wide open. Angel of mercy! that these two orphans should be called upon to pass through so much! Light as day was the room; a blaze danced upon the table, devouring papers loosely scattered over it, and thence down the folds of Paul's dressing-gown. Paul sat between the table and the desk with his face partially towards them. Frightfully distorted it was, but the eyes looked over towards the door with an expression of fearful despair; nay a twofold expression, one, the loss of his life, the other, the loss of his honor, — dearer to him in that moment than ever before, because in the presence of those before whom he should have proved an example of manly nobleness.

The desk was open, the papers unrolled. Upon the table Paul's right hand lay, grasping a folded paper; it was Sallie's will. He, it appeared, had essayed to burn it by the candle, when a power, mightier than his

purpose, had laid that hand down where he could never more lift it, or remove from it the proof of his guilt, blackened on the edges, and wet with brandy, for the decanter was turned over, and its contents lighted up like powder. Why did he not call for help, or put out the blaze? Look at the hand! it is clenched with the magic force of a spasm; never more shall it uncloseth or close itself; never his tongue explain or evade this mystery. Paul Cranston is a dumb paralytic!

Peter took in but a part of that fearful scene, — the fire and Paul's danger. Quick as thought, he drew the table to the open fireplace, and tipped its contents into it; a pitcher of water on the side-board quenched the dressing-gown. The hand — Paul's hand — fell as the table was withdrawn, like a dead weight. Peter was too anxious about the fire to notice. Sallie took it up with a pitiful cry; she knew then what had come upon him; before, she only thought it was the effect of his usual stupor. Adroitly she thrust the papers into the desk and locked it. So tightly were the fingers closed over the will, she could not withdraw it. With her scissors she cut the document close to the hand, and threw it into the burning mass upon the hearth, and, as in token of her forgiveness, she smiled as she stooped and kissed his forehead.

"What shall we do next?" said Peter. For a moment she was in doubt, almost despair. Then her clear mind gave the order, —

"Run for Margaret and Jonas!"

Now it came to pass that Margaret, with great self-gratulation, and *no* compunctions of conscience, had completed her work and carefully placed away her

various implements, not forgetting the now useless key to the inner wine cellar.

She closed the kitchen door leading to the back-stairs entry, when she gave a snuff, turning her head up, as if to question what that burning smell meant. The reply came in the hurried words, "Call Margaret and Jonas."

She called Jonas most effectually, by taking him out of his bed and standing him upon his feet, and scolding him because he was not dressed, when he was wanted. He was only the more bewildered to see her looking as though she had been up all night. But Margaret did not stop to parley, she ordered him down into the parlor at once, and proceeded forthwith to lead the way.

Paul Cranston, while his own wife and sons were sleeping, was borne in his chair by Peter, Jonas, Sallie, and Margaret, over the stairs into Aunt Mary's chamber. His senses were perfectly clear, but he could not speak; if he could, how he would have protested against *that room*; as it was he shuddered; but no one understood.

The pillow Peter had kissed so sadly, he now placed to sustain the helpless head of his mother's only brother and playmate; and the room Paul would have refused to pass the night in, with the kindest intentions possible became the prison of his remaining life. Sleep fled from his devoted attendants that night — and for the next twenty-four hours, their personal plans or grievances or anxieties, were lost sight of in the greater sorrow for this stricken man.

Ah, what a blessed *fact* is sickness; it dispels our prejudices, it allays our irritations, it brings us into a

state in which we can feel real love for our enemies.

Were there ever nurses so faithful as those who took Paul up to his future chamber? and when the doctor said the case was hopeless, these cousins wept as though he had been a good father to them. When he added that he might live for years, it was most comforting news to them both. His mind was unimpaired, might they not win his love? and was he not the last of that generation?

Left alone with him at last, Sallie worked upon those fingers until she withdrew the fragments of that fatal paper and burned it before his eyes. Then she whispered to him, that the facts were known only to her, and never should go any farther, and begged him to forget it entirely. When she came to him again his eyes were moist with tears. Poor Paul had been driven to desperation, the crash had come. Oh, what unuttered thoughts and impulses must now be tapping at the door of his memory for an outlet, and the tongue could give no sign!

## CHAPTER XXIV.

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

Not friendship's sigh —  
Not reasons subtile count!

Not melody  
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew,  
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,  
Whose hearts leap upward  
Through the cypress trees  
To the clear moon;  
Nor yet, the spheric laws,  
Self chanted,

Nor the angels sweet all-hails  
Met with the smile of God.

Nay, none of these.  
Speak, Thou availing Christ!  
And fill this pause."

## PETER'S DEPARTURE.

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AMONG many families whose prosperity and distinctness date back through several generations, there still lingers a goodly tradition, in the shape of an impalpable yet most effective sentiment, the sentiment of reverence for man.

In the Cranston family, this feeling seemed innate; and although in the case of Mrs. Stuart, the very fact of her possessing this element, served only to make her trial greater; it still remained a strong ingredient in her character through life. In the mind of Cousin Sallie also, this "peculiarity" perhaps it would now be called, was unusually prominent. To thwart the will of a gentleman, and her circle included no others, — for even Uncle Paul, and his vices were "gentlemanly," — was contrary to her nature. She believed in man, she rested in his stronger reason, and if he was her superior in years, her own judgment bowed submissively before his.

It must have been a clearly-defined, well-proven case of *wrong* for her *not* to do his bidding. Such a case within the charming security of an old, and well-established family, did not, and of course was not likely to occur. But, as has been seen, she had sometimes come to diverging points, where quite as directly the conflict came between the opinions of her father and Uncle Paul, as herself; although upon *her* fell the disagree-



able action upon the subject. This sentiment, however, had never been so aggrieved, and outraged as this summer. Each year, to be sure, had added strength to the habits of Paul and her mother, but she had seen them only on occasions, and had had the good fortune rarely to witness the great evil she always had feared, and, though still believing in a general way that it existed, — not seeing, not facing it, not feeling called upon by the very element above referred to, to act with reference to it, — the evil itself became almost a myth.

It must be confessed, too, that Sallie habitually, as well as naturally, evaded looking directly at what was disagreeable to her. The beautiful, in persons as well as objects, attracted her; defects anywhere, her mental eye as well as the natural, never rested upon long enough to leave an impression upon the memory. Thus, this young and lovely person kept the chambers of her mind sacred to the choicest pictures of the beautiful, hung with garlands fashioned by her own refined tastes, and supported in graceful attitude by the tone of her fine imagination. Into them her thoughts delighted to wander; and even when busy with the cares that take their root in the simple natural of life, the light from within threw a softened grace and warmth outward, making no toil for those she loved, a drudgery; no existence, no picture, deficient in the charm of picturesqueness. Though the known and acknowledged mistress of Cranston House; it sat so lightly upon her, she cared so little for the acknowledgment of it from others, it became merely nominal. Those older than herself, were there, and it was pleasanter to nestle under an older, stronger power; and *that* Paul certainly was.

Tortured she certainly had been for the summer, by

the discordant spheres about her, by the truly awful dissipation rife within her home. To act upon the the subject did not occur to her. To endure, to screen as far as possible these unfortunates — for that is the true name whereby to call them — was intuitive. Reasoning about it had not begun. It lay too near an infringement of the respect and reverence for man, in the case of Uncle Paul; and the tender regard due a mother, in the case of Mrs. Cranston. How much of this was the influence of a strong desire, first of all, for peace, and pleasant, happy faces about her, it would be difficult to tell. It has been clearly shown, that, face to face with a *necessity* for action, backed up with the supreme conviction that she *must*, because it was *right*, Miss Cranston was equal to carrying out such a necessity to the letter, and with a calm dignity, repelling all rude or ill-natured questionings.

Sitting now by Uncle Paul, who was sleeping from the effects of an opiate, — wholly conscious of the awful fact that he was a helpless pensioner for life; not only for a support, — that did not trouble her for a moment, — but for every want, the most minute attendance; the question could not but arise, — “How shall it be done?” The whole case was thus thrust into her hands; and with it many a collateral suggestion quite startling to her.

Unflinching to herself, when she really took in hand her own *heart*, she now asked of it, if there could not have been some way of prevention; and with that question came a *resolve*, taken, alas! too late as a remedy for Uncle Paul, but not too late for her mother, and her brothers. No better time could ever offer than this, surely; even *her* heart must soften when she sees the



wreck of her husband, when she knows of his failure, and the pitiful helplessness of us all. Thus was Sallie's mind made up.

A plenty to do keeps down the desolation of bidding farewell to those we love. Sallie's hands were full, and the sleep each night, after a well-spent day of toil, made each morning seem a *resurrection* from the exhaustion and the discouragement with which she laid herself away to rest.

After a private conversation with Mr. Hale, Peter held more strenuously by the resolve of the previous day, and with the additional motive power, gained through that conversation, of danger to the Cranston estates. While Mr. Hale also gained from Peter a most astonishing piece of news. Not only the facts with regard to Paul's sickness, but with regard to the papers burned. Ignorant of the nature of those papers, or that they were not Paul's, but Sallie's, Peter gave up her secret without knowing it was one.

Mr. Hale took the whole case into his hands, very much as a surgeon lays bare the hidden mysteries of the human frame — appalled with wonder, yet excited and interested in the chance to exercise legal skill. The lawyer closed his cogitations with a stern determination never again to allow a paper of Miss Cranston's anywhere but in his own keeping.

Out of patience with Paul, and even with Sallie for not looking better after her own interests, Mr. Hale was not prepared for the sight which met him when he went into Paul's room. Thrown down, like a stalled ox, in the very prime of life and manly beauty, unable to move his right side, and wholly unable to articulate, Mr. Hale was completely disarmed, so much so, that

he could not find the power in his heart even to wrong Paul, by asking a confirmation of his sin of Miss Cranston.

Anxious to know the exact loss of papers, hoping even against hope, that one paper, not really belonging to Sallie, might still be in the ill-fated desk, he hardly knew how to get at the truth with a tact that would not excite suspicion, or wound the feelings of others. The important paper he found years before among those taken from the old chest of drawers. It was supposed to be lost, and it was with that knowledge he asked for those papers, and having found it, he, for reasons best known to himself, and perfectly justifiable, kept his own counsel. Unfortunately it was enclosed with Miss Cranston's will, and supposing, as he had a right to, that safety hung always round the old desk, he placed them there. This was a government grant of a township of land, to be located at the option of the holder, anywhere in the unoccupied government lands. For services rendered, it had been given to Peter's maternal grandfather, and by him bequeathed to Peter, to be given him on the day he became of age.

Mr. Hale, to make sure that it was not burnt, took the liberty of opening the desk immediately after leaving Paul's room. The methodical lawyer was shocked at the disorder in which he found it, and not a little uneasy to find himself at another's desk without permission; but his joy at finding the paper he so much desired, withdrew his thoughts from every thing else for the time, and he commenced with so much zeal to arrange the remaining papers, and inform himself of what were missing, as well as make up his mind what to do about those lost, that he forgot where he was, and

the strangeness of his position. Before he had finished, Cousin Sallie entered with Margaret, each too pre-occupied to be surprised at his presence and his occupation.

Mr. Hale colored.

Sallie put her fingers over her lips significantly; she and Margaret commenced to remove the bottles from the side-board. A new thought struck her, and she turned to Mr. Hale.

"Grant me a favor?"

"Certainly, with pleasure."

"Make a sale for me of the Cranston wines."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes."

"How much of them?"

"All."

"All?"

"Yes."

Margaret's heart chuckled over her last night's achievement, *that* was safe at least. They all proceeded to the cellar. Mr. Hale looked it all over, and took a list, summed it up, and expressed his satisfaction by a short whistle.

"Miss Cranston, this ought to have been done before."

"Oh, I wish it had, Mr. Hale."

"Well, take it *all* in all, had you not better consult the doctor before you sell it *all*?"

"Oh, no, take it. I have made up my mind, — *it is sold!*"

Mr. Hale, rather puzzled, "Sold? you anticipate! I will sell it for you, there can be no doubt about that."

"Say *you own it now*; please *do*, Mr. Hale, oh, please *do!*"

A bell rang from Mrs. Cranston's chamber. Margaret stepped on to the stairs, and stooped to tie her shoe; it was a sham, to delay answering the bell until Mr. Hale gave his reply.

"Say it is *yours*, Mr. Hale; do, do, please!"

Mr. Hale stared at her; how could *he* understand the necessity.

"*Me!* I buy all this wine?"

"Yes, you; you will, I ask —"

The light broke through his bewildered mind at last.

"Ah! yes, it is *mine*; yes, yes, Miss Cranston. Here, Margaret, bring me the key to this door! Miss Cranston please step outside this room; its contents are mine; I will send you a check to-morrow, covering the price. Margaret, remember there *is* no wine belonging to this family. Sold, say, — *no! attached*, say."

Sallie looked angry.

"Nay, my dear young lady, you will need all the forces you can muster in *that* campaign; and indeed, *you are* not safe from an attachment! Margaret, do as I say! It *is* attached! under the keeping of a sheriff, and will be sold at auction; if not previously at private sale. No danger of her offering to buy it, is there? Stop! Margaret! say it *is sold!* that there was a *necessity!*"

Margaret vanished up the stairs, while poor Sallie, fully alive to the ludicrous strait, into which she had led her precise friend, sat down on the cellar stairs, and laughed immoderately; in which Mr. Hale joined, with almost as much nervous excitement as the young lady before him.

Margaret could manage Mrs. Cranston vastly better than Cousin Sallie could.

Reader, have you ever seen an inebriate deprived of all stimulants? If so, you will need no aid in rendering the picture strangely awful to you. On the other hand, to those who have not witnessed it, not suffered from a case in their midst, no pen of mine can draw it with lifelike accuracy.

Strange as it may seem, the shock of the announcement of the loss of the wines, was greater to Mrs. Cranston than that felt for the misfortune of Paul. Wine to her, was like gas to the balloon, she could not *rise* without it. It helped her out of bed in the morning, and helped into it at night. Her first cry had been in a faint voice.

"Quick, Margaret! I am so faint, don't put water, — *clear!* I'm dying!"

Every morning she had greeted Margaret in that way to which Margaret had given no answer, but brought the longed-for draught. But when she came so tardily over the stairs, and to the oft-repeated command, in her own peculiar way, as though it was of no consequence, replied that there *was none* to be had, and, as if to keep the despair depicted upon the lady's face from one gleam of hope, added, that every thing round was likely to be taken, for the name had failed. She, sitting up in bed, fell back suddenly, saying, —

"Then I must die!"

Faint she certainly was; and Margaret, who had promised so fairly to Cousin Sallie, would certainly have broken her word, had it been in her power to get possession of any stimulant; but it was not. Mr. Hale had the key, and the door of Cranston wine cellar was barred from its natural heirs!

Poor Sallie! It cost a vast amount of thinking, not

to say praying, to place herself in this constant antagonism to those she loved; but having come to this conclusion there was no wavering; her determination was as firm as her truth to herself. She nerved herself to meet the consequences, very much as one does to submit to the removal of a tooth.

It was a month, before any kind of order or quiet settled down over the disturbed elements of Cranston House. In that time, the effect of her gentle and quiet action, the graceful movements of Sallie among them all, her manifest regard for them, and her unrelaxing efforts to make every one comfortable, began to show itself. She made good and kept bright the name for hospitality. The consciousness of obligation was not felt, and by consequence, did not appear. In that *home*, the definition of the word was not whittled down to the mere sharing of food and lodging; no, it was emphatically a home for the heart, the head, and the whole creature.

Uncle Paul was referred to, as the head of the house; and when with Philip and John, she even called him father, she loved him very much, she could not live under the roof with any thing and not love it. He was as dependent upon her as a babe. We love that and those who are dependent, to whom we are necessary. Through the day he was her care, through the night her brothers nursed him. This united labor of love, created a never-ending theme of conversation; it drew with a cord of love heart to heart.

Like a thunder-storm, the violent death of Proudy, and the succeeding events, had cleared the air of unhealthy vapors. To Philip and John, Peter Cranston Stuart who thrashed them till they were sore from

head to foot, who voluntarily exiled himself from his own home with the haughtiness of a prince and the bravery of a soldier, was the ideal of their present fancy. Strange, up to that evening he had devoted himself to their pleasure and comfort, and they did not like him at all; now, he was the theme of discussion, the object of promise, of interest, and family ambition. Truly, the human mind has chambers, so shaped, that no square or compass, no rule of science, ever yet could measure them.

Mrs. Cranston was really sick, and apparently sinking, but on consulting the doctor, he decided that the crisis was past, and time would restore what wine had robbed her of — her senses, and her health.

The heat of summer, and the constant nursing, began to show their effect upon Sallie. After all, she suffered most for want of sympathy. To no person could she really open her heart, to no person transfer her burden, even for a day.

Peter, had he been there, she could not have permitted to see from her stand-point. But then his presence would have kept whole a segment of the circle of former habits of thought. Constantly she missed his kind attentions, his care of the place, his voice that read to her when she could not spend the time to read for herself; then they loved the same books, and one book was equal to two with him by her side, because of the new creations of thought, one mind wrought out from the other. Hours, sometimes, they had spent over the dictionaries, digging up the roots of words. How much amusement it had sometimes afforded them. Then, the fun that came up in a dry gust so unexpectedly, that surprised her always, as

though it had dropped from the clouds. Verily, to the mind of Cousin Sallie, Peter was a wondrous young man; almost maternal was the feeling she had for him.

His first letter was short and business-like; never was so precious a letter as that sent her. Like the speaking of a ship at sea, the voice was of the past. A voice uttering words in a familiar dialect, — her native tongue, sent across an *alien sea*, from ship to ship. Those western breezes seemed to fan her cheek, that glorious sun, to light up her future with its cloudless splendor, even through the touch of that little letter. Will this young woman, whom rough and treacherous winds had left without any earthly props, swayed towards the setting sun, reach forth the tendrils of the heart to twine upon some new support yet to be revealed?

A new theme of earnest meditation, is the best possible tonic for mind and body. Cousin Sallie had found it so; the effect was most beneficial. Thought kept time to the tune of good offices for others. Her mind regained its brightness, her step its elasticity. Paul looked at her, watched her, wondered and admired.

The motive power that could have so transformed his brother's petted child into an indefatigable self-forgetfulness, — what could it be? Day after day he took up the question, and came by a certain process of almost mathematical calculation to some kind of a result; but always starting with the question set down in false figures; he each day tried his hand again, but with no better success. Still to him it was a most excellent mental occupation. She, at home in her capacity of nurse, and busy with her own thoughts, or,

ultimating some device for his amusement and comfort, did not recognize his scrutiny or help to solve his queries.

Many signs and tokens she instituted, whereby he could tell her his wishes, or reply to her questions; and that he could give expression to his thoughts more in detail, she induced him to learn to write with his left hand. For this purpose, she most ingeniously stuffed one side of a slate, so that the pressure of it upon the bed might not weary him, and tied a pencil and a sponge by a ribbon to the frame. When she first brought it to him, so tastefully arranged, suddenly his eyes lit up with the old, happy, bright twinkle; suffused in a moment, like an April sun glimpse, with a cloud, dropping the healthful moisture of tears. She hastily wiped them away with her own handkerchief, sealing each eyelid with a kiss. It was a silent, most impressive sealing of a new compact between them; and the hand nearest his heart gave the sign, by consecrating his new index of language with his first written word upon it — "*My daughter!*" Sallie's heart gave a bound like a bird, who, thrust prematurely from the nest, returning, finds it ready, and the wing of love lifted to cover it.

This was the first instalment of her reward, henceforth to be received regularly. Not the return of the lost Cranston estates could so well have repaid her as that one, feebly written word of endearment. So true it is, that what is vital to woman, is rarest given her. So little, so trifling, the taller creature, man, overlooks it. His wider vision attaches no importance to the trifles upon which she feeds and thrives; and without which she pines and starves. Or if, perchance he

brings the majesty of that eye to bear so low as where her heart reaches forth its tendrils, his judgment rules that it is folly. And he who would save his horse from too rough a curry-comb, flings these impalpable, womanly emotions back into the heart from whence, by God's law of order they took issue, to feed upon, and destroy itself.

A touching sight it was; that man, lying upon his back, with the sheet folded down so white and smooth, and his hands laid forth, the well one sheltering and warming the sick one; while his young and most devoted companion read the papers to him; or, at evening, bending low by the shaded lamp, read the lesson and the prayers.

Those ever-varying changes were at work, which should at last bring this family into harmony within itself. Cousin Sallie did not know how this frank confidence in her uncle, this coming to him with every event, however trivial, this keeping him informed of every thing about the country, as well as Cranston House, was beguiling him of the conscious tediousness of his position. Even Peter's letters she took at once to his bedside and read. Never a word was there, which she could not read to him. Peter said nothing about the past, and always made the most affectionate inquiries about them all. Soon he began to describe the new country; to tell of his adventures, and their escapes from dangers and suffering, under the privations of this new kind of life.

Like one who had been crowded into a posture where she could stand only upon one foot, Sallie was as much relieved as though the cramping breach had widened, and the other foot had come down strongly

for her support. It was as though she too, had taken a journey into a far country, and carried Uncle Paul with her. She brought the map. Paul traced with his feeble hand the course of the great Western rivers, those heaven-created highways of emigration, till he found, at the junction of two mighty streams, the township Mr. Hale had purchased for Peter, forestalling the time of his freedom, and taking his legacy as payment. Paul suddenly dropped the pencil, and his eye sought Sallie's. Like a tower of strength, up the mighty thoroughfare, beyond the new town of Cranston, stood Fort Leary, like an eagle among the cliffs!

Before another month the aspect of things had brightened. The worst was known of Paul's affairs. Another screw was given to the vice-like economy Sallie was retreating within. Paul never knew that he was a pauper. Mrs. Cranston never knew that she ate the bread of dependence. Sallie toiled on. She did not feel poor. Were not her father and mother sitting side by side up stairs? And were not she and Margaret equal to keeping Cranston House, and the wolf from its door? Truly, Sallie had much to rejoice in, and her heart was not ungrateful; it was only very lonely, and sometimes tired. Softened her manner was;—beautiful it had always been. Stately and delicate as the lily, she bowed before the winds that visited her too roughly, only to rise when the sun came forth, refreshed, and radiant with the diadem of tears.

## CHAPTER XXV.

“As from a mountain's top, the rainy mists of the morning  
Roll away, and afar we behold the landscape below us,  
Sun illumined, with shining rivers and cities and hamlets,  
So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far below her.  
Dark no longer, but all illumined with *love*, and the pathway  
Which she had climbed so far, lying smooth and far in the distance.  
Gabriel was not forgotten. Within her heart was his image,  
Clothed in the beauty of love and youth, as last she beheld him.  
Into her thoughts of him, time entered not, for it was not.  
Over him years had no power; he was not changed but transfigured,  
He had become to her heart as one who is dead and not absent.  
Patience and abnegation of self, and devotion to others,  
This was the lesson a life of trial and sorrow had taught her.  
So was her love diffused, but, like some odorous spices,  
Suffered no waste nor loss, though filling the air with aroma.  
Other hopes had she none, nor wish in life but to follow  
Meekly, with reverent steps, the sacred feet of her Saviour.”

## BEYOND THE ALLEGHANIES.

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ONE day when Mr. Hale was sitting by Paul, the latter wrote on his slate,

"I thought you loved Sallie."

"So I do."

"Why don't you marry her, then?"

"For the same reason I gave you years ago!"

"Have you made another trial then?"

"No, of course not; I should lose my present agreeable relation to her if I did. She has evidently forgotten that there ever was any strictly personal wish in my mind; and she gives me the confidence of a child almost; I will not risk the semblance of a relation I now so much covet."

"Hale, I have learnt a good many things I never dreamed of, since I have been laid away against this wall. I am Sallie's pupil, it is all pantomime, her teaching; she is too simple, too humble, ever to advance a theory, and all I can see of her soul is in the *acts* of her life; those are her soldiers on duty, and they are always on the alert. But there is a reserve guard, equally vigilant, keeping watch between her inmost thoughts and my queries. They, of course, are numberless, as I've nothing else to do. It is the first time in my life I ever undertook the real study of a young and beautiful woman, and I confess I am at fault; I can't understand them. Why don't she marry you?"



Mr. Hale gave no answer, but looked steadily at the wall.

"She has never been in love."

No answer.

"So she must be open to the shafts of Cupid. Well Hale, if you find the answer written on that wall, read it to me, I can't see so far. Hale, I will throw my slate at you, if you don't speak."

"The slate is wadded, and can't hurt me if you do," said Mr. Hale.

"Ah, there is a whole case, witnesses, argument, and legal decision in your face, you are deciding anew against yourself. Hold! I am opposing counsel, I take up your side now; let us see; so, so, ah!"

"You shall do as you please, Paul, but I shall *win* the battle, having Miss Cranston's *heart* on the side I have espoused."

"Hush! she is coming."

"Miss Cranston, good morning! I have brought the papers. Allow me to read; it is as much as you can do to keep the flies from Paul's face."

Mr. Hale took a seat removed from Paul, and behind Sallie. His hand trembled as he opened the paper; his own mind stood upon the pivot of the most exciting climax it had ever experienced, and, all unknown to his companions, he felt that he held in his hand his own destiny. Very deliberately he read, putting off, as a lady does in her letters, the all-important theme till the last. He read anecdotes, over which they laughed; political contests, over which they all sharpened the tone of their wit; then he turned the paper, folded it carefully, and commenced the Western news without comment, as though he had not read it

before, and was ignorant of its contents. Under the head of a letter to the editor, thus it ran:—

"There has been quite an exciting time, some forty miles from this fort, between the settlers and a company of Mormons living farther north. The troops under command of Col. Stuart, were called out, and although several were wounded, I have learned of but one seriously. He is now in the care of the settlers, and has every attention. He appeared suddenly upon the field of the disputants with an attendant. I have just learned his name, it is Max Wortemberg!"

Sallie held a switch of freshly cut peach leaves in her hand, and was swinging it slowly over the bed by which she sat, for the purpose of keeping the flies from Uncle Paul. Ere Mr. Hale had rounded his period, the switch fell upon the bed, and poor Cousin Sallie, for the first time in her life, fainted.

Mr. Hale was answered; "Confirmation strong as holy writ," was this fact to his mind. It did not sear his better feelings; on the contrary it awakened a purpose of action he had long needed, while there sprung anew the sentiment whereof he had spoken to Paul, of loving and serving her as though she was his child.

Margaret could hardly credit her own eyes when she answered the summons. Mrs. Cranston said it was the heat. Paul wrote with characteristic impatience upon his slate. "She is tired to death!"

Mr. Hale kept his own counsel. Twenty-four hours later, he drove into the yard with Madame Mazoni in the carriage by his side. Sallie laid herself down in her arms, and like a weary child who had found a secure resting place—slept.

Mr. Hale ten days later watched by the rude bed



of Max Wortemberg — who, unconscious, raved and tossed in the fearful delirium of fever.

From Georgia, along the southern border of his country, Max had journeyed, on earnest thought intent. At one with nature, — she his teacher, his physician, — harmlessly, he went on his way, gathering specimens of living wonders peculiar to each locality, whether of beast, bird, or of those children of innocence, the blossoms of God's bounty, scattered, like angel's smiles, everywhere. Thus through every variety of climate, up to Washington territory, thence through the aid of a guide, he made his way down the Missouri, and landing upon its eastern shore, he struck again into the forests lying between it and the sunny Mississippi.

Again he commenced his research, with his companion Pierre, now well accustomed to his silent mood, still as guide and assistant. The voice heard best, heard only in solitude, bore him unwearied, sleepless company. Not yet did that voice whisper to him of the fallacy under which he had become a banished man. Its work was to aid in the completion of the mental condition, through which that fallacy took root and form. It must have its day, its seed-time and harvest; when, being completed, naturally and without pain or violence, it would disappear like the mist of the morning, passing to an oblivion as real as though it had never been a part of his life.

To an old world denizen, or to the resident of our own cities, no more splendid panorama can possibly be opened to the eye than our vast regions of country, where the wild Indian wakens its solitudes; where Nature decks herself in luxurious abundance,

and riots in a wild, untamed beauty, equal to that of the lordly savage — both alike waiting for the touch of the wonder-working hand of civilization; transmuting all it rests upon into forms of artistic finish and wide-spread usefulness.

An exciting and onerous commission Max secured to bear him company in his wanderings. His research was as a government agent.

Thus then, with a definite object, and environed with the ever-varying minor interests growing out of his love of knowledge, as well as his devotion to the beautiful, the ragged, twinging, painful wound from the poisoned javelin of a first disappointment, lost its hold upon his thoughts. There were points of interest gained *outside* of its range. The world of society was thrust aside, while the tribes of wild men and their surroundings, became the all-absorbing theme of thought, wonder and admiration.

Years rolled on. *Time* applies an all-healing plaster to every merely *human* wound. And, as the last appliances of costume, by which man is designated, and his caste marked in the world, disappeared from his person — he stood free from the image of Annette, as though it had never been taken into his memory with the tender devotion of a lover. A soberer and a wiser man, was he for the experience which had cost him so much.

Dressed in skins and moccasins, with a belt around his waist securing a hunting-knife, a bag of powder, and revolvers, the gentleman so remarkable for personal appearance, was wholly disguised. Max Wortemberg of to-day, turning his face once more towards the ris-

ing sun, would not have been recognized at all by those who long before saw him with the stern purpose born of a first sorrow, not to say most mortifying disappointment, set forth towards that West, where his soul, in the first consciousness of its night-shadows, reached forth with pitiful intuition, smarting with pain, weak from its great loss, to the type of its own state, the going down of the sun.

Landed upon the eastern shore of the Missouri, his senses sharpened by the habits of savage life; the ever-westward rolling wave of civilization seemed to him breaking its course almost at his feet. Behind him, and beyond the mighty stream, upon whose bosom he had floated, till it assumed the endeared relation of a friend, stretched back the years of his pilgrimage, cut asunder from the present, — no longer a part of himself.

Recollection presented her mirror with a finely polished surface, and with a friendly hand held it up before him; wherein the man with mental eyes washed clean from the glamour of a false estimate, away from the outer pressure which would, very likely, urge him to the decision of a false judgment against himself, stood face to face with a future spanned with the bow of promise. While the voice, — call it fairy, call it conscience, or call it good angel, as you please, — that voice which is the faithful friend to each individual heart, — which is the God calling to Adam in the cool of the day, and talking to him as his best friend, — which whispers distinctly through the clamor of the outward din, when we cannot guide ourselves, cannot see our own way — which has patience with our mis-

takes, follows our circuitous wanderings, seeing how surely the right good is at last to be gained; that voice whispered, —

“Old things have passed away; behold I create all things new.”

Emerging from the oak timber, a sky, swept clean from all clouds — a sky bright in every direction with a golden hue peculiar to that region, hung over the wide-spread prairie and the far-off woods, fringing in their lines the wayward courses of streams and rivers. Beyond, in the soft, lingering twilight, like terraces of well-kept, cultivated grounds, stretched plain after plain of yellow, ripened grass, growing, waving with the summer winds, ripening only for the birds, and dying to give place to each returning season's new creations.

The sun was nowhere visible. The picture was complete without it. With the practical air of a Western hunter, Max Wortemberg stood, or walked leisurely along measuring the distances. Miles away, objects seen in this clear atmosphere, were distinctly visible to the naked eye. In the rear, a quarter of a mile distant, was his man Pierre, and two ponies, from whose backs he was removing their burdens, in order to give them the privilege of getting their own supper, and choosing their own bed, anywhere within the call of the said man-servant's voice. This man Pierre deserves a passing notice, as one of a class peculiar to our Western wilds. An off-shoot of civilization, dropped from the camp of an advancing army, to live or die, as the case may be, or the tenacity of animal life may be able to retain its hold upon a waif so helpless and fragile. Sometimes a strong maternal instinct, over-

ruling all other emotions, causes the mother to leave her companions, and devote her newly awakened sensibilities to this creature, from whose history the proof of parentage is stricken out forever. But oftener, infancy, under such circumstances, struggles up into a poor apology for life, knowing no ties, save such as the wandering tribes of savage men bestow upon it.

God sets his mark in ineffaceable lineaments upon the face and form of a child, and by a law beyond the reach of crime, the parents transmit themselves in their posterity. Subsequent neglect may turn the blessing into a curse, but it cannot destroy a blood inheritance. *That* shows itself, not only in the outer aspect, but in a capacity for thought, above the plane of savage mind, and a corresponding quickness of wit, to which that race are always oblivious.

Like his master, Pierre was dressed in savage costume, partaking somewhat, too, of a Spanish bandit's. Tall, and straight as an Indian, one glance at his face convinced you of your mistake. The features were strongly marked, the beard heavy and black, as well as the hair, now hanging in tangled masses over his shoulders and down over his breast. The small portion of face uncovered with beard, was of a yellow bronze color, smooth and really delicate in texture and softness, and your surprise is complete, when from under that shelving forehead and shaggy eyebrow, you discover a pair of clear, deep blue eyes. Eyes that a lady might covet; or an orator render effectual, in giving point to his arguments;—that to look at made you think of tears, for they peered forth from their rough, strong setting, like prisoners in some hopeless exile.

Pierre, as he now stood, unlading the ponies, was the finest looking of the two men. Max thought so, as his perspective glance came round so as to take him and the ponies into the foreground of the picture. His movements had the grace of strength and habitual exercise, without the rigidity and stiffness, which labor effects. With the rapidity and skill of long practice he pitched their tent beneath the shelter of a cluster of oaks, kindled a fire at a proper distance, and hung his camp kettle from the limb of a tree, drawn down in the right direction to secure the most effectual heat, while in a melodious voice and with a strange mixture of blithsomeness and pathos, he sang a song in Spanish.

Having served the supper of his master within the shelter of the tent, now glistening in its whiteness beneath the shelter of the old oaks, and gracefully looped up at the side, he made a temporary speaking trumpet of his hand, and placing it over his mouth, spoke a sharp note, which his master answered in the same way, and walked rapidly towards him. A pot of coffee was placed beside the kettle of simmering buffalo meat, and from under the coals Pierre drew, with great dexterity, what at first appeared like a hard slice of ashes. With his knife he cut into it, and produced a corn cake, well cooked, and sweeter than many a house-keeper, with all modern improvements, presents to her family.

Max flung himself within the curtain of the tent, and eat with the appetite of a hunter. Having satisfied his stomach, he reclined against his saddle and turned his eyes dreamily again, to the beautiful world wide spread before him. The glow of lingering twilight had faded, while the moon in its fulness appeared

above the horizon as if to keep watch in the absence of her lord. Max sipped his remaining coffee, and turned his thoughts within. The entrance of the moonlight seemed to have left ajar a door through which his memory, from its solitude, looked eagerly forth towards that busy world where the charm of true companionship awaits all wanderers. He made a stir among the relics of the past. Many faces had faded; Annette's was gone entirely. Like a soul a-hungred for sympathy, his outward gaze became more dreamy, while his mental deepened in intensity.

How is this? By what power of the night, and the near approach of return to the sea coast, and the prospective charm of civilization, has *this* image come in answer to his restless questioning? "And God said let there be light, and there was light." To the heart of Max Wortemberg it revealed a great *truth*.

I said revealed, for not now was it created; long before, when in the pertinacity of a falsity, he had believed that he loved Annette, and had exchanged pledges of troth with her;—for a brief moment, in Mazoni's parlor, when he sought the congratulations of Cousin Sallie, and she so cordially gave them, some dweller in his bosom, leaped up to his eyes and looked out—returning,—drew back with it, into its most sacred chambers, *her image*. Secure in an eternal law,—there it lay, unnoticed, unrecognized, until now!

Long hours Max reclined, lost in wonder over the mental conflict through which he had fought his way to a result so unexpected. The image deepened as he contemplated it. Her sprightly conversation; her patient assistance, when he first commenced the study of English; the adaptation of her mind to his; the def-

ference with which she had accepted his religious views, and the pleasant banter with which she overthrew his prejudices, all poured in upon his mind with dazzling clearness. And then reason, in her cold way, told him how in fighting at a phantom he had trifled away the day of grace;—for doubtless ere this, Miss Sallie was the wife of some more worthy and discerning man! Max sprung out from the tent murmuring, "God pardon me a sinner; to assume Mazoni's place as protector in his house, I thought was doing his service; but like the blind folly of man's self-conceit, it has led me into variance with myself, and every one concerned."

"De mosquitoes it is, master, won't give you no rest. Lie down again, and I'll spread the net over you."

Max turned with a half-conscious, sad smile towards him.

"Pierre, my good fellow, what shall I do without you?"

"Pierre is good in de prairie; he no good among de pale faces; no breathe in much smokes; no eat, no cook, away from the hunt, and the fish."

"Plenty of fish, Pierre, in all the streams and rivers beyond the big Mississippi. We will not part company on its banks;—go with me, and I will give you a boat where you can cast line all day, if you choose."

"Pierre no like much white face. Master good; Pierre wait for him on de river where de buck come to drink."

"Why do you not like white face? You love me; take me for a fair specimen, then could you not live with them as well as with me? And now I think of it, Pierre, who are you?"

"Dis is Pierre, of regiment No. 7.

"But cannot you remember who your parents were?"

"Never knowed, certain, master."

"Think now of when you were a little child; is there no face you can recall?"

"No, master."

"Where did you live then?"

"In de camp."

"After that, where?"

"In de Camanchee country."

"But your Uncle Frank, was he a Spaniard?"

"He no Spaniard, he pale face, in de regiment from de States."

"Was he killed by the Camanches?"

"No, master, Great Spirit called him."

"How old were you?"

"Don't know."

With sudden interest, Max came close to Pierre, and brushed the hair back from his face; examined his features, his head; the neck, the arms and hands. The eyes had always been a surprise to him.

"Norman father and Celtic mother Americanized. Think again Pierre—*Who are you?*"

Even in the moonlight those eyes, so earnest!—sad!—lit up and faded! A gleam so transient, it could not bring to its owner, recollection at all tangible.

Max laid his arm across the shoulders of his companion, while silently, for a moment the eyes of both threw a glance into the far-off country, stretching away in wondrous beauty, lit by the moon, as though, in that mighty page of nature, each would find an answer to the questionings of his heart.

"My good Pierre, go with me; I have no friends, no ties; you shall go to school, I will make a *man* of you;"

Pierre withdrew proudly from the arm of Max.

"Nay Pierre, the *true image* is here I know as well as yourself; but let me breathe into it the breath of knowledge."

"Master," said Pierre, pointing up solemnly, "de Good Spirit lit it! He not let it go out."

"I know; but I will love you in place of those He has taken away from me, and *you* have *never known*."

Again the eyes lighted, and faded, to the clear blue of quiet repose, while across the far-off horizon a sudden gleam shot, followed by a sound, faint yet distinct, answered by an echo that would have been lost anywhere, except in the calm of a prairie night.

"What is that, Pierre?"

Pierre had gone to the top of a tree; Max watched him and the eastern sky. Quick, sharp reports, and faint moaning echoes answered in continuous numbers; then the sky lit up with a gleam so lurid, there could be no mistake; they were within sight of the abodes of man, and that was a burning house or barn.

"Master, I say, pale face no friend to pale face. Christian fight Christian; look there,—it de north star—look there,—it the place of de sun's morning; between it is de *Mormons*. Look now, that way, from de warm star, to de sun's morning, that be de *new* settlement of de pale face. He have but one squaw, much house and big tent; *Mormon* have many squaw; dem he do steal—he rob much cattle and corn. *Mormon* have big block-house, he hide. *Mormon* very bad."

"Pierre, saddle the ponies. Haste; let us go and help."

Half an hour later saw them proceeding at a rapid pace across the prairie towards the "sun's morning."

"Master fight Mormon?"

"Yes, Pierre, there is not an Indian tribe on this continent so debased as the Mormons. Without doubt they have committed some outrage upon the new settlers of whom you spoke, or there would not be a fight between them. How old is the new settlement?"

"It come one summer — one winter — one summer since. It good pale face, it kind to de red man."

"What is the name of it, Pierre?"

The poor ignorant creature bent his face down on his breast and thought; but the name his lips could not master.

"Pierre have it on paper in the bags; him that owns de town gave it me."

"Ah! is he a gentleman?"

"'Pears like he is, master. His hair like de corn, his face pale, he strait like de arrow, he spring like de squirrel, he afraid of no thing; de good spirit do send him, he save him from de wicked Mormon."

Pierre's thoughts, to which he gave utterance, only served to make the way seem more tedious, with the good to be attained directly before them, and the dead level distance intervening, apparently growing no less. So little did the prospect change, that almost before they were aware of it, the brown, square building stood out in the moon-light against the sky, and the blackened ground far beyond, where a prairie fire

had spent itself, stretched along like a remnant of the far-spent night.

Between it and the travellers ran a stream of water, along which they rode to find a safe fording place. Voices sounded from the opposite shore, in words of consultation. Max hesitating to plunge into the stream until he discovered which party were so near, halted in the shade of the timber and listened.

"I don't reckon more than fifteen or twenty in that block-house, beside the women; but they have plenty of ammunition, and the house is pretty strong; don't any of you flinch a hair; boys if you see me turn my back, *shoot me down*. Think of it, Jennie is in that block house, and her body, dead or alive we must have or die in the attempt."

"Cross over, Pierre; it is all right, as these country people say. Hist! have they started?"

"Yes, master."

"This way, Pierre; we will make the rear guard and watch unknown."

In the shadow Max and his companion examined their pistols, and kept watch over the wide stretch of prairie, flanking either side of the block-house, and a few small dwellings clustering in its immediate neighborhood.

The men, under the command of their leader, divided, one portion going round the house, while the other dropped at equal distances, down into the grass, and at a given signal, commenced firing. The grass was an effectual screen, and from it they broke every window in two sides of the building. The attack was unexpected yet not wholly unprepared for. Bullets found their way out of the windows, as well as into

them, but they flew harmlessly over the heads of the assailants.

While the attention of those inside was thus drawn to the apparent attack, the men beyond the house had made good progress towards an entrance. Unluckily they were at last heard, and from a loop hole in the upper story, a fearful firing poured upon them.

Max had never seen Pierre so excited before, or heard him express so much interest in any people, as he now did in this new settlement, lying south of them, and whose bravest men were taking their lives into their hands, while they settled some wrong, the only point of which he understood was, the incarceration of some girl called Jennie, belonging to them. The assailants appeared to be young, with the exception of their leader; and there was something inspiring to the two noble hunters who rode slowly through the tall grass, watching their chance to offer a blow for her ransom, in this demonstrative chivalry, working its way against fearful odds.

Pierre, seeing the peril of the men in the rear of the building, instead of going near them, flung himself from his pony, and suddenly disappeared in the tall grass. Creeping, leaping, and relieving his inward excitement generally, by all manner of contortions of body, he made the circuit of the dwellings, clustering like out-houses, close to the principal building. Before he began to wonder or question really what Pierre meant by leaving their self-constituted guard, Max felt his hand grasping his own, and heard his voice whisper, —

“Master, quick; we can smoke them out — de hay is ready.”

Without a word, Max followed him through the same circuit he had previously made, and when at last they halted, it was very near one corner of the block house, where under a rude shed stood a load of hay.

A deep shadow lay over the shed, that portion of the house, and the two travellers. Max saw at a glance the admirable and effective design, and without comment they both laid hold of the tongue, and drew it, in the face and eyes of flying bullets, close beside the wall of the house. All alert for action, Pierre sprang into the hay and set it on fire. The chill wind, like an evil spirit of darkness and death, with the fearful force of an accelerated travel over a level prairie, forced Pierre's lighted sparks through the dry grass, and the whole mass was ablaze. Hissing, roaring, seething; dimming the moon with its glare; lighting up the faces of the besiegers, with an impish grotesqueness, and, coming as it did from unknown persons, striking them with an overwhelming conviction that the fire had descended from heaven in their behalf. The smoke poured into the windows, rushed through every crevice. The light even danced before their faces, and the blaze roared, as if in derision of their danger.

Outside, shout followed shout, — every effort was doubled. Inside, there was a momentary death-like hush. Then a cry from every man and woman for help, for a reprieve; for life!

On the top of the building, Pierre danced, shouted, threw his arms up, leaped in the air, and making his way to the edge of the roof on each side, made sure that the prisoners were well guarded; then with the agility of a monkey, he swung himself down to a window and leaped into the room, where gathered in a group to the



number of fifty were the Mormons who having never shown mercy expected none, and silently waited their doom. Their terror was so great that they did not see him, nor hear the voice of Captain Barlow at the window, both demanding Jennie, and a promise to quit the country, as the price of their release. Pierre knew Jennie; she was the pet rose-bud of the new settlement; scarcely fifteen, and very small of stature. He discovered her at last in the arms of a woman to whom she clung, in faintness and terror.

Pierre did not stop to talk, but caught her in his arms, and landed safe outside with her. The woman, all too innocent and beautiful for such a place, followed. Pierre shouted, "This is Jennie," and passing in the rear of Captain Barlow, laid his burden at the feet of a young man, who was staunching the blood of a comrade.

Their object, gained the good feeling in every heart stirred as strongly for the safety of the prisoners, as though they were not their greatest enemies. The door was then thrown wide open and liberty offered to all, with the condition that immediate preparation should be made for departure beyond the Missouri; and that any women among them should freely choose their future place of abode. It was not till the roof became a sheet of fire, that the promise was given. Then with a rush, the deluded creatures poured forth from the burning building, and hastened to save from their dwellings something for their journey. Several of the women fled to Captain Barlow, and in broken exclamations and tears, expressed their gratitude and craved protection.

Now our good Captain Barlow was vastly better

fitted to lead an army, than to provide for helpless women; and while he stood in the gray of the morning, looking down upon them, the expression of his face was truly ludicrous. This *was* a dilemma. To help himself out of it, he called out—

"Major Stuart, this way!"

"Here," answered a voice in the rear. The captain turned, and there, upon the trampled grass, was the young owner of the new township, endeavoring to restore Jennie to her senses.

Shrewd and clear headed, the captain's eye taking thus a rapid view of last night's havoc—in wounded men, appearing here and there, a stiff blackened lump along the course of their station, he turned with not a little assurance towards the new accession to their settlement;—while the last clouds of his dilemma were swept away by the first words of Jennie.

"Sister Annie," the child voice uttered; the response came from one of the women, who sprung to her side, and took her tenderly as a mother, in her lap. "Ah," thought Captain Barlow, "there'll be plenty for them to do after such a night as this."

That early dawn, gray and sombre, like a face covering a fountain of tears! All the softened drapery of night, the enchanting light and shade which a silvery moonlight throws over objects, now departed.

Grim and rigid, the charred ruins of rude habitations marked the ground. Daylight presented the actual of a sad picture. People in groups, busy with their own immediate movements, hurried about in a space quite circumscribed, preparing litters for the wounded.

Max Wortemberg had received a wound in the left



leg. Pierre, with tender care, was dressing it. Major Stuart was stunned with a blow from a falling timber in an attempt to put out the fire upon the roof.

The first rays of the misty sun, struck aslant the receding company of departing Mormons. Quite a lengthened train it was, containing not a little ability, energy, and strong, though most woefully ill-directed, manhood,—hopelessly degraded, by lives of disorder, and falsehood, no word of good cheer passed between the two parties. In rude wagons, on horses, and many on foot, they sped away along the open prairie, till the distance wrought them into a thin, receding line, like the pall bearers of some loved comrade! And as the settlers watched them sailing over this vast sea of grass, behold, another dark thread appeared coming in an opposite direction, and bearing towards their new city.

They hastened their preparations, and with a joy not all joy, notwithstanding their success, for was not their young Major insensible, and was not Max Wortemberg wounded? Alas! the mental state, after violence, even though it be justifiable, is the best possible sermon upon its consequences!

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"LIKE flocks of migratory birds a-wing,  
Our by-gone days sweep o'er the sea of time,  
On, on, to the eternal calm, they speed.

"One is baptized with sad and bitter tears,  
And bears an arrow 'neath its drooping wing;  
One, crimsoned o'er, with battle's gory stain,  
Utters a nation's agonizing shriek;  
One, scarred and battered by the winds and waves,  
Sobs out the grief of ship-wrecked mariner's  
Lays, the bright sun mistook for blackest night.

"But lo! amid the flying flock I see,  
Like doves with rooks, fair golden days, like this,  
Filled to the sunset with the song of birds;  
And gemmed *all over*, with the noblest deeds.  
'Tis God, who lifts his window, and sends forth  
The raven night, on its eternal course,  
And the white dove of day with leaves of peace,  
From His celestial Ararat on high."

## TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION.

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FACING the junction of two noble rivers, appears a high bluff, cone shaped, beautifully rounded, and green with native verdure. Not a tree, or a shrub mars its clear outline. Approaching from either river, it forms a distinctive mark; resting as it does in a wide table-land, and keeping the respectful distance of half a mile from the shore. That half mile is smooth as a lawn; and in Western parlance is called a "*levee*." Looking forth from it, you see a long way up these two mighty streams; adown which the rapid tide ever flows; hemmed in with low, green borders, where the very turf is level with the great body of water, and the flowers dally with its beard of foam, kissing its incoming waves fearlessly. Islands round up from the bosom of these great waters, fringed also with green, flecked with luxurious shrubs, laden with flowers and wild fruits; while the far, wide-spread country, lying off to the west, gave promise, long since realized, of marvelously rapid growth.

As you turn the eye down, where in harmonious, eternal marriage, these rivers keep a firmer, steadier flow, in the groove of a deeper channel, and the completeness of united force, the prospect loses in picturesqueness, though not in extent. The outlines are level to painfulness, relieved only by the ever-varying light and shade skimming both land and sky, and the

constant boat-travel, up and down this great thoroughfare.

Peter held the title-deed of the above mentioned bluff, with its surrounding "levee," and in honor of his maternal ancestors, named it Cranston. The location for a town, was one of the finest in the country. Capitalists saw its advantages at a glance, and made most extravagant offers to Peter. He had been forced prematurely into manhood, and his plans took form; extending over a period of years; so that no inducement swayed him from his purpose. He opened a land office, — town lots sold rapidly at high prices, and to actual settlers.

The greensward of the levee was soiled and tumbled with the tramp of busy feet; and lumbered with freight, now constantly landing from the river-boats. A few slight, ill-constructed cabins dotted the surface, even to the top of the fine bluff.

As it then was, a city of cabins, rough, untidy, and uncomfortable, with but a few hundred inhabitants, — the morning after the flight of the Mormons, from the neighboring prairie, it presented a new feature of beauty to the view. On the river's bank, a mile or more from Cranston, the tents of a company of United States Dragoons glistened in the light, and fluttered in the breeze.

To the settlers, it was not a surprise. They had asked protection; and although the capture of Jennie had compelled them to take the matter of her rescue into their own hands, a previous experience of two years, led them to believe their only safety would be in the acknowledged protection of government.

The land hunger, incident to man, finds ample nour-

ishment in Western townships; with variety enough, in "corner lots," mill sites, and prospective railroad shares, to allay any irritation of the digestive organization, which food poorly cooked, impure water, and bad whisky might excite; while wealth in the future, and power as large landholders, kills out every lingering twinge of homesickness. To look in among them one's first impression would be, that emigration inevitably tended to barbarism. After observation modifies that impression. The new, perhaps any new condition, evolves a new phase of manhood; verily, too much freedom of action, is almost as disastrous as too little. The life of the emigrant is a wild one, of necessity. Nature presents a correspondingly wild aspect to meet it. He grows merry, uproarious, and happy in the disorder and slovenly condition through which he best rises to power, — the power of wealth. If he be ideal in character, he does not really *live* in his present surroundings, but rather in a palace, sometime to grow up from his prospective wealth; and if there was no more land to "go in and possess;" if no more town sites were offered, to tempt successfully the appetite of land hunger, the holy love of home, — a homestead, — might ultimate itself in the great West, with the most happy results.

In emigration, woman, being most devoted to home, suffers most. I mean personal suffering and privation. In the fact of mental or moral depreciation, she is least in danger, because her affections make her heaven; those, she takes with her. Her mind is set to music under any outer condition; her suffering, therefore, in a new, strange, and lonely life, arises from the difficulty under which she labors of re-arranging her notes

upon the unyielding facts of a life outside civilization. The wild utterances of nature are new and strange to her, and the language thereof does not come in like a welcome. But in after years, when she has, through habit, become familiar with her surroundings, and through new ties, fastened to her new locality, and full of love for it, that would be a nice analysis which could separate the actual, local attachment, from its accidental, which could thus give the proof of how little she *lives in place*, and how really in the harmony of social relations and her home thus created.

Ordinarily, dwellers in far-off cabins, bred perhaps in cities, now stranded beyond the reach of all usual modes of communication, catch at any novelty with amusing avidity. Those glittering tents, pitched noiselessly, the women looked forth from the doors of their new homes at them with eagerness and a certain kind of awe; the men with a thrill of national pride and sense of security. More than one cabin, however, stood closed and darkened from the glare of day, while woman's careful tread and busy hands kept watch over the wounded and suffering.

A long, low building took the name of hospital, and was in charge of "Sister Annie," a name widely known in the region, as attached to a Sister of Charity, belonging to the convent, from which, while out to see after the sick, she had been taken away with little Jennie.

Within a stone's throw of the hospital, stood another small building, with only one room. The door opened under a sheltering roof, hardly worthy the name of piazza, yet giving an air of comfort, and even tastefulness nowhere else seen in the settlement. Within,

a decent floor of rough boards covered the whole room, another item of comfort superior to the general condition, and along the inside walls were fitted rude boxes, about two feet from the floor, like sailor's berths in ships, each containing a mattress, and coverlet of buffalo skins. In one corner of the room was a pile of mattresses, and an abundance of dark blue blankets, folded neatly, graced a pole stretching against the wall behind them.

The door of the cabin had been suddenly thrown wide open. Opposite it, two berths were filled with men, tossing in helpless, feverish unconsciousness, and calling vainly for the absent, who, in the delusion of fever, seemed to them close at hand. The cabin was intensely hot, for the sun stood high in the heavens, the roof was thin, and no grateful shade of oak, cottonwood or walnut hung its luxuriant branches between it and the noonday heat.

With an odd mixture of fear and anxiety, zeal and conscious ignorance of sickness, Pierre watched over them, finding certainly as much as he could do, to keep them from throwing themselves out upon the floor.

By the fire in one end of the room, stooping over the coals, was a fair young girl, small of stature, dressed like a child, having short skirts and pure white pantalettes fastened into a band round her well-turned ankle. Her dress was in that good taste which indicates refinement and gentle breeding, and the air of the child was that of a "lady to the manor born." Her hair, brown, glossy, and long, hung in heavy braids over her shoulders, and as she stood stooping over, stirring gruel, she exhibited the graceful feet, slender, delicate, and well poised. One look served to prove that she had

trod the pavement and the drawing-room, ere she graced the broad prairie and the rude cabin. Her beauty consisted of a fine rosy complexion, and sweet innocent expression, more than in regular features; and yet there was a certain style in the outline, in the short upper lip, the Grecian nose, and well-rounded chin, which ranked her at once among those human blossoms whereon the beholder's eye delight to linger, and upon whose head, even the wicked cannot fail to ask for a blessing.

Her arm was bared to the shoulder, for she was at work, and the sleeve was rolled up neatly, out of the reach of soil, while the little hand stirred the liquid she daily prepared, not only for those tossing and moaning so near her, but also for many others, whose cruel fate had denied the constant ministrations of woman. For half an hour she kept her place over the stewpan, stirring first this way then that, then filling the spoon and pouring it back into the whole; for some faithful person had taught her the rare art of making a gruel really pleasant to the taste of the sick, and beneficial too; and to keep it in constant agitation, was the first and last injunction.

How often, while thus occupied, the young face turned, half in terror, half in pity, towards the sick, as their half-muttered words broke the cabin silence; how often her eyes turned with a sort of unconscious sense of security to Pierre. He had brought her out of great peril; to her he was no savage, but a saviour! Her lips open, and the color flits,—rushes from the lips; concentrates its forces in the centre of her cheeks. Max has roused up, his eyes gleam out from his burning red face, they soften as he looks at Pierre; they

say, "have pity upon me;" his tongue is parched, Pierre gives him drink—his strong arms, hairy, and tense with sinews, from which the flesh has wasted, toss up and down, as though hunting for rest.

"Pierre, my good fellow, lend a hand!—here, lift me out of this ditch!—I shall suffocate! Open the cover, quick! O God, most merciful!—Good Pierre; bring me water from the mountain spring; but first take me out,—I stifle!"

Pierre has captured the arms, and holds them firmly.

"Master, dis is de water from de spring—it is no ditch—it is de Christian bed! Pierre could do better in de great prairie with master—"

"Bed! said you? bed! ha ha, a *bed* in the American wilds! Pierre you are *drunk*;—see here; it is a gully in the sand bar! it rained all night, red hot bullets!—blazing through the river, turning its course; help!—help!—the flood is coming back again!—Pierre, where *are* you?—oh! I am drowning!—oh, how hot!"

Then came a dreadful groan, and kind Nature wrapped about Max Worttemberg the cover of unconsciousness.

Jennie put her little apron over her quivering face for a brief moment, then with womanly intuition she sought a remedy. She pulled Pierre by the rough sleeve of his hunting shirt, and whispered,—

"See, what a pile of wider mattresses; bring one here, and lift him on the floor—it is better than that narrow crib."

Pierre did as he was commanded; and in his enlarged border Max's restless spirit relieved itself in

bodily motion. Jennie now poured her gruel into drinking cups, and taking a cloth from the wall, washed with nice dexterity, the stewpan, and put it upon a shelf, outside, to dry. She swept the room, darkened the windows, and then, coming close to the other invalid, she stood and watched him. Her heated face subsided into paleness, almost, and over its soft expression, tender, anxious emotion, spread in veil-like modesty. He slept a heavy, frightful sleep; she listened to the long, unnatural breathing; she drew closer to him with eager terror; then she ran to the mattresses;—

“Pierre, help me; Mr. Stuart must have more air, the strength has all gone out of him.”

Pierre brought the bed, and there, side by side, on the rude floor, two strong men lay, stricken powerless; dependent upon ignorant, savage nurture, and childish inexperience, for every want, for every attention.

Many times each day, “Sister Annie” came to see that all was going on right, and to cheer them by her wise simplicity. Every day the same routine of nursing, of consultation, of momentary beguilement, notched its mark upon the calendar of time. With curious, half-wondering earnestness, Jennie sometimes stood upon the threshold, gazing at the white, picturesque tents, or listening to the strains of martial music, borne across the arm of the river, running up into the shore, making the distance between her and the dragoons, nearly all spanned with water.

Three weeks passed, and yet the improvement was not perceptible. The heat at noonday was most intolerable, and midnight, chill as winter. Both extremes penetrated the cabin, as really as it did the sur-

rounding country. The effect upon the sick, was most pernicious. The gain of the day was lost in the change of the night.

Happily for Jennie and Pierre, they did not realize the danger from this continued prostration. To them, fever had settled into a routine, which, loving their patients so much, was any thing but irksome to them. It was wonderful, too, how Jennie, from the hard material about her, and the poverty of appliances, contrived to arrange that rude home into a sort of tasteful abode; and destroy, in a measure, the unsightly defects that first strike and pain the eye, when consciousness returns and presents *reality* to the mind—long under the reign of fitful dreams. From the fullness of her loving heart she did it; and though thus far there was no recognition of her presence, or of the flowers she each day hunted for and arranged in a broken-handled mug, upon the top of a nail cask, close by the side of the sick; it did not at all damp her energy in procuring them or take away from the pleasure of her work.

I said there was no improvement, and yet there was; Peter called her “Cousin Sallie” and thanked her, when she bathed his head, or wet his mouth. Max caught at the word, and fastened it to some far-off link in slumbering memory, repeating the name often,—like one asleep, vainly endeavoring to get hold of the clue, whereby to guide himself into reason and healthful thought. Jennie favored the delusion; it was pleasant to be called by a name they both knew and loved. There came the state of convalescence at last, when the rapid, disjointed thoughts that run riot through the brains of the sick, were spent, like the winds from drifting clouds,—and a dead lull, depress-

ing beyond any pain, laid its hushed hands upon them. To Jennie, it seemed like dying, and even Pierre, shook his head mournfully. Hushed and silent were they, in the presence of a dread something; undefined, yet mightier than they.

As the day closed, Jennie's distress increased; she turned her back upon the inmates of the cabin and sat down wearily upon the door-step. Her little hands closed nervously over each other, and with wistful helplessness, her eyes lifted themselves up from the tears, and gazed forth towards the encampment. The ruddy glow from the west struck aslant her trig figure, and rested upon the wan faces within. Reason came home to those bowed heads. For the first time, each became conscious of the other's presence. Silently they looked at the young girl in the door-way; reason had assumed her sway, but the utmost strength of either could do no more than turn the head from one side to the other. Yet a dim consciousness of gentle nursing, of the soft hand of woman cooling the fevered brow, ran along, like a thread of silver, the course of those uncounted days of sickness.

For awhile the thoughts of both ran in the same course; like children they turned to her who had been their comforter. Jennie received in that hour a homage never granted to the queen of empire, or the belle of fashion and beauty. O woman! chafing against the walls of thy home, and crying out for a larger sphere of action and enterprise, behold this little girl of fifteen summers, in whose simple wisdom there stirs but one emotion, instilled by a Christian mother,—the love of the Lord and the love of the neighbor. Not only is she star of brightness and

beauty to those prostrate men, but the anchor of hope, the "manna" of their desert, the refreshing fountain, without which they faint and die.

As the twilight deepens, she who is unconscious of the gaze within, and feels the grasp of sadness tighten around her heart, darts out into the air with the speed of an antelope; she climbs the bluff side, where, in a rude enclosure, the new-made graves of the settlement told their own story. There slept the dust once animated by Jennie's mother; a gentle woman, who having no home, sought one with the emigrants, and fell among the first fruits of God's harvest. Her death created in every heart a warm corner for the beautiful orphan, and the buoyancy of childhood set its signet of happiness upon her. It was only when her heart swelled with grief, as now, that she turned from the sympathy of strangers to her blood, and sought her mother's grave, there to find relief in tears; for Jennie was by nature reserved and undemonstrative. Thus relieved she went back with no sign, save swollen eyes, and renewed strength.

Peter turned his face away from the door with a sigh, as she departed. Max was looking steadily at him—their eyes met.

"Pierre, move me; O God, I know that face."

The hand of Max sought that of Peter, and the young head, with hair like the "ripened corn," lay in the bosom of the large, dark man; while from the broad chest against which it rested, deep sobs long drawn, broke forth:—

"You here; and to die!"

"Why not here as well as anywhere? It is all



God's country. His chariots tarry by every bed of death."

Peter's serene face, his calm whisper, only served to move Max more, and his sobs broke forth anew. They spent themselves; then his anxious desire to know how Peter, so delicate and tenderly cared for, came in such a place, began to question him.

"Your mother, Peter?"

"Gone home to heaven."

It was said with the quietness of one who also stood upon the shore, from which she had crossed to the other side. Max looked at him with wonder.

"Cousin Sallie, is she here?"

"In this world, yes; but not in this country."

"But you have called her often, and so have I."

"It was a dream, sir."

The excitement was too much for both. Jennie had lit her one "tallow dip," and drew near to examine them. Somewhat startled, she was, not only at their position, but looks. Cold drops of perspiration stood along the brow of Peter. She drew him back upon his own mattress; the perspiration wet her arms, for it bathed his whole body. How frightened she was!

Pierre had gone for wood. No sound could she hear, save the music across the creek; it was the Dead March in Saul. Peter recognized it, and said with a smile, —

"Listen!"

Presently her ear caught the sound of oars, — it was a relief, any human sound. She ran to the door; a gentleman had landed with baggage. Her only thought was the most natural one; that he was a new

settler; her strongest wish, that he might prove a physician.

"Which cabin did you say?"

"That with the stoop over the door, straight ahead."

Jennie's heart beat audibly; hope renewed within her; she took another look at her patients. They were asleep; and from their long confinement, looked more deathlike than when awake. It was not a quiet slumber; the eyes were tremulous and rolling, the lids quivering in nervous unrest. Jennie shaded the tiny light, and knelt beside them, watching anxiously. As she thus knelt, Mr. Hale entered, and stood beside her. His very presence gave her tired mind a resting-place, and her remaining courage ebbed out, the tears slid down her cheeks silently. Without a word, for expression could not convey the emotion of either, Mr. Hale took the light from her hand and examined them carefully. It was his first close observation of human struggle with disease; and although the shock was dreadful, he could not give way before this child; he must find relief in action.

"Bless me! this is dreadful. Is there a strong man anywhere within call?"

Jennie ran for Pierre.

"Bless me! bring that box, quick! Break it open! That bottle, there; now a wine-glass, my little girl!"

"We have no wine-glasses in this country," said Jennie, with dignity; "but here is a mug, — it is clean."

And the little girl held up to the nice gentleman, upon whose boots the fine polish from the steamboat shoe-black still glistened, a painted mug, having the



words, "my mother," written in gilt upon the side. New thoughts poured upon him, suggested by every thing he saw. He filled the cup, before half full of water. He stared at Jennie, and asked, —

"Are *you* the nurse?"

"Yes, sir, Pierre and I."

"Can you feed them? Have you a spoon?"

He looked from her to his box desperately, for he was an old bachelor, who had always been sufficient unto himself; and, although he had packed that box with the most costly luxuries, and with much self-gratulation, his life had prevented the growth of all those minor considerations for others, which are here represented by his question for a spoon.

Before Jennie could answer, he exclaimed, —

"Bless me! what a destitute country! No wine-glasses; no —"

"Oh, yes, there are spoons, sir; every woman carries spoons — good spoons — in her pocket. We are all nurses here just now, sir. This is my spoon."

And she held up before him, one, upon the handle of which were written the same words, "My Mother." He treasured those words; the shadowy form of his own mother stood beside him.

Jennie, kneeling first by Max, slipped her hand under his head, and spoke. Pierre held the light close beside her, so that the room generally was in total shadow. Mr. Hale could not be seen, while nearer the door, in his rear, stood another gentleman, dressed in uniform, quite unnoticed except by Mr. Hale, who supposed him to be one of the friends of the house. Max moved uneasily, and, without opening his eyes, said, —

"How kind you always are, Cousin Sallie; what is it?"

"Wine, sir; let me feed you, it will do you good."

Sleep had broken the clear light of reason, and he answered, —

"Charming wine, Cousin Sallie. Have we really arrived home safely? and are they all here?"

He turned his eyes inquiringly towards Peter.

"Yes, I see; please feed him, Cousin Sallie; he is the weakest; he took no care of himself, and it was a very long journey. Ah! if *you* had not been with us."

He pushed the mug gently towards his sleeping companion lying so near him, and, vainly endeavoring to turn his body nearer, spoke again.

"Peter, awaken! here is some of the Elixir of Burgundy; I am myself again! Pierre, my faithful friend, we will hunt to-morrow; we should have venison with soul-inspiring Burgundy."

Max was asleep, with the utterance of the last word; with him, the crisis had passed; life crept back under cover of that deep slumber.

Jennie going to Peter, called to him,

"Mr. Stuart!"

No answer.

"Peter Cranston," said Mr. Hale.

It was like magic.

"What, sir? Who was that, Cousin Sallie?"

Peter trembled.

"Let him say it again; oh, I want to see him, — I think I have been dreaming — very pleasant — I thought it was" —

Stupor closed his eyes. Then Jennie said, —

"Drink some wine, please, quickly, you need it."

"Yes, thank you—I have—I will—give it me.—Cousin Sallie, I've seen my mother; she said the Duke was harnessed ready to come and fetch us. I thought—how strange!—that Mr. Hale called to me—but it was in the dream, I suppose.—Dear Cousin Sallie—thank you, it refreshes me—nobody but you could have thought of it.—Did Margaret fetch it from the wine cellar?"

"If I had come sooner, she had broken it on my birthday,—I am a free man now,—I am so glad, so very thankful—it was my *one purpose*—to save *Cranston House*—you struggled so hard *alone*, Cousin Sallie—how tired you must be—I am so very glad!—Excuse my hat—it is very singular—but I have not been able to get it off for some time;—wearing the hat is the habit where I have been travelling.—I believe in God, Cousin Sallie; he has proved my best friend.—Jennie! ah, yes! [with a sigh of relief,] we brought her back safely, Sister Annie has the care of her—I can tell her mother of that—she knew Sister Annie—thank you—not any more—are we most home?—Oh, I am so tired!—my feet ache!—ah! I forgot—Cousin Sallie!—Pierre!—Jennie!"

Very slowly, covering a long time, these sentences dropped from his lips in broken fragments.

Mr. Hale, in dumb astonishment, looked at the picture before him, and listened to the touching words. His courage and capacity for action seemed to have forsaken him entirely; the conditions were so new, so without precedent. Jennie and Pierre were evidently his superiors to-night.

So fitful was the light in Peter's eyes, so sad and worn the youthful face, that he did not dare trust the probable result of a recognition.

Jennie never left her place by his side, or moved, only to change his position. The stimulant gave temporary strength, his cheeks became suffused with a slight glow, his breathing was more frequent and even. Peter ceased his unnatural talking, and slept.

Mr. Hale could not look away from him;—the face, the hair, bright, curling, and abundant, spread away by Jennie's careful hand, along the mattress ungraced with pillow or sheet,—the hands, transparent, tapering, clutching nervously at the dark blue blanket. To Mr. Hale, it was the young face of Mary Stuart. From it, as from an open volume, he read the double history of mother and son;—both so full of living, conscious torture, bearing a cross of life-long martyrdom; yet unsympathized with by the world, unrecognized, even by himself, till now; too late, too late for the proffer even of alleviation. Through sheer exhaustion, Mr. Hale sank down on the corner of the pile of mattresses, and wiped the tears from his cheeks.

In that shaded corner, where no light, but that of day, could effectually illuminate the darkness, the stately officer also sought temporary rest. And there, unseen, almost forgotten by the two faithful nurses, whose whole thoughts were concentrated upon those they loved so much, the two looked forth into the circle of light, fitful and dim, thrown over the couches of sickness by the meagre tallow candle.

The stillness of night's noon reigned; no sound without, but the moaning wind kept time with the distinct breathing within which grew firmer and

more regular in the one case, more unequal and tremulous in the other. Mr. Hale's cool self-possession rallied; his judgment weighed the chances of recovery. Max would live. There was force enough in that closely knit frame and determined spirit, to master fever.

Peter would die! Resistance had evidently failed in him. It did not belong to him naturally, if he had ever put it forth; there was no more of it. Every word he had uttered, broken as they were, let glimpses of light into the purposes of his life, and their fulfilment. The expression of the face, though innocent, was not that of a child, but rather of a spirit, who had measured its own weaknesses fairly, and was subdued to the most touching humility. In his sleep, words that struck here and there along the pages of his life in graphic, short hand, revealed how *deep* had been his suffering, how tender his sensibility.

To the mind of Mr. Hale, they tracked like chain lightning the dark sky that had hung over him from his earliest memory, and under which, hand in hand, he and his mother, secure in each other, trudged quietly on;—secure in God,—watching and waiting and longing for the morning! To the officer, so stately, so quiet, those words, every one, were arrows from the quiver of the Almighty, piercing between the joints of that armor of stiff, formal, manly bearing!

When Peter awoke, it was with a clear head and calm reason. For some time he did not speak. The night grew chill. Jennie drew another blanket over him, and gave him some more wine.

The gaze from out those sunken eyes became intensified, as he looked at her and Pierre; his mind

laboring hard, through the weakness of disease, to bring together the tangled threads of events.

"Give me your hand, Pierre. How long have I been insensible?"

"Pierre not tell much time—Master Stuart very long time."

"But some things I have known; did I not ask you to go for Col. Stuart?"

Mr. Hale sprung from his resting-place, turned a glance almost defiant towards the officer, and approached the couch.

"Yes, master."

"Pierre, it is my wish to see him,—it is my duty—will you go? I am in the full exercise of my reason, and time is short."

"He say he come, master; Pierre did been."

"Peter, do you know me?" asked Mr. Hale.

The sick face lit up with a glow of joy—then settled back into the habitual expression of humble, self-depreciation.

"I am so glad to see you, sir. You are very kind, very—you always were; God sent you to me,—I asked him to. I think I have been dreaming—and saw you. This is Jennie, Mr. Hale; she has been confounded in my mind with Cousin Sallie, all along in my sickness."

"Perhaps you had not better talk to-night; wait till you are stronger," said Mr. Hale.

Peter suddenly threw upon him that peculiar, searching glance,—so well known to Sallie,—and not unfamiliar to Mr. Hale. It *asked* for *truth* without equivocation; it said plainly—your *face* says I must die—your *lips*, that I shall *live*.

Mr. Hale's cheek tingled before that questioning gaze.

"Mr. Hale, the present is the only time with which we have to do; my business is important. Jennie, my portfolio, from the trunk, please,—and a little wine, I am so weak,—Captain Barlow will explain. God has heard my prayer and granted my desire, in that he has blessed the toil and privation of two years of exile. I am rich, Mr. Hale, very rich,—it gives me great pleasure, there are so many who need it, and there was no other way in which I had the capacity to serve them. No, no, don't interrupt me, Pierre,—give me your hand again,—Mr. Hale; listen! Jennie, bear witness! this poor creature,—whom nobody owns,—whom no one ever really loved, is *my half-brother!* Mazoni assured me, there was such a child, the *firstborn* of my father, and my mother charged me to find him and acknowledge the relationship. He was born in lawful wedlock, remember this, all of you!—of another wife than my mother. He has been defrauded of all rights, except existence;—but his life is without reproach,—harmless and useful. I made a vow, when every other tie seemed sundering,—that I would find him and love him,—be his friend.—I *have* found him,—I *do* love him;—I am so very happy, that I am permitted to prove my friendship, and redeem him from savage life."

Pierre, in whose hand one of Peter's rested, was the picture of awe-struck amazement. The words he understood, but the facts dazzled his uncultured consciousness. That emaciated hand, so fair! Instinctively he laid his beside it;—it was the savage mind's first effort at tracing the threads of a tangled skein in

human experience. Peter, smiling, drew the hand to his lips and kissed it, saying,—

"They are not *mates*, good Pierre, but *brothers!* The tie which binds me to you, is stronger than any other earthly tie,—it is a three-fold cord, which unites us,—the *same father*, *ill usage*, and *homelessness!* call me *brother*, dear Pierre; I *long* to hear the word;—I delayed only to reveal this in the presence of our father, and in private, but time is short—my great joy is, that the Lord has permitted me to open a new life to you,—and by my death create an interest in my friends for you.

"My second joy is, that I can alleviate care and suffering at Cranston House. Mr. Hale, redeem it from all embarrassment,—then divide my worldly goods, between Pierre, Cousin Sallie, Uncle Paul, and little Jennie.—Lift me up a little, Mr. Hale—please—oh for a drink of cold water from the old well!—Cousin Sallie has been the best of sisters to me,—she will not forget me; no, she will rejoice for me;—but ask her to receive Jennie as one to whom, living, I should have offered the claim of lawful relationship."

Peter drew the young girl's hand over Pierre's, and clasped them both within his own. Then his eyes sought Mr. Hale's face; with a sad expression, he said,

"Will you ask them, Mr. Hale, to forgive my quick temper, I was sorely tried, I was—

"Bless me! Peter, you were not a bad boy, you were not quick tempered; it was that you stood in the wine-press of dependence, until all the juices of life were squeezed out of you; your life, my poor fellow, has been a living, lingering death. I did very wrong—I should have interfered—I'm the one to crave

forgiveness of you — bless me! I don't know what I've been thinking about, I'm ashamed of myself — I, I ought to have been a *father* to you.

Peter suddenly flung up his hand and exclaimed,—

“Ah, I forgot, Col. Stuart will be *too late*.”

“He is here,” answered an advancing voice, and kneeling down between Pierre and the dying man, Col. Stuart took a hand of each and said in a trembling voice,—

“This gentleman will bear me witness before you, these are my children, born in what I supposed at the time, was lawful marriage; by a strange fatality separated, until now. My burden is,—has been, greater than I can bear.

Sob answered to sob from every one present, except Max who slept. It was too sacred a scene for a stranger to open the door and look in upon. The rigid formalism of a smothered life gave way, and the child of sweet Mary Stuart lay, for his last brief hour, in the arms of her beloved husband; while with shy movement, the child of a frail daughter of the regiment drew closer to his new-found brother. Very evident it was, that the brother was more to Pierre than the father, and that the feeling increased, as the power of comprehension deepened. Love, intense love, beamed from the eyes of Peter as he turned them from one to the other,—lingering, as though he would take the impressions of his new found treasures with him. At last his lids closed, and he murmured,—

“Mother, my mission is ended, I bring you good news.” He never spoke again.

Across the lifeless body of Peter the hands of Col.

Stuart and Mr. Hale met. The old rivalry was forgotten; the more recent, bitter indignation of Mr. Hale disappeared before the partial lifting of the curtain behind which lay the life-mystery of Mary Stuart.

Ceremony is rarely a guest in rude cabins; and never keeps watch over the sick or dying. Besides, Mr. Hale had not sat by that dying man, without receiving from him the unction of an humble, teachable spirit. And now, to forgive did not seem half as hard as to hope to be forgiven. As a relief to himself, he could not help exclaiming,—

“Bless me! Bless me! God's ways are past finding out; I cannot see the justice or the mercy of this arrangement; I should have planned, nay I *was* planning so differently.”

He suddenly checked himself, with a feeling almost akin to horror. His precise theories were trembling; a few more heart-wrenches like this, would set them adrift.

Everybody's attention was now attracted towards Pierre, who in a state of great excitement was explaining in his broken English to Max the occurrences of the night;—

“Master Stuart, he been gone to de Great Spirit—he me teach of de Father, he say he in de heavens—he good Father to Pierre—it is de same, de Great Spirit; Pierre no comprehendo—cause dat man, called Col. Stuart, call hisself our father—he no take care—he no be good to Master Stuart—no good to Pierre.”

Then with sudden energy he drew nearer to Max, saying,—“Pierre go with de master to de white man's

lodge — Pierre take de place of de brother, de Great Spirit call to de great hunting ground."

The sorrow in which the prevailing element is regret and self-reproach, who can bear? Such a sorrow the news of Peter's death brought into Cranston House. Words would fail to describe it. Imagination unaided by experience, cannot grasp it. Wholly unexpected, unthought of, the shock was terrible. No person in that house could speak of it at all. Gousin Sallie buried it deep, and to screen it from all eyes, all tongues, her thoughts, her words became more outward, less personal, more conventional. The rational, sensible side of her mind alone was manifest, that side, which throws up *no living waters*, but dips line, in the calm surface of nameless nothings.

Thus *she* had found, at last, the true measure of herself; thus came to her the crowning glory of a peace, that neither asks, nor refuses; neither trembles with hope, nor sinks in despair.

To every inmate of Cranston House, Peter's death enshrined him, as an ever-present existence. Like the bowed and stricken Mary's broken box of precious ointment, the perfume of his young life, so early ended, filled with heavenly aroma the *home* where he learned to live for others, and dying, sanctified the lesson!

Mr. Hale, with Jennie and Pierre, returned to Cranston House with the remains of Peter. Sallie received these young strangers as his last gift, and for the ensuing year, she devoted all her leisure to their education. Max Wortemberg remained to attend to the settlement of Peter's estate. Letters of business passed frequently between him and Sallie, and at last they took a more personal form, ending in an engagement.

Along the public road drives Mr. Hale with a friend, to whom he is showing the beautiful country environing the city. It is at the charmed hour of the going down of the sun.

"Pray tell me the fortunate owner of that place, Mr. Hale?"

"That? that is Cranston House," and Mr. Hale tightened the reins of the horses as they reached the winding avenue.

"Cranston House? That does not sound like the baptism of an American. Pray stop a moment, and let me get a better view. Like an old English villa; tell me how this stood among your people, who are so insane with the love of change, and who are always building new houses, appearing to our old, country eyes, like so many United States dollars piled up as an ensign of wealth."

"There it is again; you judge our people by the necessities of a portion; you gauge our tastes by the fresh paint outside the dwellings of well-paid industry; you forget that we begin where our mutual ancestors ended centuries ago, and that we are really in advance of them in what we have accomplished."

The gentleman smilingly replied, —

"By way of diversion from this national quarrel you and I have never been able to settle, tell me all about this fine old place."

"All about Cranston House? Bless me! it would take me a week, — a month. Cranston House has a cluster of histories."

Mr. Hale's manner saddened.

"My dear fellow, its histories are sacred and so must remain; we will call there, but not to-night; its pres-

ent owner is a lady — who — who — was married most happily last week, was it not, Jennie, my child?"

"Yes, last Thursday," answered a well-known voice from the back seat of the carriage.

Dear Cranston House, strong to-day as though the rough winds of heaven had never plied their blasts to prove thee; as though within thy walls, many times and often, the angel of Truth had not wrestled with error, and prevailed. Time, the indefatigable enemy of material things, will at last prevail against thee, also; yet, if there is to thee a natural body, subject to decay and dissolution, so is there, also, a spiritual body; and the material, of which thou art the sign manual, is already coming together in that better country, over which time hath no jurisdiction. And it will be found that the beauty and fit proportion of that Cranston House, upon which is placed the signet of immortality, was wrought in the furnace of human affliction.