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DR. HOWELL'S FAMILY.

BY MRS. H. B. GOODWIN,
AUTHOR OF "MADGE," "SHERBROOKE," ETC.

"Life, in perfect whole
And aim consummated, is Love in sooth,
As Nature's magnet-heat rounds pole with pole."

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD.
1869.

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DR. HOWELL'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE WRECK OF THE STELLA.

“Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and plunged like a frightened steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.”

“WHAT do you make of that light, captain?”

“Hamilton Light, entrance to Carrhaven; and would to God we were safely anchored there.”

“Hadn't we better hoist our signals of distress, and trust to the chance of drifting within reach of assistance?”

“I'm afraid 'tis our only chance. The rudder is so choked with ice as to be useless, and ice is making so rapidly on the rigging and decks that our poor bark must sink beneath the weight before many hours. Hilton, order a kettle of hot coffee to be served among the men. How many are still able to work?”

“Only four; Spencer, Ridley, Doherty, and Quinn were so badly frozen last night that they are disabled.”

“Poor fellows! It might have been better for us all if we had been swept overboard by the breaker that swallowed our Greek boy. But, Hilton, don't let the men

know that my hope is ebbing. Keep up their spirits, and tell them we are almost within sight of any craft that may be anchored in Carrhaven roads. I will remain on the lookout."

The good bark *Stella*, from Smyrna, laden with fruit, and commanded by Captain Ashmead, was bound for New York; and only twenty-four hours before this memorable morning of the 21st of December, 185-, her officers had counted, with as much assurance as sailors can ever feel, on a safe anchorage in New York harbor before night. The wind was then south, and a drenching rain had saturated every thread of canvas: before midday on the 20th the wind had veered to the north-west, and a blinding storm of snow had set in. So suddenly had the weather changed, and so drenched were the sails, that, despite the utmost despatch in clewing, reefing, and taking in canvas to make the vessel snug, the ice accumulated so fast, and the gale increased so rapidly, that the bark was driven to the north-east under a heavy press of frozen canvas.

Then, in less than twelve hours after the storm burst upon them, the thermometer had sunk to eight degrees below zero, and the rudder and helm had become so clogged with ice that they were of no service in working the bark. A few more hours of drifting and beating, with ice accumulating on the decks, and then with a sudden thump, which snapped the mainmast and lifted every man from his feet, the poor *Stella* struck a sand-bar not one half mile from shore. But between this shore and the disabled bark, the hungry sea was breaking in such furious waves that assistance from the land was impossible.

It was twenty-four hours after the rising of the gale before the *Stella* struck; and now night was approaching; the breakers were sweeping the decks, the vessel striking on the head sands with sufficient force, at each concussion,

to demolish a ship of ordinary construction ; the men worn with exertion, and nearly every one badly frost-bitten ; and no chance of relief till the tide ebbed, and scarce a ray of hope that the Stella could live an hour.

As yet her hull was unbroken and tight, and Captain Ashmead, John Hilton (the first mate), and all who could use an axe were cutting away the stays, rigging, and masts to ease the hull of weight ; it would be difficult to conceive of a situation more perilous and distressing than the wreck of the Stella now presented.

“ Hilton, if we could succeed in launching the long-boat, is there a chance she could live in this sea ? ”

“ ’Tis worth trying, sir. ”

“ Then, my hearties, cut away the stanchions and bulwarks, that the boat may be more easily launched ; and all who wish may accept their chances to live in it. I must bring our cabin passengers up to this deck, as the bark may bilge at any moment. ”

And before the long-boat was ready to grapple with the angry waves, there stood upon the deck, by Captain Ashmead’s side, a woman, a young girl, and a lad, the widow and children of Nathan Shreve, whom Captain Ashmead had found nearly destitute in Smyrna, and had offered them a passage to New York in the Stella. Mrs. Shreve had distant relatives in New England, and hoping to receive assistance from them, or at least in her native land to find some honest work by which she and her children could live, she gratefully accepted Captain Ashmead’s offer.

“ Mrs. Shreve, I think it best you should know the perils of our situation. ’Tis hardly in the power of man to save us. We think there is one chance that the long-boat may live in this sea, and there is a chance that this wreck may hold together till the tide ebbs, and assistance can reach us from the land. Which chance will you choose ? ”

The large, anxious eyes of the mother rested for a moment on the fair face of the girl, and then turned towards the huge, foam-crested breakers upon which the long-boat was now shivering and plunging.

“I will remain with you on the wreck.”

“Then, my hearties, you can do nothing more to save our good ship: take your choice between her hull and the boat, and may God Almighty have mercy on you.”

“I shall live or die with you,” answered John Hilton; and he disappeared down the gangway, but returned immediately, bringing with him several blankets, which he wrapped around the woman and her children, and then, fastening them as securely as possible to the bulwarks, he gave his assistance to the men who had chosen the life-boat.

Four sailors in turn knelt before Captain Ashmead, embracing his knees, and entreating him to share the boat with them; but with the kindest thanks for their past services and their affectionate interest in him, he begged them to leave him, as he was determined to remain by the wreck.

They succeeded in getting into the boat, but so benumbed and frozen were their hands, so clogged with ice was their clothing, that their attempts to keep the boat's head to the sea were futile, and in less than five minutes after she struck the waves she capsized, and the four men perished in sight of the remaining sufferers upon the hull.

At midnight the tide began to ebb; the gale subsided, and the clouds drifted away, so that the moon's light now revealed to Captain Ashmead more of the horrors of his situation than the darkness had permitted him to know. The second mate had been washed overboard, his hands and limbs so frozen that he could no longer cling to the

rigging. The bodies of two sailors, stiff and stark, remained bound to the bulwarks, no longer conscious of cold, and the blue eyes of little Nathan Shreve stared from their marble lids upon the foaming, cruel breakers, which could no longer appall or harm him. The last words that Captain Ashmead had heard in the darkness were little Nathan's.

"Mother, I'm not so cold now, and I'm getting sleepy."

"Good night, my boy."

"Good night, mother; but I do want you to kiss me."

There was no reply, not even a sigh or groan to tell the agony of that mother's heart, whose lips could not reach the cold cheek of her dying boy, though scarcely three feet separated them. She had talked and sung to her children until her exhaustion no longer permitted her the use of speech; and now her only hope was to awake with them where "there was no more sea."

Only the captain, first mate, Mrs. Shreve, her daughter Edna, and two sailors, now remained upon the hull. The vessel had broken in two amidships, and every sea was reducing her to fragments. Owing to the exhaustion of their physical strength, and to the hopeless, paralyzed condition of all their senses, no words were spoken by the survivors, no groans escaped, and no sounds were heard but the heavy thump and dull grating of the wreck upon the sands, or the rasping crack of some dissevered plank, or the hissing, angry roar of the breakers, during those midnight hours, when six souls awaited in hopeless agony their release by death.

But at last, after what seemed to Captain Ashmead an interminable night of watching, he knew that with the ebb tide the sea was falling, and he felt there was a chance that the remnant of the hull would hold together until assistance could reach them.

It was now early morning, and in the gray light he could clearly distinguish a brig, securely anchored in Carrhaven roads, not a half mile distant. O, if she had seen their signals of distress, and had been waiting for the ebb tide to give her a chance to attempt their rescue! Captain Ashmead was almost too benumbed and exhausted for speech; but, rallying as cheerful a voice as possible, he called out, "Courage, courage, my good men and women! Take heart; I believe there's a chance for us yet!" And in a minute more, with his eyes still fastened on the brig, he exclaimed, —

"Thank God! Yonder ship is getting out her long-boat. She has seen our peril, and is coming to save us."

John Hilton responded, —

"Ay, ay, sir; pray Heaven she may not be too late."

Edna called, faintly, "Dear mother, we may yet see land;" and receiving no reply, again she called, "Wake up, mother; there's hope for us."

The blankets in which she was wrapped were so thickly encased in ice she could not turn to see that her mother had reached a haven of rest. Words cannot describe the agonizing suspense of the next two hours, while the brig's long-boat was hovering within a hundred yards of the wreck, not daring to approach nearer, lest she should be swallowed up; and meantime the wreck was fast breaking up and settling in the sand. And just then — it seemed to Captain Ashmead a heavenly interposition — a large field of ice drifted by the wreck to windward, and kept the sea from breaking; and while it was passing, all within ten minutes' space of time, the boat's crew from the brig pulled in alongside the wreck. The two sailors had just enough strength to throw themselves into the boat. Captain Ashmead and John Hilton were too much benumbed to cut the ropes which secured Edna to the bulwarks, and two

men from the boat, with great difficulty, boarded the wreck, and lifted her over the side to the arms of two more strong sailors. She was immediately followed by Captain Ashmead and his mate, and the poor, stark, frozen bodies of Mrs. Shreve and her boy were left to find a burial with the wreck of the Stella. There was no other way, for every second was precious, and the long-boat could be freighted only with those whom there was hope of saving.

“My mother and Nathan, Captain Ashmead! you have left them,” cried Edna.

“My poor girl, they are already at rest. The sea will bury your dead.”

“Frozen! Dead! And I am alone in this cruel world! O captain, throw me overboard,” moaned the poor girl. And the only two living souls that even knew her name were so nearly unconscious from cold and exhaustion as to be unable to soothe her agony with words.

In the comfortable cabin of the brig *Champion* every attention was bestowed upon the survivors of the *Stella* that the generous kindness of the brig's officers could suggest.

The gale had so far subsided by midday on the 22d that the *Champion* was got under way, and her captain made all possible despatch to place his patients under the care of a physician. Hanthrop being the nearest port where suitable medical attendance could be found, he made for that place, and arrived there in less than twelve hours after leaving Carrhaven roads. The survivors of the *Stella* were at once conveyed to the “Bonsecour Home,” and Dr. Stephen Howell was called to attend them; but as only two of them, Captain Ashmead and Edna Shreve, will find further place in this story, we will simply say that John Hilton escaped with the loss of one foot and

three fingers. Poor Dick Bryan lost both feet and one hand, and Michael Reardon one limb to the knee, and one hand; and in the Marine Asylum, where they have found a home, they still relate to wondering, sympathizing mates the horrors of the wreck of the Stella.

CHAPTER II.

DR. HOWELL'S FAMILY.

“She doeth little kindnesses
Which most leave undone, or despise;
For nought that sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low esteeméd in her eyes.”

LOWELL.

DR. HOWELL sat with his wife and children in as pleasant a parlor as a contented and quiet heart could ask for. It was not embellished with expensive furniture nor costly pictures, but the harmonious adaptation of every article in the room to the needs and tastes of its occupants made it a most attractive place. Books, rare engravings, and flowering plants met the eye on all sides, while a bright coal fire in an open grate gave a cheerfully warm welcome to the doctor when he came in from his evening round of calls.

“We have the prospect of delightfully cold, frosty weather for Christmas,” said Diantha Howell, the doctor’s daughter, more for the purpose of drawing her father into conversation than because she deemed the remark original or worthy of utterance.

“Who ever heard of delightfully cold weather?” queried Mrs. Howell, with a shrug of her shoulders and a peculiar tone of voice, telling a sensitive ear that the doctor’s wife had a mind of her own, and never echoed another’s opinions if she could find a shadow of an excuse for differing.

“Why, mother, it sometimes seems to me as if the

cheerful comfort and warmth of our home were greatly enhanced by frost upon the windows and stinging cold outside. Christmas would be stale and flat if it came in August; and then in a hot, sultry day we should lose the pleasure of carrying mittens, and mufflers, and jackets, and shawls to our poor." And Diantha cast an admiring glance at the generous pile of warm things upon her work-table, the larger part of which were the products of her own deft hands.

"You forget, child, that if we had warm weather all the time, your poor people wouldn't need those presents."

"That's true; but they might need things instead which wouldn't be half so pleasant to make or give. Now, the most agreeable part of Christmas for me will be the distribution of these gifts to-morrow, because I know each one of my poor people's wants so well, and have made and selected these articles especially for them."

"How do you know but Mrs. Jenks will have half a dozen sacques and sontags given her, besides those which you have spent so much precious time upon?" asked Mrs. Howell.

"And Tommy Jenks will swap his mittens and scarf for a jackknife with the first boy that wants to trade," added Miss Louise Goodenow, with a faint echo of her mother's tone and manner.

It may be as well to say here, that, although Diantha was the doctor's eldest child, inheriting many qualities of his heart and brain, her half-sister, Louise Goodenow, was Mrs. Howell's eldest and favorite. Mrs. Howell was a young widow with a handsome face, and a charming little girl, and a pretty fortune of her own, when Dr. Howell was called in to attend the child.

He found little Lou seriously ill with scarlatina, and the young mother pale and interesting in her widow's weeds.

Woman rarely looks more lovely than when ministering to the necessities of pain and suffering, and the anxious love for her child which shone in Mrs. Goodenow's bright eyes added the charm of expression to a face that was beautiful in coloring and features. Dr. Howell had an artist's eye and a susceptible nature; and what sooner stirs a generous, manly soul than the sight of a beautiful woman, suffering, grieved, and alone in the world?

What wonder, when there was no longer need for professional calls, that Dr. Howell accepted the grateful mother's invitation to call as a friend?

Then came the winter evenings, and the young doctor had more leisure than was conducive to his professional reputation, and Mrs. Goodenow was fond of poetry, and the doctor read well.

It was so pleasant for Mrs. Goodenow to find a friend in the physician who had probably saved the life of her darling child — and such a friend, with a nature tender, generous, and sympathetic enough to understand her grief, that as a matter of course she told him the story of her life; — the sweet, beautiful dream of wedded happiness which she enjoyed with her dear, departed Arthur, who lived scarcely a year after their marriage, and was called away before little Lou's eyes had looked upon his noble face.

The story was so brokenly and touchingly told, interrupted so frequently with tears, which were soon dried, that the third time its pathetic variations fell upon the doctor's ears, the strongholds of his heart yielded, and the beautiful widow's tears flowed no longer.

Before little Lou had counted the days of her second summer, her mamma had laid aside the "grief that boiled over in billows of crape" — had found white satin and tulle, orange flowers, and delicate shades more in harmony

with her peculiar style of features and complexion than the sombre hue of her serge and crape; and so her widow's weeds and grief were buried beneath the becoming bridal *trousseau* of Mrs. Stephen Howell.

It was not a pleasant awakening from the doctor's first sweet dream of love, to find that beneath the fair exterior of his wife there was much selfishness, much worldly ambition and pride, little intelligence and less love. But the awakening was mercifully slow, and his vision was not cleared from the cobwebs of fancy until the father's love for his first-born child came to soothe the husband's disappointment.

Soon after the birth of his child the doctor's heart had been awakened, enlarged, and purified by the power of divine love; his life was a beautiful illustration of that wisdom which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works."

His practice was also increasing rapidly, and the duties of his profession and the love for his child left in his heart little room for repinings.

Twenty years have passed since Dr. Howell took the beautiful widow and her little Louise to his heart and home, and we now raise the curtain and reveal the sanctities of that home only to show by contrast the beauty of that charity which "suffereth long and is kind" — to portray that pure religion which enables its possessor "to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Dr. Howell is fifty years of age; his face much improved by that expression which intelligent culture, charity, earnest work, and victory over self leave, despite his gray hairs and furrowed cheeks. Looking at him, you would see only the noble, generous manhood stamped upon his face, and would forget to notice whether his hair were thin, his beard gray, or his features regular. But you could

not fail to observe that Mrs. Howell's beauty was in a most remarkable state of preservation, considering she was the mother of the elegant Miss Goodenow. Her maturity had none of the sweet Indian summer charm which we sometimes see in faces softened by silver hair, subdued by sorrow, and elevated by thought. You were at once made conscious — and somehow you intuitively felt that the lady herself was keenly alive to the agreeable fact — that Mrs. Dr. Howell was well dressed and fine-looking. She was a professing Christian, and if all things favored, went to church every Sabbath morning; paid monthly sums to the charitable institutions of the church; and when an old garment was no longer serviceable, she gave it to the Dorcas Society, to be made over for some poor person. All her charities flowed through the legitimate church channels. She did not approve of hunting up poor, worthless creatures, whom nobody knew anything about, to spend time and money upon.

Miss Louise Goodenow was very like her mother, possessing even greater physical beauty, with the added charm of youth and accomplishments. She did many things well and gracefully, as indeed she well might do, living as she did for her own selfish gratification, and studying no one's pleasure but her own. Having a decided taste for music, she had cultivated it until she had acquired an artistic style of execution quite above the comprehension of common minds; and she rarely condescended to play a popular, favorite air for the pleasure of those who could not appreciate classical music. Then her reading and pronunciation of French were almost equal to a Parisian's; at least Monsieur Sonrelle had often assured her so. She crocheted and embroidered unexceptionably, and always had some dainty bit of work ready to take up if her practice was disturbed by callers, some of whom were envious enough to

affirm that this industrious habit was only a pretext for showing to advantage a pretty, white hand. There were certain seasons of the year when Miss Goodenow was religiously inclined, and went to church so becomingly and fashionably attired that many of her less favored sisters forgot the object for which they were assembled, in admiration of this well-dressed worshipper. Miss Goodenow had been confirmed, and from that happy day had confided the interests of her soul entirely to the church.

Diantha — “a horrible, heathenish name for a girl,” — Mrs. Howell had affirmed, when the doctor begged to name his soft, pink bit of humanity for his mother. But his wishes prevailed, and the little one was christened by the father's love Diantha, Daisy, or Di, just as his mood might dictate; and now, when the owner of this name is introduced to my readers, she is nineteen years of age, — three years younger than her half-sister, — and so frequently overlooked in the presence of that elegant young lady, that she has doubtless acquired the habit of forgetting self, as there never lived a young maiden who seemed less conscious of personal attractions and merits. If she has any beauty, it is rather the effect of soul than of features, and cannot be described; you will catch glimmerings of her style here and there, as the incidents of this story shall develop her character. She is not accomplished, like Miss Goodenow, but does a little of everything so well that she is constantly running at the beck and call of each member of the family.

Stephen Howell, Jr., an intelligent, healthy young sophomore, overflowing with animal spirits, sentiment, poetry, and fun, two years younger than Diantha, and not only her pride and pet, but her especial “thorn in the flesh,” completes the group gathered around the doctor's parlor fire on the evening of the 23d of December, 185—.

Diantha stood silent for some minutes after the rebuffs she had received from her mother and Louise, looking thoughtfully and lovingly upon her pile of Christmas gifts, while Mrs. Howell crocheted with an energy that betokened displeasure, and the elegant Miss Goodenow studied the fashion-plate of a new magazine.

"Stephen, you must help me in the distribution of my gifts to-morrow," said Diantha, turning to her brother, who was lost in the pages of "David Copperfield."

"*Must*, a word which, used by the goddess Diana, has no variation of mood or tense; I shall have no choice but to obey."

"O, thank you! and remember, I must have a horse and sleigh at the door as early as two o'clock."

"Your wishes are my law," answered Stephen, with a mock military salute.

"Daisy, you must not make such a disposal of your time that you cannot give me two hours to-morrow."

"I am never so busy, father, but I can make time for your wants. What hours will suit you best?"

"From ten till twelve in the morning. I want you to go with me to the Bonsecour Home; I have some difficult work to do there, and your strong little hands can help me. There is a child there that needs you."

"I will be ready, father."

"Now, doctor, don't take Di where there's any danger from infectious diseases. It is bad enough for you to go to infirmaries, hospitals, retreats, and houses of refuge; but to drag a delicate young lady into contact with all sorts of low, worthless, vulgar, and diseased people, is shocking." Mrs. Howell's looks and tones expressed more disgust than her words; and Miss Goodenow's echo of "Very shocking! I wouldn't put myself in the way of seeing so much filth and suffering for any money," added emphasis to the maternal disapproval.

The doctor's face showed that he had buckled on an armor that was proof against opposition.

"I'll take good care of Daisy; there's a poor little waif from the wreck Stella, who needs just the kind of comfort that Daisy can give. Did you see the account of the wreck in the morning papers?"

There was no response excepting from Di; she had seen the account. And then the doctor told the story as he had gathered it from Captain Ashmead, with many touching details not found in the "Morning News" — told it so graphically, and with such hearty sympathy, that Mrs. Howell's crocheting dropped when he described little Nathan's last good night. The doctor's wife had shed some natural tears over two little graves; her grief somewhat modified by remembering that, "whom the gods love die young." Miss Louise laid down her fashion-book and made appropriate exclamations. Diantha's brown eyes overflowed with tears, and the young sophomore found it necessary to take observations of the weather from behind the window curtains.

CHAPTER III.

THE BONSECOUR HOME.

“I count this thing to be grandly true —
That a noble deed is a step towards God,
Lifting the soul from the common sod
To a purer air and a broader view.”

J. G. HOLLAND.

THE day before Christmas was, as Diantha had predicted, delightfully cold; but wrapped warmly and walking vigorously by her father's side, she looked as if she could defy the winter's frost in any region south of Greenland.

The doctor was in one of his silent moods, and his daughter knew by one glance at his face that some patient was giving him anxious thought and study. He had no eyes for the gay Christmas wreaths which decorated the handsome houses on Hawthorn Avenue and Locust Street; never turned to look at the skaters on the common, and gave no heed to the passers-by, even when accosted by a friend's good morning.

But Diantha had eyes and ears for all, and put a double sweetness and cordiality into her smiles of recognition, because of her father's abstraction. Her quick sympathies flowed out in harmony with the brisk, merry, cheerful life of the morning. She stopped once or twice to touch the dimpled cheek of a child, and once to pick up an unfortunate urchin, whose feet had gone astray, and with quick steps she rescued the apple lost by the boy in his fall, and restored it to the red, chubby hand of the owner with a

kind, encouraging pat upon his shoulder, and an assurance that he was "all right now."

Diantha was no stranger at the Bonsecour Home, and as she passed from room to room with her father, her bright face and hopeful words seemed to infuse new life to each patient; many voices blessed her, and many worn, pale faces were lighted with grateful emotion as she passed along.

"Where shall I find the child you spoke of, father?"

"In the west wing; but I'm not ready for you to go there yet. Come with me first to the operating room. Is your pulse cool and steady this morning? Give me your hand; you are a strong little woman, Daisy."

"I hope I can be both brave and strong when such traits are needed."

Every assistant in the Home knew that Dr. Howell's time was precious, and his work was usually ready for him when he entered the operating room. His words to his patients were few, but hearty; to his assistants, plain, decided, and peremptory. There was no hesitation of voice or manner about Dr. Howell; his keen, clear-brown eyes seemed to read at a glance the necessities of the case, and the means to be used for the relief of the sufferer.

"Diantha, I am going to introduce you to the captain of the wrecked Stella, and if amputation of one of his limbs is necessary, I want you to hold one of his hands, and cheer him with your words and presence."

The doctor's long practice had taught him that a woman's presence by the couch of suffering gave strength and courage to the patient.

"Good morning, Captain Ashmead; I've brought my daughter to see you."

"Thank you; Miss Howell is welcome."

The doctor's good morning was hardly uttered before he

was removing bandages from the captain's limbs, which had been badly frost-bitten, talking cheerfully meanwhile.

"Ay, captain, you'll come out from the perils of that wreck not much the worse for the wear and tear, We shall save your hands, but one foot must go; and the sooner we get rid of the offending member, the better it will be for the whole body. This young lady, who has a marvellous amount of strength when circumstances demand it, will stand by your couch and hold your hands. Shall Moore administer chloroform while I work?"

"No; I have no fear of pain, or of losing self-control; but won't the sight of such an operation be too great a shock to Miss Howell?"

"She will stand with her back to the work and her eyes upon your face, so as to give me warning if you attempt to faint; and besides, Diantha has been made familiar with all kinds of suffering. I can trust her."

Diantha, fortified with hartshorn and stimulants for the use of the patient, moved to the side of the couch which her father assigned her, and took one of the captain's rough, bronzed hands in both her own; she lent him the light of her clear, truthful eyes, and the sound of her soft, musical voice. There were hope, strength, and courage in both eyes and voice for the sufferer.

Dr. Howell's work was quickly performed, with a rare union of skill, precision, and tenderness; and when it was completed, he turned and took his daughter's place, saying, —

"You've borne it bravely, my good friend, and you should be very thankful to escape with the loss of one foot. In these days of cork limbs and modern improvements, such a loss is not so serious as it was formerly. I'll look in again upon you to-night, and report the condition of Hilton to you. Keep cool and quiet, and if there's any-

thing this little woman can do by way of reading or writing letters for you, she's most happy to be of service."

Diantha's eyes turned gratefully to her father for a moment, while she mutely thanked him for his appreciation of her willingness; and then, with a charming blending of womanly dignity and girlish timidity, she assured the captain of her wish to serve him.

Captain Ashmead attempted to express his gratitude, but Dr. Howell enforced silence, telling him Diantha was neither to read nor write for him until all danger of fever had passed.

And then he led his daughter from the room, taking her to the suffering child in the west wing, and bidding her remain until called for.

What hungry, eager eyes met Diantha's when she bent over the couch of the poor little girl!

"She's been wandering and unconscious all night, Miss Howell," answered the nurse, when questioned by Diantha about her charge; "but I reckon she's sensible this morning. I'm uncommon glad you've come, for there's something more the matter with the child than fever. She has been here since yesterday morning, crying and fretting herself into this state; and it's my honest opinion she hasn't had a minute's sleep, nor swallowed a mouthful of food, since she was taken off the wreck. Do you know if she's a foreigner?"

"No; I have asked no questions about the child; please go and prepare me a bowl of arrowroot, nurse, and let me see if I cannot persuade her to eat."

Diantha's tender hands were at once employed about the child, bathing her face and smoothing her light, tangled curls, while she talked to her in that gentle, winning way which none knew better how to use than the doctor's daughter.

"We shall soon have you running about again, my little girl. What is your name?"

"Edna Shreve; but I never want to get well."

"You think so now because you are weak and suffering, and you miss your dear mamma so much. I've heard all about the dreadful wreck, and I've come to help you and comfort you."

"I don't want to be helped, and nobody can comfort me," sobbed the child.

"Let me see what I can do for you, my dear. Who knows but I can help you to be as blithe and merry as a bird, again?"

"You didn't know my mamma nor Nathan, and you can't know how dreadful it is to be all alone in this world."

"I know it must be very dreary, lonely, and sad for you, Edna; but somebody has promised to care for orphans. Do you know who?"

"Perhaps I do; but He hasn't cared for me, or He wouldn't have let the cruel sea rob me of all I had."

"We will talk about that when you are better. If God has taken your mamma and your brother, He has sent me to you to be your friend, and I promise to love you and care for you; can you do one little thing to please me?"

Diantha had drawn the little girl up in her arms, and was looking at her with eyes so full of loving entreaty, that the child, who had resisted every effort of Mrs. Wyman to make her comfortable, said she would try.

"I was almost sure you would; little girls are generally very willing to do what I think is best and right. Now take one tea-spoonful of this warm arrowroot gruel."

Edna complied, but her hysterical sobs made it almost impossible for her to swallow, and Diantha saw that the nervous excitement of her system must be allayed before nourishment could avail. She held the sobbing child

against her bosom, soothing her with tender words and caresses, until Dr. Howell had completed his professional round of calls, and came to look after his little patient. He needed but a minute's survey of her quivering, fever-flushed face, with his fingers upon the throbbing veins of her forehead.

"Has she taken any nourishment, nurse?" asked the doctor.

"Not a drop from my hands, sir; Miss Howell got her to take a spoonful."

"Then Miss Howell must persuade her to take this powder; and you must give her a warm sponge bath immediately. Keep her head cool, and give her your most tender care."

Edna's sobs had grown less frequent and hysterical, but it was with great difficulty she succeeded in swallowing the spoonful of water in which the powder had been dissolved.

"We must leave you now, Edna; but if you will try to be quiet and do what Mrs. Wyman thinks is best for you, this young lady shall come again to-morrow."

"Yes, Edna, I will come to-morrow, and every day while you are sick; and I will try to come this evening and bring you some nice nourishment, and hold you again in my arms, and perhaps sing for you, if you are fond of singing?"

The child made no reply, and it was pitiful to see the worn, grieved, hungry look of the face she buried in the pillow when Diantha laid her back upon the couch.

"I have no more work of this kind for you to-day, Di, and I hope I am not taxing your strength nor your sympathies too severely," said the doctor, when they had gained the street.

"It does me good to share your work, father, and to feel that you can trust me, and that I'm of some use in the world."

“In my opinion there’s no surer safeguard against disease than occupation for mind and body. Concentration of thought upon one’s own selfish gratification dwarfs the intellect, blunts the moral sense, and enfeebles the body, while a moderate amount of work for others, an interest in their pursuits, and a conscientious endeavor so to live that the world may recognize in us the spirit of Him who went about doing good, will lift one’s soul into a purer atmosphere.” They walked in silence for some minutes through the gay, bustling throng that now filled the streets; but the tempting displays in the shop windows and the festive preparations for Christmas could not banish from their thoughts the sad picture of suffering at the Bonsecour Home.

“I wish we had that poor Edna Shreve in one of our quiet chambers,” said the doctor, when they had entered a street where conversation could be resumed.

“O, father, ’tis just what I’ve been longing for, ever since I saw the state she was in. Mrs. Wyman’s ways are not soothing and gentle enough for a child so delicate, nervous, and torn with grief as Edna is. Do you think we might manage it?”

“There are ifs to be considered; your mother will object, and not without reason. She will be unwilling that so much care should fall on you; and that her systematic housekeeping should be thrown into disorder will really be a trial to her nerves. Jane and Ellen will be very likely to send in a ‘notice’ if we take a sick child into our family; but you needn’t give the subject any more thought. I’ll consider it carefully, and talk it over with your mother this evening.”

But the subject had taken such a deep hold on Diantha’s thoughts that it was impossible to thrust it aside; and so preoccupied was she in thinking over ways and means for

the preservation of Edna, that on reaching home her mother noticed her silence, and remarked thereon, —

“Diantha is all worn out with her morning’s work, doctor; you’ll ruin her health by taking her to witness scenes of suffering that are depressing her spirits and keeping her sympathies constantly excited. Such employment is entirely unsuited to her years and to her position in society. Now, Di, I want you to go to your room and rest, instead of taking your presents to the Jenks family.”

It would not have been in harmony with Mrs. Howell’s character if she had permitted an occasion like this to pass without expressing her disapprobation. Dr. Howell saw the look of disappointment that crept into Diantha’s face, and came to her rescue.

“Let me prescribe for Daisy, my dear. She had better go to her room and lie down for a half hour, and Jane must send her up a cup of hot coffee and a lunch; and after that I think she might be allowed to go out and distribute her gifts. The ride, the fresh air, and the pleasure of making others happy, will be the best tonic for her.”

“She’ll take your prescription, of course. I didn’t expect my advice would have a straw’s weight. But I would like to know what she’s been doing this morning.”

“Only taking a step towards that heaven which we both hope to gain, Mary; and for her authority and encouragement she has this injunction: ‘But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.’”

CHAPTER IV.

DIANTHA'S MISSION.

“Blessing she is : God made her so :
 And deeds of week-day holiness
 Fall from her noiseless as the snow ;
 Nor hath she ever chanced to know
 That aught were easier than to bless.”

LOWELL.

“WHAT new victim of the world's rough usage has kept you a half hour from your appointment, and, as a matter of course, deprived a dozen poor wretches of a half hour's pleasure in the possession of this heap of rubbish, which you call Christmas gifts?”

“Have I really kept you waiting, Stephen? I'll tell you what made me late after you've helped carry these packages to the sleigh, and we are fairly off.”

“Grant an ell and yield a yard,” answered Stephen; and with comical grimaces, and protestations against being made a porter of, he helped his sister fill the sleigh with her “rubbish.”

She understood his feigned reluctance well enough to know that the service he was rendering her was not without its pleasure for him.

“Well, Di, now that we are ‘fairly off,’ tell me what made you late, and what has given your eyes such a wistful, absent kind of stare, as if your vision reached beyond this mundane sphere.”

“Now, Stephen, come down from your sophomoric stilts, and talk common sense.”

“Thank you for presuming that I have the ability to do so; and now for the reasons.”

“You heard father say that a young girl was saved from the wreck of the *Stella*? Well, I’ve been to see her, and she is such a forlorn, miserable, suffering little creature that my heart aches for her.”

“That organ you are pleased to call your heart ought to be proof against pain. What does the ‘creature’ look like?”

“Her face and eyes were so red with weeping, and so swollen from the effects of her exposure in that dreadful storm, that one could hardly imagine how she would look if she were in a healthy condition of mind and body; but I should think she was a fair, slender, dark-eyed girl, with a great quantity of light, tangled hair.”

“In fact, quite a heroine for a romancer. You know girls in novels always have a great deal of hair — especially in women’s novels: you make her so much of a character, that I can see

‘Her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.’

And I dare say, like the skipper’s daughter, —

‘Blue are her eyes as the fairy flax,
And her cheeks like the dawn of day.’

How old may this wonderful maiden be?”

“Not far from twelve, I think; but you will not hear anything more about her while you are in such a trifling mood.”

“What injustice! to suppose I could be otherwise than serious, when your description has brought so vividly

before me the ill-fated maiden of the 'Wreck of the Hesperus.' I shall never be understood."

"That will be no great loss to the world; but please try to understand me now. I wish you to turn your horse's head into the next street on the right, and draw rein before a low, brown house; and then you will remain in the sleigh while I deliver these packages."

"Straight forward and pointed as an arrow from Diana's quiver should be; I shall perform your royal bidding."

"This is the place; I won't detain you long;" and Diantha, with as many packages as she could well carry, disappeared within the brown house.

It would be difficult to find a more touching picture of poverty than was presented to Diantha's vision when the door was opened to admit her into a small room, not more than twelve by fourteen feet, containing eight persons.

Extreme poverty usually presents a hard, repellent aspect, not only in the faces of its victims, but in all their surroundings. But in this Jenks family its heavy hand had not crushed out all hope — all regard to outward appearances; it had left upon the face of the mother, and the children who huddled around her, a pathetic, appealing look, as if asking one's sympathy, rather than substantial aid.

It was an American family, one saw at a glance; their nationality was not only stamped upon their regular features, pallid complexions, shrewd eyes, and thin lips, but in the shrinking sensitiveness with which they accepted charity — a pride which would almost sooner starve than beg, and which used every device for concealing the most threadbare side of their hard lot. The cleanliness of the room and its occupants, from the patched but scrupulously clean garments of the mother and children to the neatly-scrubbed floor and stove, all told the story of New England birth and pride.

Three or four wooden chairs, a table, and a rude couch comprised the furniture; and upon this couch lay the father of the family — a man not more than forty years of age, prostrated by rheumatism, which, depriving him of the power of locomotion, seemed grudgingly to allow him the use of his hands. These were employed, when not too much swollen or stiffened with pain, in making baskets, crude and homely in their manufacture, and used for homely purposes. The scanty products of the sale of these baskets and of the mother's needle were the only income of the family; rent, fuel, food, and clothing for eight persons to be obtained with such scanty means, and only when circumstances favored, did the united earnings of both parents amount to six dollars per week. They hired two small rooms, for which they were obliged to pay four dollars per month; one of these rooms was the sleeping apartment of six members of the family, while the two boys found "tired Nature's sweet restorer" on a sack of straw in the common dwelling-room.

Mrs. Jenks would still have been in the glory of her summer-time had she not been prematurely aged with sorrow, sickness, and hard work. Now, at thirty-five, her hair is thin and lined with gray, her cheeks pale and hollow, and heavy purple shadows lie under her dark eyes. During the fifteen years of her married life she has given birth to eight children; two having died in infancy, four little scrofulous heirs of poverty and labor stand shivering and shrinking around their mother when Diantha enters the room, while one little cripple is held in her arms, and a rude wicker basket contains the baby.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Jenks. I hope you are all comfortably well to-day."

"Thank you, Miss Howell. Mr. Jenks is rather more poorly than usual this week; he hasn't been able to use his

hands since Monday. The baby has been ailing, and little Susie has the influenza."

Diantha deposited her bundle upon the table, went to Mr. Jenks's couch, and spoke a few cheery, hearty words to him, listened kindly to his wailing account of the week's pain and disappointment, and then turned to the expectant faces of the children, kissing one, kindly patting another, and speaking a pleasant word to all. Then she drew Mrs. Jenks aside, and with delicate tact gathered from her a history of their most pressing wants.

"Indeed, we haven't a whole dollar in the house, Miss Howell, nor so much as a hod full of coal; but Tommy and Fred have been promised some baskets of chips from the carpenter's shop on Ferry Street, and they're going directly for them."

"What about the rent?"

"We are owing for the last month, and another month will be due the last day of the year. We have not tasted meat, nor tea, nor coffee, for more than a week; but we have had plenty of potatoes and a little meal. Mrs. Metcalf sent me a barrel of potatoes the day before Thanksgiving: she is very kind to me, and gives me a deal of sewing to do; but she's close in her pay for work, and doesn't always remember that poor folks need their pay as soon as the work is done: she's been owing me five dollars nearly a month, and I haven't dared ask her for it, because she gave me the potatoes and some clothes for Tommy and Fred, that her boys had cast off."

"Bessie and Mary didn't come to my class yesterday."

"No; they were obliged to stay in because they lent their shoes to Tommy and Fred, who went for chips. And, Miss Howell, I'm sorry to tell you that I can't make them comfortable or decent to go on the street again while the cold weather lasts. Bessie must go out to bring and

carry my work and her father's, and though she's patient and never frets, I often find her crying because her life is so different from that of other girls."

"Have you as much sewing as you can do at present?"

"More than I can do while Harvey and the children are so miserable. Susie is so fretful with pain that I'm often obliged to walk the room half the night with her; and you know she is scarcely out of the arms of Bessie, Mary, or myself through the day, and baby is so cross with her teething, we have a hard time of it."

"You must, indeed, Mrs. Jenks. I'll ask father to look in this evening; perhaps he can give the children something to relieve and quiet them."

"He has taken a deal of trouble for us, and done us a world of good that we can never pay him for."

"Never mind that. You shall see me again the day after to-morrow, and I'll send Robert around with a basket in the morning. I hope you'll find the Christmas gifts I have brought useful."

"Nothing you could bring would be amiss, there are so many mouths to feed, and provisions and coal are so high. O, Miss Howell, I don't want to trouble you, and I'm very grateful for all you do; but how we shall get through the winter God only knows."

"Please let the thought comfort you that God does know. I will try to interest some charitable ladies in your affairs. Good by."

Only one more room where Diantha is a frequent visitor shall reveal its hitherto unwritten history to our readers. It is in a wooden tenement block on Ferry Street, half basement or cellar; on one side only light enters through small, patched panes of glass, so scantily that one asks if heaven's light is a luxury too expensive for God's poor. There is a decent-looking bed in the room, an old chest of

drawers, a small pine table, three wooden chairs, and a cracked cooking stove; and as near the old stove as two chairs can be drawn sit the two old occupants of this room, sisters, who have nearly counted their threescore and ten years. So remarkably alike are they in features and expression, or, rather, in want of expression, that they are often mistaken the one for the other by the few Christian friends who cross their humble threshold. Poor in this world's goods, weak in body and feeble in intellect, yet they are rich in hope and faith, and in that knowledge "whose price is above rubies." Knitting coarse leggins and mittens for teamsters, and making the cheap cotton overalls worn by laborers, furnish employment for their hard, bony hands, and brings them in an occasional dollar; but their main dependence is the charity of a few benevolent ladies. Diantha's presence brought warmth and light to the poor old dames, and the sound of her step and voice was music to their uneducated ears.

"Bless you, Miss Howell! come with your hands full, I'll warrant. It's like you to think of us on a day like this," exclaimed Martha Keith, whose tongue was a trifle more fluent than her sister's. And as they touched the woollen garments that Diantha's hand had fashioned for them, tears dropped from their faded eyes into wrinkles, that looked as if they had been the channels of bitter waters; but the tears shed over Diantha's useful gifts did not deepen the wrinkles in the withered faces of Martha and Sylvia Keith. In reply to Miss Howell's kind inquiries after their welfare, Martha's gratitude found expression in words as well as tears.

"We are toler'ibly well, thank you, Miss Howell. Silvy has the rheumatiz now and then, and I have my old cough, but we're a deal better off than thousands of others; and so long as we can hobble out to meetin' on Sundays, and to

prayer meetin's on week days, we're thankful, and have nothin' to complain of. Ay, miss, it's meat and drink for poor old souls like us to hear Elder Dinsmore preach; and, as I often tell Silvy, Deacon Sage's prayers carry us e'namost to heaven."

"You have decided to remain in this poor room through the winter, rather than share the comforts of the Old Ladies' Home."

"Well, yes, I may say we have. You see, miss, the Home is so far from our meetin', and we'd rather go without some comforts for our bodies than starve our souls; and besides, we are only used to each other, and we're wonted to this place. I hope you won't think we are ungrateful to the ladies who offered us a place at the Home."

"No, Martha; but we think you'd be more comfortable there. You must always let us know when you are needing anything."

The blessings of the poor old women followed the young one when she left them, and if her hands were wearied and her brain oppressed with thought when she returned to her father's fireside, her heart had been enriched, and a round of that ladder gained by which the soul rises "to a purer air and a broader view."

CHAPTER V.

MRS. HOWELL AT HOME.

“The love of praise
Fills life with fine amenities. Not all
Who live have pleasant tempers, and not all
The gift of gracious manners, or the love
Of nobler motive, higher meed than praise.”

J. G. HOLLAND.

“DIANTHA and Stephen not in yet?” asked Mrs. Howell, glancing around her well-appointed dining-room as if in search of the delinquents.

Dr. Howell was, apparently, too deeply absorbed in the columns of the evening paper to answer her query, and the lady somewhat energetically pulled the bell-rope. When Jane answered the summons, she ordered dinner to be served immediately.

“Do we dine alone, Mary?” asked the doctor, when the agreeable odor of hot soup reminded him of his physical necessities.

“Yes; Louise has gone to dine with the Metcalfs, and Diantha and Stephen have not returned from their mission to the poor. I must say I'm glad of an opportunity to speak with you alone, though I don't suppose you'll allow my ideas of what is right to influence you.”

“Why, Mary, I'm always open to conviction. What's wrong now?”

“The truth is, doctor, I'm not at all satisfied with the manner in which Diantha is spending her time, and I

know she has your encouragement. She was invited three days ago to visit the Metcalfs with Louise this evening, but wrote a note yesterday declining their invitation, because of her numerous engagements for to-day. And what were her engagements? Nothing more nor less than this hospital visiting, and a round of calls on poor people. It is impossible to make her see the importance of cultivating the acquaintance of such people as she would meet at the Metcalfs'. Then she is neglecting her music, her French, and all the accomplishments that are indispensable to young ladies nowadays."

"I'm sorry you can find so little to approve in Daisy. She seems to me quite accomplished enough for a girl of her years. She certainly finds time to read some excellent books. She converses well, and gratifies my taste in singing; and then we couldn't ask for a more affectionate or obedient child."

"I'm not complaining of any lack of affection or obedience; and yet I think if these traits were stronger in Di's character, she'd endeavor to conform herself more to my wishes. What gives me most anxiety is, to see her naturally fine talents lying dormant or running to waste. You say her singing satisfies *you*, but it is not artistic, and such a remarkably rich, flexible voice ought to be cultivated. Di is not ambitious, and if you are pleased with her ballads and simple songs, she doesn't care a straw for artistic effect. She spends too much precious time on people who cannot appreciate her, and is entirely regardless of fashion and etiquette. In short, she's in great danger of becoming a religious enthusiast or a strong-minded philanthropist."

"I have seen in Daisy only the fruits of that pure religion and undefiled which delights in visiting 'the fatherless and widows in their affliction.' Her nature is ardent and enthusiastic, and she must do earnestly and heartily

whatever her hands find to do. Let us encourage her, Mary, in her efforts to serve the Master; the pleasures and fashions of this world will prove strong temptations to a pretty girl like Daisy, even if we use our utmost endeavors to keep her unspotted."

"You don't understand me, nor sympathize with my desire to see our child admired and appreciated by those whose good opinion is worth gaining. She can have just as much true religion in her heart, and at the same time enjoy more of those innocent pleasures which are natural to her years, and cultivate those talents God has given her, so as to make herself a more useful and ornamental member of society. Louise is a Christian, but she is a great favorite because she is so accomplished; and I don't want to see such a striking contrast between my daughters, and know that others remark it too, when I'm sure Diantha has as much talent, if it were only developed, as Louise."

"I must have a serious talk with Daisy, and see if I can discover a lack of those graces and accomplishments which are the ornament of true womanhood. Her instincts have seemed to me so pure, and her whole nature so sweet and healthful, that perhaps I may have been blind to her lack of ambition."

"Indeed, I think you are blind to all Diantha's faults, doctor; and as you are the only one who can influence her, I want to open your eyes. Take her dress, for instance. You allow her three hundred dollars a year for spending money, and she ought to dress very prettily on that amount; but she told me last week that she couldn't afford a new party dress for this winter, nor a new cloak; and I am convinced she has spent more money on that Jenks family during this autumn than would be necessary for the new dress and cloak. It is not becoming for a young lady to set at defiance the customs of polite society.

If there's anything I abhor, 'tis a strong-minded woman, who affects independence and singularity in dress and manners."

"Surely, there's no affectation about Daisy, or I should have noticed it; and only this morning I was remarking how neatly and becomingly she was dressed."

"Yes, in that old blue merino and gray cloak! She's worn them both two years, doctor; and if she persists in wearing them another winter, they'll be as well known in all Hanthrop as your horse and buggy. I'll admit that Diantha is always neatly dressed; but she has no style, and looks as if she were obliged to economize; and by the way, I don't think it adds to your reputation for a member of your family to go about scrimpingly dressed. Society will infer that your profession is not lucrative enough to allow your family the luxuries of life."

"We can afford to be independent of the world's inferences; and moreover, my dear, you and Louise dress with sufficient elegance to advertise my prosperity to the clique in which you move; and I have no fears that my professional reputation will suffer amongst my patients."

"You seem to forget, doctor, that Louise and I are not dependent on you for the means to dress elegantly, and our friends are very well aware of the fact. If it were not for the income of my late husband's property, I should make but a shabby appearance on the paltry sum you allow me; and, thank Heaven, Louise is not beholden to either of us for money."

Dr. Howell whistled softly,—not a polite or refined substitute for words, as his lady had often assured him,—but the accomplishment had sometimes proved a sort of safety-valve, and if not classic or elegant, it was at least expressive, and the doctor was a man not entirely exempt from human frailties. Mrs. Howell had an income of six

hundred dollars per year, and Miss Louise had just twice that amount, and both ladies spent all but a paltry fraction of their money in personal adorning and selfish pleasures. One or two dollars paid monthly to home and foreign missions, — an occasional dollar to some other benevolent societies, and cast-off garments grudgingly given to the poor, — made up the sum of their charities, and heavy drafts were yearly made upon the doctor's purse to indulge his wife in the pleasures of a summer tour, or some expensive article of dress and ornament.

Doubtless the doctor's whistle was inspired by the memory of these trifling incidental expenses, and it might have been an expedient for raising his courage sufficiently to unfold his latest benevolent scheme to his wife, as the unfolding followed immediately upon the decadence of the whistle.

"Now, Mary, I'm afraid you'll be a little surprised to hear of a plan of mine, which, if carried out, will certainly take more of Daisy's time, for a few weeks, than all her other charities." The doctor hesitated a moment, as if hoping that a question from his fair lady might help him over a difficult crossing; but there was no encouragement in the cold, handsome face opposite him, and he took up, somewhat falteringly, it must be confessed, the thread of his discourse.

"I have told you how remarkably that little orphan, Edna Shreve, has enlisted my sympathies. I'm afraid no human power can save her, unless she is removed from the Bonsecour to a quiet home, where she can have the most tender and judicious treatment. Both her mind and body received a severe shock during that long storm and wreck, and she is so worn with grief, fatigue, and fever, that she won't take nourishment from the nurse's hands, and I can think of no one who would be strong and tender enough

to minister to her mental and physical wants but our Daisy. You know this child has been cast a poor, helpless, orphaned waif upon our shore —”

“You needn't say any more, Dr. Howell. I see you want to turn our house into a hospital, and your own child into a common drudge of a nurse; but you reckoned without your host when planning this last quixotic move. Just think for a moment! Our entire family arrangements to be turned topsy-turvy for a little beggar whom nobody knows anything about —”

“Wait a minute, Mary. Captain Ashmead says her father was an educated man, — a teacher, — who went to Smyrna, hoping to be cured of pulmonary disease, and was so much improved by the climate, that he taught the children of the English residents there for several years, when again his health failed, and he died, leaving a wife and two interesting children helpless. The captain says Mrs. Shreve was hoping to find a distant relative in New England who would assist her in taking care of these children.”

“Why can't you advertise for the relative to come and take care of the orphan? I'm sure it can't be our business.”

“As soon as Captain Ashmead is able, he will endeavor to find Edna's relatives; but meantime the child is dying.”

“And you want to put her into our best chamber with a contagious fever that may be the death of us all? I'm not willing to trifle with the lives of my children in such a fool-hardy way. Really, doctor, you and Di have mingled so much with common, ill-bred people, that your natural perceptions have become blunted, and you can't understand my sensitive shrinking from disease, and from all vulgar associations.”

At this point the doctor's lady felt that her words

needed to be made more emphatic by the "semblance of grief," and a dainty kerchief was drawn from her pocket, and held before her face. The doctor ate his pudding in silence. One could see that it was not an agreeable pastime for him to differ from his wife, nor an easy matter to bury a charitable project when once it had enlisted his sympathies. As neither silence nor tears were Mrs. Howell's most formidable weapons of defence, she soon emerged from behind her kerchief, and gave utterance to her emotions in words.

"Mr. Goodenow would never have asked me to torture my delicate sensibilities as you do. He could appreciate my shrinking from any contact with disease, or with vulgar people."

Dr. Howell, never having known the departed Mr. Goodenow, was willing, on this occasion, as in multitudes of previous instances, to accept in silence his wife's estimate of her first husband's appreciation.

"If he could speak, I'm sure he would say his only child ought not to be debased and humiliated by low associations."

Now Dr. Howell was a man whose temper was not easily controlled, and his natural and spontaneous impulse was, to wish fervently that Mr. Goodenow might have been spared to protect his wife and child from contamination; but remembering it is always best to "leave off contention before it be meddled with," he swallowed his unwise impulses with the coffee that made a part of his dessert; then rising, he drew his wife's arm within his own, and led her to a sofa in the parlor, seating himself by her side, and taking possession of her fair, shapely, jewelled hand.

"Mary, my intimate associations with all kinds of suffering, poverty, and disease, may, as you suggest, so have

blunted my perceptions that I cannot comprehend your shrinking from them; and certainly your happiness should be one of my first considerations. If you would go with me to the Bonsecour Home, and see this desolate little waif, and just how she is surrounded, I think your motherly heart would open to the child, and you wouldn't wonder that the desire to remove her here has taken complete possession of my thoughts; but a plan occurred to me while eating my dinner, which I hope will meet your approval. The chamber over my office is used only as a lumber-room, and its contents can be readily removed to the attic. This room is large and sunny, and can be made pretty and cheerful with the outlay of a small sum of money; and it is so far from the chambers occupied by the family, there can be no danger of contagion. Moreover, Edna's fever is not contagious; 'tis merely the effect of exhaustion, grief, and nervous excitement."

"But I should be in constant fear of some infectious disease brought in her clothing from that foreign place."

"You forget, Mary, that the poor child lost every article of her clothing on the wreck, excepting the garments she had on; and those will be left at the Bonsecour."

"And then think of Diantha's valuable time, and all study, practice, and society given up for a sick child that has no claims upon her, and the danger she will be exposed to! Think of the expense, too! Jane and Ellen will never submit to the extra work, and you'll be obliged to hire another girl, or part with them. It will be no trifle to buy a carpet and chamber-set for that large room. They will cost more than the India shawl I've asked you for so many times. But I have so long sacrificed my own wishes for the sake of your throwing money away on all sorts of worthless beggars and impostors, that it's useless to complain now, or oppose this last plan of turning our house into a hospital."

The doctor whistled softly for a minute, with his eyes fastened on the figure of the carpet at his feet. He might have been trying to recall one of the sacrifices his lady had made of her own desires, and he might have been asking for wisdom and patience. When he resumed speech, there was no indication in his clear, healthy voice of anger or annoyance, although a delicate ear might have detected a shade of weariness and disappointment.

“If I remember correctly, Mary, I’ve heard you express a wish for another sleeping apartment; and if this room is furnished, it will serve for Diantha or Stephen when ’tis no longer wanted for our little patient, so that the money we should spend upon it wouldn’t be thrown away. As regards Daisy’s time, I have an excellent American woman in my mind’s eye — a poor widow, who would be only too glad to serve me by assisting in the care of this child. I will manage affairs in such a way that our daughter shall not be oppressed with care. Another thought presents itself to me. You have been wanting to take Louise to New York this winter, and a change of air and scene for a few weeks will be an excellent remedy for your dyspepsia. Why not go at once, say the day after to-morrow, to your brother-in-law’s in the city, and allow me to try the experiment of quiet and tender nursing for this orphan? By so doing you and Louise will escape all danger of infection, all the worry and discomfort that may attend the introduction of this sick stranger into our family, and at the same time gratify your long-cherished wish, as well as give your brother Ralph’s family pleasure.”

There was silence for several minutes. Mrs. Howell was thinking how she could accept this much coveted pleasure of a visit to New York, and yet make the leaving home appear like a sacrifice to her friends. She was weighing the chances, too, of securing an India shawl as

a conciliatory offering, as well as other advantages that would be gained by concession. She really wanted the room over the doctor's office transformed into a habitable apartment, and that, with the visit to New York, and the possible camel's hair shawl, would make amends for the sacrifice of her opinion. At this interesting crisis Diantha entered in evening costume—a vision bright and fair enough to dispel heavier clouds than hovered around the domestic horizon.

“Mother,” she said, advancing to the sofa, “I have changed my mind about going to Mrs. Metcalf's; if you think it will be pardonable for me to go after having declined her invitation. I shall be too late for the dinner, but shall be in season for the conversation and music, which is all I care for.”

“You are the most eccentric girl I've ever known, Di; the very embodiment of caprice. What made you change your mind at the last minute?”

“I finished my calls sooner than I expected, and as I saw you were disappointed because I refused this invitation, I hurried home, made a hasty toilet; and now am I presentable?”

Mrs. Howell examined critically the details of her daughter's dress—a soft gray silk, with delicate lace at the throat, fastened with a coral pin, Diantha's favorite ornament. Her brown hair waved and rippled naturally above her fair brow, and was simply coiled at the back of her head. There was no attempt at artistic effect in its arrangement, and yet it was a crown of such rare and golden beauty that one could not fail to observe it.

“You always dress so severely plain, Di; but I believe the general effect is good this evening.”

Diantha read approval in her father's face.

“I am glad you can approve, mother; good night! and don't sit up for us.”

Mrs. Howell arose from the sofa as soon as Diantha had disappeared, saying, —

“This discussion has brought on one of my severest headaches, and I must go to my room. Of course you will do as you think best about bringing that sick child here.”

“Do you think favorably of taking this time for a visit to New York?”

“My head aches so severely that I cannot think; but I’ll talk it over with Louise in the morning. It will be very awkward to thrust one’s self into a private family with only a day’s notice; but I suppose it isn’t worth while to consult our convenience. We can go to a hotel if brother Ralph’s family can’t receive us.” And with the air and tone of a martyr Mrs. Howell swept from the room.

The doctor, after five minutes of whistling, humming, and apparent study of the coal fire, buttoned on his heavy coat, and betook himself to the streets, which were still thronged with the hurrying feet and eager faces of those whose preparations for Christmas kept them abroad.

CHAPTER VI.

CHRISTMAS.

“Win her with gifts if she respect not words;
Dumb jewels often, in their silent kind,
More than quick words, do move a woman's mind.”

SHAKESPEARE.

FEW ladies have possessed Mrs. Howell's tact in so yielding a disputed point as to gain their own desires, and at the same time appear a martyr to the convictions of another. If ever the doctor imagined himself victorious in a matter where his wishes clashed with those of his wife, it behooved him to look well to his honors, for if she yielded one inch of contested ground, it was but to strengthen her defences on more desirable points.

It mattered little to Mrs. Howell whether Edna Shreve was nursed and cared for in the room over the doctor's office, so long as her residence in the house in no way conflicted with the pursuits and comforts of its mistress, and especially if withdrawal of opposition from the doctor's scheme secured for her the pleasures of a visit to New York.

The conference with Louise decided the question of the visit; there was remarkable harmony of tastes and opinions between mother and daughter, and both agreed that much might be sacrificed to gain so desirable an object as this visit.

“I propose, mother, that we go at once to the St.

Nicholas, and send Uncle Ralph a line from there. Of course he will call immediately, and take us to his house. It is fortunate that my wardrobe is so handsome this winter; I shall need only one more party dress, and I can have that made so stylishly in New York. You'll want a new *moire antique*, and it will be positively shameful if father doesn't give you a camel's hair shawl, when he more than half compels you to make this visit."

"Louise, I've often requested you never to speak disrespectfully of Dr. Howell. He has been a kind father to you."

"I'm quite as well aware of that as need be, and I do respect him and love him; but you know he is often close and niggardly as regards money, especially when 'tis spent on dress. Think what subterfuges you sometimes are obliged to resort to, just to obtain such things as are necessary in genteel society."

"Yet, in justice to Dr. Howell, I must say, Louise, he's generous enough with money when 'tis used in accordance with his notions of right. He's not like your dear father, who never objected to my manner of spending money, so long as I looked pretty and genteel. The doctor is not as broad and liberal in his views as I could wish."

And Mrs. Howell sighed with genuine emotion, because, forsooth, she was wondering whether the doctor's breadth and liberality would be stretched at this crisis over the area of an India shawl. To be sure, she had settled in her own mind that a new lace-trimmed velvet cloak and a black *moire* dress would be not only becoming, but stylish, even if she was obliged to make so great a sacrifice of her tastes as to go to New York without the shawl.

"We must go down to breakfast now, Louise, for, even if 'tis Christmas morning, the doctor will have a round of calls to make, and won't like to be kept waiting. But

tell me first how Diantha appeared at the Metcalfs' last evening."

"O, much as usual. Di has never any style, and, I might almost add, no self-respect. Whenever she meets real make-weights at parties, such persons as nobody wants to know, she's all graciousness and attention. She had no words for anybody last night but that strong-minded Miss Wheeler, who always seems to me a walking advertisement of some foundling hospital. Her gray eyes are always asking for your old clothes, and carefully calculating how many poor children could be clothed and fed with the cost of your dress; and then the very limpness, scantiness, and grayness of her own stuff gown seem to frown a remonstrance against everything that is stylish and fashionable. Di was in a corner with Miss Wheeler and Mrs. Metcalf more than half the evening, and appeared to be entertaining them with the wants of her poor people. She wouldn't dance, and didn't sing but one piece. I must say, mother, Di is all Howell, and is fast growing to be a girl of one idea."

"It is such a pity! With her talents she might be an ornament to society. But I've done my duty both by example and precept — the dear child has had line upon line." Even this consoling reflection did not soften the aggrieved expression upon Mrs. Howell's face, which she deemed a necessary herald of the sacrifice she was about to make in permitting the orphan Edna to be nursed in her house. Entering the breakfast-parlor, they found Dr. Howell, Diantha, and Stephen in waiting, and were greeted heartily with the compliments of the season. Before the serving of coffee, an investigation was made of the articles upon a side-table, where it had been arranged to deposit such gifts as the members of this family presented to each other.

There was a sealed envelope directed in the doctor's handwriting to Mrs. Howell, and to each of his children a handsomely bound book.

Mrs. Howell's gifts daguerreotyped her peculiar tastes quite as forcibly as words could, and she gave herself great credit for the magnanimity which could treat both daughters alike, when one pursued a course so antagonistic to the example of her mother and older sister.

Louise and Diantha received very handsome and showy bracelets from their mother, with an assurance that she had denied herself many little pleasures for the sake of presenting these fashionable ornaments — an assurance which was intended to enhance the value of the gifts, as well as to remind the young ladies of her own self-sacrificing disposition.

The accomplished Miss Goodenow had crocheted and embroidered some useless trifles, and received thanks from the recipients of these favors with her usual elegant *non-chalance*.

Diantha's nimble fingers had netted a pretty breakfast shawl for her mother of soft pink wool, and for her father, Louise, and Stephen she had executed with remarkable grace and skill some sketches in water-colors. If Diantha excelled in any accomplishment, it was with her pencil and brush.

Stephen's gifts were characteristic of his taste and talent — fanciful little boxes and brackets carved with his own hands from rosewood and ebony. The contents of the sealed envelope were not revealed to the members of the breakfast party, but before the doctor left his office for the Bonsecour Home, his lady entered with as much emotion stamped upon her face as she felt would be becoming.

"I have come to thank you, Stephen, for your timely and appropriate gift. I suppose you would like me to use this check in buying an India shawl."

"Make just that use of it, Mary, which will add most to your comfort and happiness."

"I have long been convinced that an India shawl is an economical garment, because it lasts a lifetime, and is always fashionable. I do not, in fact, regard a lady's wardrobe as complete or hardly respectable without it. You have taken away the greatest objection I had to going to New York at this season by presenting this check, as, I must confess, much as I wanted to visit Ralph Goodenow's family, I should have been ashamed to go there again without a camel's hair shawl. I find Louise is delighted with the prospect of the visit, and I really think the change will do us both good. I hope the little orphan you are so much interested in will gain very rapidly when she gets into that quiet room, where she can have your attendance and Diantha's almost constantly. She ought to gain after so many sacrifices have been made for her."

"Shall you leave for New York to-morrow?"

"We can't possibly leave until Monday. You know this is Friday; but if the room is ready to-morrow, you may bring the child here, provided you are quite sure there is no danger of infection."

"You need not have one anxious thought on that point. I will go and see what can be done for her comfort this morning, and then, if I can find people who will assist me on this holiday, I think we can get the room ready for the poor child by to-morrow evening."

The doctor had buttoned on his out-door coat while speaking, and now, with his hand upon the door-knob, was arrested by his wife.

"You mustn't forget to engage that American woman you spoke of to assist Diantha; for really I couldn't enjoy visiting my brother's family if I had to think of that dear child as mewed up at home, drudging and fagging for others. And, doctor, think seriously of what I told you last evening about the use Diantha is making of her time

and talents. Don't let her slip into such narrow grooves of thinking and acting as Miss Wheeler has."

Dr. Howell smiled instead of whistling; but then he was never so likely to indulge in that pastime before his morning round of calls as after his return; so that probably the smile should have been set down quite as much to the credit of cool and quiet nerves, as to any unusual control of his musical inclinations.

"I'll do my best for our Daisy," he said, and with a hurried good morning went forth to his professional duties. He was not surprised to find Diantha already at the Bonsecour Home, as she had expressed much anxiety about the state of his little patient on the previous evening. She was holding the delirious child in her arms, and attempting to soothe the ravings of her fever by cool applications to her head, and those gentle ministrics that some women seem to know intuitively how to render.

After a minute's serious watching of Edna's state, the doctor spoke:—

"Daisy, we have need of the most tender nursing here; medicine can do comparatively little. If you can stay with her till twelve o'clock, I think I can have Mrs. Bartlette here to relieve you by that time. She is a woman whom I can trust to assist you in a delicate case of this kind, and to-morrow we must have her in a quiet room."

There was a grave emphasis in the doctor's tones and looks, and Diantha needed no further words to assure her that the suffering child was in a most critical and dangerous condition.

"I will stay with her, father, until she can be removed to our house."

"I cannot permit that, Daisy; while the child is delirious and unconscious, Mrs. Bartlette can serve as well as you. Your willing strength must not be too severely

taxed in the beginning. If we are so fortunate as to bring this child through the crisis of her fever, she will need your most tender and judicious treatment during her convalescence. When Mrs. Bartlette arrives, I want you to go in and write or read for Captain Ashmead a few minutes; and then, if I can find Berry or MacDougald, and they are willing to show me carpets and furniture on this holiday, I shall call for you, with my horse and sleigh, to assist me in making selections."

And with a few directions concerning the treatment of Edna, the doctor left her to Diantha's care. She had the satisfaction of knowing that the child was soothed and quieted by the touch of her hands, and seemed conscious of a gentle presence near her. The ravings of her delirium gradually subsided into plaintive moans for her mother, little Nathan, and the far-off Smyrna home, and before Mrs. Bartlette's arrival she had so far yielded to the tender ministrations of Diantha as to sink into an uneasy slumber, broken by sobs and incoherent words, but still a much more hopeful condition than she was in two hours before.

Mrs. Bartlette's face wore the marks of a keen sorrow not yet buried, but its expression assured Diantha that whatever a watchful nurse's skill could do for Edna would be done with a mother's tenderness. There were honesty and intelligence in the quiet, worn face and light gray eyes, and patience rather than hope in every movement of her features and hands.

"You are the doctor's daughter?" she asked in a tone so low and soft that the lightest slumber could not have been disturbed by it.

"Yes, and you are the good woman father thought could be trusted with this case?" The woman assented, as with quiet fingers she unloosened the fastenings of her black

cloak and crape bonnet, and took the seat Diantha vacated. She watched the sleeper's face for a minute with startled eagerness, as if old memories had been aroused by it, and then, turning to Diantha, said, —

“I was longing for work only this morning — for something that should enlist my sympathies and engross my thoughts, as well as busy my hands; and your father has given me just what I should have chosen to do.”

The sobs and wailings of the sleeping child made further conversation impossible, and Diantha left her in charge of the new attendant, and went to the ward where Captain Ashmead was confined. His eyes were turned expectantly towards the door when she entered, and met hers with a grateful welcome.

“Your father said you would come, Miss Howell, and report to me the condition of my little passenger; but you are late.”

“Yes; I did not like to leave Edna until the woman came who is to nurse her. She is more quiet than she was two hours ago; but 'tis very sad and painful to hear her call upon her mamma and Nathan to save her from the dreadful waves.”

“Poor girl! so she is living over those awful hours of agony and suspense! If I close my eyes, I am still standing on those shivering planks, and the hungry waves are tumbling over me, and the sad voice of Mrs. Shreve is ringing in my ears above the roar of the breakers and the creaking of the cordage.”

“I know nothing about the religion that seemed such a comfort to her, but I shall never forget the plaintive refrain of one hymn she sung: —

‘It is I; be not afraid.’

And it was the closing line of every stanza. I thought

death was inevitable, and I determined to meet it bravely; but there was no light or hope for me beyond those cruel breakers."

"And now?" questioned Diantha, timidly.

"And now I can but acknowledge that a power mightier than man's interposed to save us; but the justice, mercy, and loveliness of that power I fail to recognize. Why, if He holds the winds and the waves in the hollow of His hand, did He permit Edna's mother and brother, and ten more poor wretches, to perish in sight of land?"

"It is enough for me to know that God permitted it, without asking why. I dare not reach out after a knowledge of those things which He has wisely hidden. Had I been one of the survivors of that wreck, I think the question, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' would knock at the door of my heart for an answer before doubts of the infinite goodness and mercy found entrance. But I'm afraid, Captain Ashmead, I have disobeyed father's injunctions in allowing you to speak on an exciting theme. Shall I read to you?"

"The sound of your voice is pleasant and restful, and I must confess to a hungry yearning for something that shall turn my thoughts away from that haunting wreck and my poor disabled limb. Can you find the words Mrs. Shreve sung in the Bible?"

Diantha brought a Bible and read Matthew's record of the stilling of the waves, and then turned to the one hundred and third Psalm; but before she had concluded it she was summoned by her father.

"I suppose I must not expect you to come to the hospital after Edna is removed?" remarked the captain, when Diantha closed her book and bade him good morning.

"I shall come if I can help you in any way, and as soon

as father thinks you are strong enough to dictate, I will write the letters you spoke of to him."

There was much heartiness and gratitude in the captain's "thank you," and "good morning!" and Diantha had a pleasant consciousness, while looking at carpets and furniture, that the wreck of the *Stella* had already woven threads into her web of life of a deeper and more vivid coloring than time's every-day shuttle had hitherto wrought.

CHAPTER VII.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

"Ill fares the child of heaven, who will not entertain
On earth the stranger's grief, the exile's sense of pain."

TRENCH.

"Selfishness
Is never great, and moves to no great deeds."

DR. HOWELL had no difficulty in finding workmen, who forwarded as expeditiously as he could wish the transformation of the chamber over his office into an apartment for Edna Shreve.

With Diantha's aid he selected a pretty ingrain carpet of subdued colors, a chamber set of chestnut, and delicate buff curtains; while his daughter adorned the walls with sketches in crayon and water-colors, the fruits of her own pencil and brush. In the southern window she placed a stand of her most fragrant flowering shrubs, and an English ivy almost concealed another window with its wealth of green leaves. And in less than forty-eight hours after the doctor had broached this "quixotic scheme" to his wife, the unconscious little orphan was brought upon a mattress in a close carriage to take possession of her new quarters.

"You've spent as much money on that room, and made as much fuss in ornamenting it with your pictures and flowers, as if it were for one of Queen Victoria's children," remarked Mrs. Howell, when the family had gathered in the parlor after the toils and labors of the day.

“Perhaps so,” rejoined the doctor, “for I have remembered that she is one of God’s little ones, and that He has said, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.’”

“It is to be hoped the child will appreciate the value of the money and time spent upon her,” added Miss Goodenow, with a look and tone which plainly intimated that such a charitable wish was without the pale of reason.

“It will certainly be pleasant, if the poor child lives, to know that she appreciates the services we have rendered, and will be a healthy stimulus to future deeds of self-denial; but we are not taught by our divine Master to regulate our charity by the amount of appreciation which it receives,” said the doctor.

“I reckon, if we did,” replied his lady, “the sum of our charities would not materially decrease our comforts. Take that Jenks family, for instance; you give an old gown to one of the girls, and the mother will be sure to ask for a cloak or shawl to go with it; and if you give them a pair of shoes, they’ll remind you of their need of stockings. I decided long ago that my own comfort and happiness were of as much importance as the wants of shiftless beggars, who would sooner live upon the bounty of the rich than work. Mr. Goodenow used to say that poverty was as frequently due to a lack of tact and thrift as to adverse circumstances, and should never be encouraged by indiscriminate charity.”

Dr. Howell had many years before acquired the habit of receiving in silence his wife’s version of her former husband’s tastes and opinions, and if his own private judgment did not entirely harmonize with the late Mr. Goodenow’s, he rarely proclaimed the fact; and Mrs. Howell’s assertion that her own comfort and happiness were of paramount importance, was a truth so evident to the fam-

ily circle, that it was unnecessary to add to or subtract from it; therefore no reply was made, and Mrs. Howell crocheted with a haughty dignity habitual to her, and with an expression meant to convey the pith of Solomon's assertion, that "the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way."

Diantha, loving both her parents with the wealth of a generous nature, was always keenly sensitive to any discordant note in the domestic harmony, and in some way endeavored to exorcise the jarring spirit. On this particular Saturday evening, her desire to promote a feeling of good-will and charity, by introducing a theme of common interest to all, suggested the propriety of drawing out her half-sister's accomplishments, which were rarely displayed for the entertainment of her relatives.

"Louise," she said, walking to the side of that young lady, and laying upon her shoulder a hand which conveyed as much persuasion in its touch as that member is often gifted with, — "Louise, won't you please play for papa and Stephen that selection from Mendelssohn which so delighted the company at Mrs. Metcalf's last evening? I heard Mr. Horace Metcalf say he never heard an amateur performance that pleased him so well."

Perhaps the compliment, coming as it did from an authority which Miss Goodenow recognized as worthy, and perhaps the anticipated pleasures of her New York visit, softened her haughty spirit; and it may be that kindly impulses in her nature, deeply hidden beneath its thick crust of selfishness, had been stirred by the glimpse she caught of Edna's helpless condition when she was borne through the hall: so that, contrary to her usual disobliging habit, she walked to the piano, only murmuring something to the effect "that papa and Stephen couldn't appreciate her style of music; they enjoyed less classical compositions than she played."

“You must assist in educating our tastes, Louise,” said Stephen, laying aside his novel; and his sister, probably inspired by the novelty of an amiable desire to confer pleasure, played with such spirit, interest, and expression as to elicit the heartiest praise from the doctor; and Mr. Metcalf happening to call in season to share the latter part of the entertainment, the fair pianist doubtless felt that even in this life there are compensations for acts of self-denial.

Mrs. Howell and Miss Goodenow were satisfied with the momentary glimpse they had of Edna’s pale face when she was borne through the hall; and neither curiosity nor charity tempted them to the chamber where she lay before they started for New York. However, there was much packing and consultation to occupy their thoughts, and, the Sabbath intervening, the services at Dr. Blossom’s church must be attended, especially as the house was most elaborately decorated with evergreens and flowers, in honor, as was generally supposed, of our Saviour’s birth. And Miss Goodenow declared “she would not miss seeing the Christmas decorations and hearing the music for any money.”

Mrs. Howell, having performed her maternal duty, and exhibited her new velvet cloak, by accompanying her daughter to the fashionable church in the morning, and, besides, feasted her eyes on its beautiful decorations, and her ears with the appropriate artistic music she had enjoyed, and the subduing effects of the handsome doctor’s smoothly-flowing sermon, thought, as she remarked to her husband, that “she had received a sufficient quantity of mental and spiritual food for one day, and though in the morning she had anticipated hearing Rev. Mr. Dinsmore’s evening discourse (she was a member of the church where the latter divine officiated, and where the doctor

and Diantha honored their profession by regular attendance), yet now she felt it would be unwise to place herself in the way of disturbing the harmonious effects of the morning services.

And the doctor did not urge her to make what she would have called a "sacrifice."

With many injunctions to Diantha about the housekeeping, and with reiterated regrets that she was compelled to leave home just at this time, when all her friends were giving parties, Mrs. Howell kissed "her dear, old-fashioned, domestic daughter," as she often plaintively called Diantha, and performing the same affectionate ceremony upon the doctor and Stephen, and being dutifully imitated in her manner of leave-taking by Miss Goodenow, the ladies were assisted into the carriage that was to convey them to the depot, which carriage was closely followed by a porter's hack, containing three immense trunks and two small ones. We will permit Mrs. Howell to describe some of her New York pleasures in a letter, which, as one writer has remarked, "is always the best exponent of a woman's character."

NEW YORK, January 2, 185--.

"DEAR DOCTOR: You have, of course, received the note I despatched from the St. Nicholas Hotel, telling you of our journey and our safe arrival. Brother Ralph sent his carriage for us the day after we reached the city; and though we have been domiciled in his delightful home nearly a week, I really have not found time to write before, because of the constant succession of charming attentions that have been showered upon us. I must tell you, first, that Ralph is not living now where he lived when I visited him five years ago, but has recently bought a palatial residence on Montague Square. It is a brown stone front, five stories high with the basement, and presents an

imposing appearance on the outside, while the interior is exquisitely furnished from basement to attic. The library, reception-parlor, and dining-room are finished in walnut, with furniture to match. I should say nothing could be more elegant than the furnishing of these rooms, if the drawing-room did not so far exceed them in loveliness and richness. The finish of that room is in rosewood, with beautifully frescoed walls; the furniture is a unique pattern in ebony, ornamented with gilt, and upholstered with rose-colored silk rep, and window draperies to match. The carpet is Axminster, so rich and handsome that I cannot think of describing it; but it constantly reminds me of half-blown rose-buds and lilies of the valley thrown upon a ground of fawn-colored velvet. The walls are covered with pictures by the best artists, and there is almost an endless variety of beautiful ornaments, vases, bronzes, statuettes, &c.

“Ralph’s wife keeps four servants, besides a colored boy, and they have one of the most stylish turnouts in New York — two splendid bay horses, and the family coat of arms on the door of the carriage: this coat of arms is also engraved on the silver, and on the china dinner-service. Indeed, it would take me all day to enumerate one half the luxuries and elegances which Ralph’s family seem to use as the merest every-day trifles.

“You remember they have but two children. Arthur, who was named for my dear husband, and Hortense, an accomplished girl of twenty. Arthur is just the age of my Louise; he has finished his education, and is at home, in daily expectation of receiving a lucrative appointment as secretary to one of our foreign embassies. He is very talented and distinguished looking, and is very attentive to his cousin Louise.

“Yesterday, it being New Year’s Day, Ralph’s wife and

daughter were at home to all their gentleman friends. They were quite as handsomely dressed as if they were going to a ball. I declare, Stephen, sister Ralph's lace and jewels were worth a moderate fortune. Hortense is a blonde, and though she is called very pretty, I must say she looks insipid when contrasted with my Louise. She wore a lovely blue silk, with exquisite pearl ornaments, and Louise had a peach-colored silk made for the occasion. Her uncle Ralph gave her the choicest set of rubies for a New Year's present I ever saw; they were lovely with the peach-colored silk, and Louise looked, as she always does, thoroughly lady-like and handsome; more than one gentleman thought so, too. She was surrounded with admirers, and my own early triumphs were vividly recalled.

"The drawing-room, hall, and dining-room were decorated with flowers, and one might almost say the table groaned under its weight of luxuries; champagne flowed as freely as if Ralph owned a vineyard. I was afraid some of the gentlemen who called late in the day had taken a trifle too much of something that had an exhilarating effect, as they talked, and laughed, and joked rather loudly for the society of ladies, and one poor fellow actually reeled so clumsily against a Roman mosaic table, that it fell against an ebony pedestal, on which stood a choice little marble statuette, and the mosaic table-top and the statuette were both shivered. Ralph said they couldn't be replaced for three hundred dollars; but his wife and Hortense only laughed about it, and said the young man belonged to one of the first families, and had only taken one glass too much. I don't suppose you'll be much interested in my account of the New Year's festivities, but Diantha will be. However, there is a question you will be interested in; and that is, To what are Ralph's great wealth and prosperity due?

"You know, when old Mr. Goodenow died, Ralph and

Arthur each received from his estate thirty thousand dollars. But my dear husband was called away so soon that his own was not increased, while Ralph, by shrewd management and careful investments, is worth half a million, and his wealth is rapidly accumulating. He seemed greatly surprised and shocked when I told him Arthur's money had all been invested in bank stock, and its income had barely sufficed to educate Louise, and dress us both respectably. I told him you had been so deeply absorbed in your professional duties that you had lost sight of my moneyed interests. Ralph said no business man would have permitted that money to lie comparatively idle so long. He generously offers to secure us stock in a copper-mining company of which he is president. And, by the way, I find Ralph's business is almost wholly confined to buying and selling stocks of various kinds; he is an officer in several companies. The 'Eureka Copper-mining' seems to be his favorite just now, and he says its stock was thirty per cent. above par on Wall Street to-day, and may be thirty-five to-morrow; but as Ralph is president of the company, he thinks he can secure for us several thousand dollars' worth of shares considerably below the market value. Louise is very much excited by what her uncle tells her of the rapid manner in which money properly invested accumulates; he says there is every reason to believe her fortune may be doubled in less than two years, if she will permit him to invest it for her.

"Dear girl! no one could more gracefully fill a position of wealth, and I would like to see her the mistress of a million. She is as much at ease amidst the elegances of her uncle's home as if she had been accustomed to them all her life, instead of the narrow and cramped way in which we have lived ever since my second marriage. I do hope, doctor, I shall be able to persuade you to sell our old house,

and build or buy on Hawthorn Avenue or Livingston Square. If you haven't love enough for me and Louise to gratify our wishes in this respect, you should consider the future prospects of Diantha and Stephen; but I have wandered from my subject. Louise has such confidence in what her uncle Ralph tells her, that she wishes you to withdraw ten thousand dollars of her money from the Merchants' Bank, and send it to her by express, as soon as you receive this. You may also send two thousand dollars of my dear Arthur's béquest to me; and if Ralph makes an investment that returns me handsome dividends, then I will make a larger venture. I have scarcely given you an inkling of our New York pleasures, yet I have written a long letter, and consumed all my leisure. We are going to the opera to-night to hear Marvelina, and to-morrow evening we accompany Ralph's family to a brilliant party. Louise sends love, and says she will write Diantha soon. With love to my children, I remain,

Affectionately, your wife,

MARY G. HOWELL."

CHAPTER VIII.

EDNA'S CONVALESCENCE.

"Thou bring'st no tidings of the better land,
Even from its verge; the mysteries opened there
Are what the faithful heart may understand
In its still depths, yet words may not declare.

"And well I deem, that, from the brighter side
Of life's dim border some o'erflowing rays,
Streamed from the inner glory, shall abide
Upon thy spirit through the coming days."

W. C. BRYANT.

DR. HOWELL sat for several minutes by his office fire after he had read his wife's letter, whistling softly, and gazing as intently at the glowing coals as if he saw therein the means to gratify her ambitious desires. The doctor was not wealthy, and his house was neither large nor elegant; but it was pleasantly situated, overlooking the harbor of Hanthrop and several suburban villages.

Mrs. Howell and Miss Goodenow argued that the doctor's lucrative profession ought to maintain them in a style as handsome as that of their most wealthy neighbors, inasmuch as their own income relieved him from some heavy expenditures; but the doctor's tastes were quiet and refined, and he never willingly spent a dollar of his income for the sake of keeping up appearances, or imitating the fashions of his more wealthy townsmen. He gave liberally to public charities, while his heart was especially open to the cries of the needy in every avenue of want. There

was scarcely an orphan, or widow, or poor laborer in Hanthrop, but had reason to bless his name.

If, while reading Mrs. Howell's letter, the doctor had wished for the means to procure for her a more elegant home, and those expensive luxuries which her worldly ambition coveted, it must be confessed that the longer he whistled, and the more intently he studied the coals, the more determined he became to live quietly in his pleasant, comfortable home, and so to husband his income that his charities might rather be increased than diminished.

He had not much faith in Ralph Goodenow's investments, but he dared not be as plain and emphatic in the unfolding of his sceptical opinions to his wife, as he might have been, had she not so often taunted him with his old-fashioned ideas, and his want of business capacity; and acknowledging to himself that he knew much more of the "ills that flesh is heir to" than of the money market—more of poverty and suffering than of the ways and means by which small fortunes are expanded—his reply to his wife's letter lacked much of his characteristic firmness and decision. He advised her to leave her money in the Merchants' Bank, it being as secure there as human sagacity and prudence could devise, and if not quite as productive as fancy stocks, in his opinion much safer. He thought if she and Louise invested in the stocks of the "Eureka Copper-mining Company," they would procure wings for their inheritance which would waft it beyond their grasp.

And then he reminded them both of the unhealthy mental excitement which the fluctuations of the stock market would occasion, and entreated them to be content with their present competency—to seek for pleasure and happiness in the quiet and rational paths which Providence opened for them, and not to covet that which might only impoverish the soul while gratifying the lusts of the eye.

But having no control over the property of his wife and step-daughter, he could do no less, after giving them his advice, than remit to them the amount they had desired.

Mrs. Howell felt that her husband's professional habits rendered his advice almost valueless compared with her brother-in-law's, and thinking, too, that he had always been wanting in ambition and a due regard for the fashions of this world, (excepting, of course, when he had aspired to the honor of an alliance with her ladyship), and that this very want of ambition would disqualify him to advise in money matters — her affections captivated by the elegances of her brother's establishment — her reason dazed by his talk of stocks, investments, and rapidly-made fortunes — and her fancy excited by brilliant pictures of the glory, honor, and power of wealth — perhaps it was quite natural that both mother and daughter should rely upon the judgment of Ralph Goodenow, rather than the doctor's. However, shortly after Dr. Howell's remittance reached them, they were rejoicing in the possession of twelve thousand dollars' worth of shares in the "Eureka." We will leave them for a few weeks to the enjoyment of such pitiable and paltry pleasures as selfish hearts can gain in the pursuit of fashionable follies, and to the fanciful castles which they built upon the sands of anticipated wealth, and turn to the chamber where Edna Shreve is carefully attended by the doctor and Diantha.

The new year brought to the doctor's household a stronger hope that Edna would rally than had previously brightened the cloud which hovered over her. For nine days she had scarcely recognized one of her anxious attendants, but in her unconscious ravings had sometimes imagined herself in Smyrna — sometimes upon the sinking wreck — and occasionally, when Diantha's patient hands were employed about the child, she fancied herself once

more in her mother's arms. But on the morning of the ninth day after her removal from the Bonsecour, Mrs. Bartlette reported her as having been in a quiet sleep for several hours. The doctor found her pulse feeble, but there were a moisture upon her skin and a quietness in her slumber, as well as a steadiness in the languid movements of her blood, that greatly encouraged him.

"Her symptoms are much more favorable this morning, Mrs. Bartlette; leave your patient now with Diantha until you are called — you are needing rest;" and, turning to Diantha, the doctor continued:—

"If Edna doesn't wake within an hour, you must rouse her gently, and give her a spoonful of gruel and a few drops from this phial. The most judicious and watchful care will be needed for a few days to prevent her from sinking with exhaustion; but I trust, with the blessing of God, we shall bring her safely through. And then how shall I reward my Daisy for her devotion to this stranger?"

"Dear father, you cannot think I want any reward but your approval?"

"No, Daisy, no; excepting the commendation of One who has enjoined us to 'entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.' The spirit which is cultivated and developed by deeds of charity and self-denial is always a good angel in our hearts, even if the recipients of our charities prove unworthy and ungrateful."

When Diantha found it necessary to rouse her little patient, she sat down upon the couch, and raised the frail figure in her arms, singing softly meanwhile a soothing passage. Few voices possessed, both in singing and speaking, more of strength, sweetness, and tender pathos than Diantha's.

Edna's dark eyes opened, and for a moment gazed eagerly at the singer; then, with a look of disappointment,

she turned, sighing, with a hopeless voice, "O, I thought it was mamma singing. I must have been dreaming."

"Did your mamma often sing to you?"

"Yes, and your voice is like hers."

"I am glad of that, because it will give you more pleasure. You shall hear me sing as often as you wish."

"Where am I? and who are you?" asked the child, looking at the room and at Diantha with wondering yet conscious eyes.

"You are in Dr. Howell's home, and you will find this a charming room when you are able to sit up and look around. Can't you guess who I am now?"

"You are the doctor's daughter, who came to see me at the hospital."

"Yes; I see you have not forgotten me. I shall not permit you to talk much to-day; but after you have taken some of this gruel, I shall sit by you, and sing a little now and then, just to give you something agreeable to think of. You musn't have a care nor a thought about yourself; but remember God has provided friends for you, and brought you to this quiet, pleasant room; and now we only want you to rest and get strong."

An expression of trust and gratitude crept into Edna's face, and a few tears trickled slowly from her eyes; but they seemed to Diantha like the softening, revivifying showers of early spring, instead of the devastating storms that had shaken her frail form ever since the wreck.

For several days after the fever left her, Edna lay in a state of weakness and exhaustion, which scarcely permitted her to speak; but the few words she uttered showed that she was keenly sensitive to all the kindness that surrounded her, and deeply grateful. Her wistful eyes followed every movement of Diantha during these days of lassitude; and though she submitted to Mrs. Bartlette's

attentions with gentle patience, yet it was evident the child's heart had elected Diantha as its refuge, and poured upon her those fountains of affection which had been arrested and turned back to their source by the desolating wreck of the *Stella*.

One evening, about a week after the crisis had passed, and when Diantha was holding the little girl in her arms, that she might see a beautiful sunset, she asked, abruptly, —

“What is to be done with me, Miss Howell, when I get strong?”

Although this question of the child had often presented itself to Diantha's thoughts since love for the clinging, helpless orphan had crept into her heart, yet she was quite unprepared with an answer, and could only say, “There will be time enough to think of that when you are strong. God will provide a home for you, my dear child.”

“O, Miss Howell, do you think, if you ask Him, He will let me live near you?”

“We will both ask Him every day to keep us in a home together, or very near each other. I think my little girl is almost as dear and as necessary to my happiness as I am to hers.”

“You do love me?” asked the child, in an eager tone and with pleading eyes.

For answer Diantha only drew the little girl more closely against her heart, and kissed the quivering lips and questioning eyes.

“You must not allow any anxiety about your future to steal into your brain at present. Leave everything to the good God who has said that ‘not even a sparrow falleth to the ground without His notice;’ and a human soul is of more value to Him than many sparrows. Do you feel strong enough to-night to tell me something about your life before I found you?”

“If it tires me to talk I need not go on; and I'd like you to know all about me.” Edna paused a few minutes, looking wearily out upon the fading sunset clouds and the white sails in Hanthrop harbor, as if collecting her thoughts; and when she spoke again, it was in a low, quiet voice, that expressed stronger and more delicate sensibilities than were natural to her years.

“It must have been five or six years ago that papa was teaching in New York, and grew very pale and weak, and the doctor said a sea voyage and a warm climate might do him good. We went in the *Silver Swan* — a sailing packet — to Smyrna, because papa knew the captain, and he let us go for less money than other captains asked. When we got there, papa hired two rooms in a porter's lodge, quite a long way out of the city; and we had plenty of grapes, oranges, and figs; and such a pretty view of the domes, mosques, and minarets of the city! and lovelier than all was our view of the harbor. Then papa grew better, and he used to walk away down to the city, and teach a few English children; and papa taught me, and we all learned to speak French. I think I can speak it quite as well as I can English,” added the little girl, with a slight touch of pride in her tones, as if her accomplishments reflected honor on the dear parents whom her new friend could never know.

She leaned silently for a few minutes against Diantha's supporting arm, with such grief and loneliness depicted on her pale face, and with tears dropping slowly from eyes which seemed to look yearningly back into the past, that, for a moment, Diantha regretted having encouraged her to speak of herself. But she wisely inferred that Edna, in recalling the past, would be more than compensated by the feeling that a living friend knew enough of her buried joys to sympathize with her present sorrows. And in a

broken, tremulous voice, the child took up the thread of her narrative.

“I think we were very happy for two or three years, though we knew very few people, and had but little money. Then mamma got sick, and a little baby came that was always crying, and that worried both papa and mamma. We called the baby Paul: but he only lived a few weeks, and we buried him in a shady corner of the English cemetery. Soon after baby died, my sister Nora, a dear little girl with blue eyes, and short brown curls, and the sweetest voice, grew sick and died; and she was laid away under a cypress tree by the side of the baby. Papa was never strong enough to teach after Nora was taken; and when our money was all gone, and we had sold everything to the Jews that they would pay money for, we went to the English hospital. They were very kind to papa there; but he died very soon after. I think he grieved so much for Nora that he could not live without her, though he was very, very sad to leave mamma, and Nathan, and me.”

Edna's tears flowed silently, and her quivering voice forbade speech for several minutes; and when she spoke again, it was only to tell of their daily walk to the wharves for weeks, in search of an American captain who would be willing to give them a passage to their native land, and trust to the charity of some friends, whom Mrs. Shreve was hoping to find, to pay him. She finished her recital by saying, —

“I shall never forget the day we found Captain Ashmead, nor his kindness to mamma and Nathan; and I should like to show him how much I love him, and how grateful I am. Is he still in the hospital?”

“Yes, one of his feet was so badly frozen in that terrible storm, that Dr. Howell was obliged to take it off; and

it will be several weeks before he can walk about, even with a crutch."

"O, I'm so sorry! Please ask Dr. Howell to tell him how grieved I am. Is there any one to talk with him, and amuse him at the hospital?"

"Father visits him every day; and there are the nurses, and Mr. Moore, the assistant surgeon, is agreeable. I dare say they all try to amuse him. Then, you know I go in two or three times a week, and write letters for him, and sometimes read."

"Do you think, when I am able to ride, Dr. Howell will take me to see him?"

"I can promise you he will, and leave you there for an hour every day to entertain your friend. I've no doubt you'll do the captain a vast amount of good, and you must let that hope encourage you to get strong."

"May I ask, Miss Howell, where I shall get a gown, and a cloak, and a hood to wear when I am strong enough to ride?"

"Mrs. Bartlette and I have been planning and working for you, and we know just where a neat, comfortable little wardrobe is coming from."

A soft tinge of color flushed and paled on Edna's cheeks, and her delicate lips trembled with emotion; but she only said, —

"Dear Miss Howell, I shall try to get well, so that I may show how much I love you."

"Indeed, you must try to get well for a great many better and wiser reasons than that. Now I shall forbid your talking any more this evening, and I shall leave you with Mrs. Bartlette while I go down to welcome your friend the doctor."

CHAPTER IX.

CAPTAIN ASHMEAD.

" But I ask
 What He would have this evil do for me.
 What is its mission? What its ministry?
 What golden fruit lies hidden in its husk?"

"I HAVE pleasant news for you, Captain Ashmead," said Diantha, one January day, when she came into the captain's room almost as noiselessly as the snow that was slowly sifting from the heart of the gray clouds; and though her presence brought that sense of purity, peace, and rest which belongs to a quiet fall of snow, it brought a sunny cheerfulness also, more in harmony with the verdure and warmth of summer.

"Your face is the herald of good tidings, Miss Howell, and you've brought them to a willing ear; I am as tired of my own thoughts and fancies to-day, and as hungry for the sound of a pleasant human voice, as a man can be."

"If that is your mood, my news will be particularly agreeable to you, as it promises a bright little visitor for you on the first pleasant day. Edna Shreve has been gaining so rapidly for the past week, that father has promised to bring her here to spend an hour with you every day, so long as you need her."

"Ay, that is pleasant news, indeed; she will be a welcome guest, and I hope will do me good. I have been wondering all the morning what is to become of the poor child. The letter you wrote to her mother's cousin in

Libnah, Conn., has been returned with a note from the postmaster, saying the family had removed to California, and their address was unknown to him. I could have provided a home for her in a boarding-school, but my small fortune was nearly all swallowed up in the wreck of the *Stella*, and I reckon for some months my wits will be sorely puzzled for means to keep this poor maimed body afloat; and then I have an aged mother dependent on me. Have you thought what provision can be made for Edna's future, in case her relatives cannot be found?"

"I have thought a great deal about it, and talked it over with father, but he invariably says, 'Wait and trust;' and deep and tender as my interest is in this helpless orphan, I remember there is One whose ear is ever open to the cries of the needy; I can leave her with Him."

"You are certainly to be envied for such unbounded faith in God's providence. I would give a fortune, if I had one, to possess your unquestioning trust; but doubts and questions are constantly harrowing my thoughts. However, I'll try to be manly enough not to entertain you with my blue devils. You haven't congratulated me yet, Miss Howell, on the advance I have made towards crutches since you were here."

Diantha's quick ear caught the bitterness, the want of submission, in the captain's tone, when he alluded to his lameness. She had known Captain Ashmead scarcely a month; but his weakness and his dependence had necessarily brought him into more intimate relations with her father and herself than the ordinary incidents and accidents of every-day life could have done, and she had learned to detect his moods and tempers in the tones of his voice, and in the expression of his eyes, with a readiness which she could hardly have explained to another's satisfaction.

"I am not too late to offer congratulations now. I expected to see you sitting up, as father told me you were in a chair for a half hour yesterday. He says you are doing him great credit as a patient."

"Yes, my poor limb is healing rapidly, and I am gaining strength; but I am not as cheerful and grateful as a man ought to be under such circumstances."

Diantha did not ask the reasons for his despondent temper, but quietly moved to a small table near the window, and arranged the writing materials upon it ready for work.

"If you have letters to write this morning, Captain Ashmead, I can give you a half hour of my time. Father will call for me before twelve."

"Thank you; I would like a few lines written to my dear old mother, who still fancies me helpless, suffering, and neglected in every conceivable way. I received a letter from her yesterday, and one from my only sister, who says nothing would prevent her from coming to nurse me but her own invalid state and the care of three young children — all babies, of course, for she hasn't been married five years."

Diantha, with paper before her and a pen in her fair hand, sat waiting for dictation.

"Well, tell my mother, please, in your own way, all Dr. Howell says of my physical condition; tell her, as soon as I can hobble on crutches I shall come to the old homestead for repairs, and I shall be in a precious mood for all sorts of petting and coddling." There was a pause while Diantha's pen travelled down the page; and when, in her own language, she had reported the captain's progress towards crutches, she raised her eyes, asking, "What more?"

"Tell sister Elinor there'll be just enough manhood left

in me to make toys for her babies, and they'll find my crutches an inexhaustible source of amusement."

"Captain Ashmead, pardon me for saying you are very distrustful to-day, and ungrateful too. I'm not willing to send your mother and sister a letter tinged with your present depression, and conveying to them a picture of your ungracious temper."

Diantha's courageous eyes met the captain's equally clear, honest ones as she spoke; he saw in their brown depths rebuke; and he saw more — sorrow and disappointment. The rebuke he could have accepted bravely, but not the consciousness that his friend was disappointed in him; and he burst forth, with an impetuous earnestness: —

"Tell me, Miss Howell, how to conquer this rebellious spirit; how to recognize God's mercy and loving-kindness in a disaster which has crippled me for life; how to thank Him for permitting the sea to swallow all the hard-earned savings of the last twelve years, and how to be grateful that my plans for the future were all swept as mercilessly from my grasp as were the poor broken masts and planks of the *Stella*."

Captain Ashmead, in his earnestness, had not heard the creaking of the door, nor the light, quick footstep of Dr. Howell, who had entered, and now stood behind his patient's chair; but Diantha had seen him, and given him a look and smile of such glad and grateful welcome, that he knew she wished him to answer the captain's questions.

"My good friend," said the doctor, seating himself by the captain's side, "your questions seem to imply a doubt of the excellency of God's wisdom in creating the earth and sea subject to just such natural laws as produce storms. You cannot doubt that wind, snow, and rain are

ministers of God's mercy and forethought for the general good of those whom He has created? You could hardly expect that these natural laws should be turned from their legitimate purpose, or that, in effect, a miracle should be wrought to save one vessel from wreck? You forget that God's infinite wisdom and love have inspired the inventors of such means for the protection of commerce and travel upon the ocean as the barometer, sextant, compass, steam, and naval architecture. You seem also to have lost sight of the fact that while it was not in harmony with God's purposes to work a miracle for the saving of the *Stella*, yet your own life, by the timely floating in of that field of ice, was almost miraculously saved."

"Thank you, Dr. Howell, for your rebuke and your plain talk; both have thrown some light upon things which my rebellious spirit has wilfully kept under the shadow of doubt. If the questions of my longing, hungry soul could be satisfactorily answered, I believe I might yet praise God for His wonderful works. But tell me now what purpose God can have in thwarting all my plans, and in maiming this body, of whose strength I was justly proud."

"I don't know enough of your past life to say what God's purpose may be in arresting its current; but that His acts are always excellent, wise, and plenteous in mercy, I doubt not. Have you not hitherto lived for self-aggrandizement alone? Have you ever conscientiously sought to know what use God would have you make of the powers He has given you? A beautiful stream of water, flowing proudly in its own natural courses, may be comparatively useless, until the hand of man arrests it and turns it into new channels, that it may minister to the needs of commerce and manufactures; and so with the plans and pursuits of your life: they may appear, to your selfish

and finite vision, worthy and sufficient, until God's providence hedges in the old paths of your natural inclinations, and opens new ones of greater usefulness to your fellow-beings, and which shall more truly develop your mental and spiritual resources. You admit that you were proud of your physical strength; and has not God shown you the foolishness of glorying in that which even a breath of His wind may waft from you?"

"Dr. Howell, since I have seen so much of the power, peace, and rest of a Christian's faith exemplified in you and your daughter, I have longed to possess it. I can say, 'Lord, I believe;' but I am not submissive to His decrees, and not satisfied that He permits so much evil to exist."

"Have you never thought that what bears to us the semblance of evil may be only God's minister of good—the outward husk which conceals golden corn? If the earth's best fruits grew spontaneously, and there were no weeds, no thorns nor brambles, no hard, stony soil to be broken, no accidents nor disasters on sea or land, in fine, no digging, delving, pruning or grafting, no hard research, study nor toil to obtain knowledge, wisdom, and riches, where should we find courage, patience, heroism, and energy? If sin did not rise in our very paths, clothed in the most tempting garb, where should we find the strong virtue born of resistance? We may regret the necessity for pruning the branches of a flourishing apple tree, until we have tasted the richer, sweeter flavor of the ingrafted fruit. We may mourn the fall of a sturdy oak until we see the ship which has been fashioned from its bole; and so, captain, I might deplore the maiming of your strong body, did I not feel confident that our all-wise Father will use this apparent evil as a minister of good to your soul; and I pray that from the ashes of your buried hopes and plans there may arise a new life, which shall bear 'the peaceable

fruits of righteousness.' You must be content to see some things 'as through a glass, darkly;' for if all God's purposes and the reasons for all His discipline and chastening were written out in characters that we could not mistake, there would be no such element of character as faith; its ennobling influence on our lives would be lost; we should be more like machines than free, intelligent, moral agents. And now, my good friend, I must entreat you to trust yourself, without doubt, question, or parley, to the infinite mercy and compassionate love of our blessed Christ, relying with child-like trust on the atonement He has made. I have no more time for sermonizing this morning," added the doctor, glancing at his watch; then turning to his daughter, he said, —

"Daisy, I have still a half hour's work to do in the hospital, and meantime I have made a promise for you without consulting your wishes or convenience."

Diantha rose at once from her seat by the writing-table, saying, —

"I am sure you have promised nothing that I cannot at least try to perform."

"Then go into the reception parlor, where you will find several poor patients waiting, and sing to them until I call for you. Some of them caught snatches of the tunes you sang to Edna before she was removed, and they have petitioned you, through me, to grant them the privilege of hearing you again."

There were hesitation and unwillingness expressed in Diantha's burning cheeks and drooping eyes; but after a moment's pause she raised them to her father's face with a smile of compliance glimmering through tears, and only said, —

"I hope my listeners will not be critical nor exacting;

they should know 'tis not easy to sing when the act is not voluntary."

"I will promise you one generous and grateful listener if you will permit my door to remain open while you sing," said Captain Ashmead, reaching out his hand as if he would detain her until she had promised.

"You must ask father's permission; I am only his hand-organ this morning;" but the smile which accompanied the words told of a spirit willing to confer pleasure, even when the means required a sacrifice of personal taste and inclination. She walked into the reception parlor, which adjoined Captain Ashmead's room, and after making kind inquiries regarding the welfare of the patients gathered there, and giving them all encouraging looks and words, she seated herself at the piano, and played a few soft, minor strains of music, until her own soul was in harmony with the sublime passage from Handel's Messiah, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Her rich, strong, yet tenderly pathetic voice gave a new meaning and a more sweetly persuasive beauty to the inspired words than Captain Ashmead had recognized in them before. Her voice carried conviction to his heart that she had abundant knowledge of the "rest" promised to those who seek Christ; that her hope and faith were like anchors to her soul; it also expressed the purity, strength, and tenderness of her nature as clearly as the face mirrors the character of the heart.

For many hours after Diantha had ceased to sing, the words of the invitation, and the promise echoed in the captain's heart, wrestled there with the doubting, questioning spirit, until, meekly submissive, he had accepted our Saviour's invitation, and had found "His yoke easy and His burden light."

And when Dr. Howell made his next call he was

greeted with the calm, confident, grateful assurance of a soul that has struggled with sin and conquered it; that has come up from the dark shadows of doubt into the eternal warmth and sunshine of God's love, pleading no merit, no works, no offering of his own, but relying upon the sacrificial offering of Him who graciously supplieth our needs.

CHAPTER X.

EDNA'S RELATIVES.

“Where'er her troubled path may be,
The Lord's sweet pity with her go!
The outward, wayward life we see;
The hidden springs we may not know.”

“FATHER, did Captain Ashmead tell you we have no prospect yet of finding Edna's relatives? The letter addressed to Cyrus P. Atwood has been returned by the postmaster of Libnah, who says the family have removed from there, and their address is unknown. What is to be done with Edna?”

“We might send her to the Orphans' Home, or to the poorhouse,” suggested the doctor; “but I think we had better ‘trust and wait’ a little longer.”

Mrs. Bartlette rose suddenly from her seat at the dinner-table, murmuring something about having forgotten Edna's tea.

Both the doctor and Diantha noticed the quick rush of color to her face, and the pallor that succeeded, as well as the nervous excitement revealing itself in her voice and movements, and each looked to the other for explanation.

“Father, I have seen Mrs. Bartlette excited in a similar manner, and almost overcome with emotion, two or three times before: there is a mystery about her; and you remember what one of our favorite authors says: —

‘Dark mystery hangs round nothing pure
Save God alone.’

Yet Mrs. Bartlette seems as true, and gentle, and patient as a woman need be, and I'm not willing to believe sin lurks behind such a face as hers."

"Do you remember what appeared to disturb her on the occasions you have alluded to?"

"She certainly started and turned pale when she first saw Edna at the Bonsecour; and once, when she was sitting with me sewing, and listening to Edna's account of the storm, and her mother's last singing, Mrs. Bartlette rose abruptly, saying she was subject to faintness, and left the room.

"Daisy, I think I have the key to Mrs. Bartlette's emotion, and to her secret. She has told me that Bartlette is an assumed name, and I have an impression, amounting almost to conviction, that her real name is Atwood, and that she is the cousin whom Edna's mother hoped to find. I have noticed her deep interest in her patient, and her evident emotion when plans for the child's future have been discussed, and her confusion when your letter to the Atwood family was mentioned."

"But I cannot understand, father," Diantha exclaimed, "why a woman who seems so honest and amiable should wish to conceal her real name, or her relationship to Edna."

"I have the key which would probably unlock that mystery, too. You may have heard me mention a young convict in our State Prison by the name of Lewis. He is Mrs. Bartlette's son. I have not told you before because of her exceeding sensitiveness, and because I knew if your mother should become aware of the fact, she would have an uncontrollable aversion to receiving a woman so connected into our family. I first met Mrs. Bartlette last November, in the warden's office, where she had had an interview with her son, and was just bidding him good by when I entered. She was so overcome with grief at that time as to faint, and

I remained to apply proper remedies for her restoration. I was interested in her face and bearing; there is an air of refinement about her much above the average. Her son Lewis has fine, regular features, and an intelligent face, which does not wear the impress of a soul deeply stained with guilt, though he usually looks sullen, aimless, hopeless, and defiant. When Mrs. Bartlette had recovered from her faintness, I asked how I could serve her.

“If you could only teach my poor boy how to bear the burden of his guilt, disgrace, and punishment,” she answered, “and persuade the prison officers to change his work for something more agreeable,—if you could in some way make his condition less aggravating and humiliating,—you would confer the greatest favor upon both of us.”

“I promised to do what I could for the young man, but again reminded her of her weakness, and her present need of help, and of my willingness to serve her.

“She hesitated, with a truly lady-like delicacy, and then frankly confessed she had spent nearly every dollar of her money in paying a lawyer to defend her son at his trial, and in following him here; and now she was among strangers, without the means of support.

“She seemed to have little thought for herself, and only desired to be near her son, that she might see him as often as the prison rules would permit.

“I can sew, or teach, or take care of young children, or nurse the sick, or do any honest work which shall procure me bread and shelter so near to Lewis that I may see him often, and help make his long confinement endurable,” she added, with tears of such genuine emotion that I asked no other voucher for her honesty. I took her to a respectable boarding-house, and paid for a week’s board in advance, and then secured Miss Wheeler’s interest in her.

“She has told me, from time to time, much about her

past life, which, ever since her early marriage, has been a succession of bitter trials and disappointments; she seems to have endured them with remarkable patience and heroism.

“The early years of her married life were spent in Libnah, but for several years she followed her husband from city to city; she speaks reluctantly of him, but I have learned he was a speculator, a spendthrift, a gambler, and a drunkard. - I infer, if she is Edna's cousin, as I suspect, her natural delicacy and refinement prevent her from acknowledging the relationship, as in her present poverty — and disgraced by a convict son and husband — she could in no way benefit the child, and might prove a serious hinderance.

“I am ready to exclaim, with one of Shakespeare's characters, —

‘O, how full of briers
Is this working-day world!’

“I have suspected Mrs. Bartlette was familiar with sorrow, but I did not think she carried about a heart so full of real, living grief and trouble. What brought her son to the State Prison?”

“I haven't time to tell you his sad story this evening. I must be off to see poor Mr. Jenks as soon as I've swallowed my coffee; he is suffering very acutely to-day. But, Daisy, I think it would be well for you to tell Mrs. Bartlette that you know her son is imprisoned here, and draw from her delicately the history of her grief. She will be stronger and happier for your sympathy, especially if you can persuade her to throw off all disguises, and tell you what she knows of Edna.”

When the doctor left his daughter in quiet possession of the parlor, she seated herself at the piano for her usual

after-dinner practice; and though she was always conscientiously diligent in whatever claimed her attention, — no matter whether it was study, or practice, or work for others, — on this particular evening she found it impossible to thrust from her thoughts the sorrowful picture her father had given her glimpses of, and to concentrate them on the grand old musical composition she was attempting to learn. It must be confessed that an anxious desire for Captain Ashmead's deliverance from the shackles of doubt somewhat shadowed her sunny temper, and ruffled the flow of those musical chords which usually dripped from her fingers with a smooth, sweet, and pathetic rhythm, quite as pleasure-giving as her sister's more brilliant performances.

Suddenly, in turning the pages of her music-book, her eyes were arrested by these words of a favorite anthem: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

"Why am I cast down and disquieted," murmured Diantha, "when God has promised that the souls of those who trust in Him shall not be left desolate, and when I have so often found fulness of joy in trusting Him? Can I not leave the cause of the orphan, the stranger, and the oppressed with One who delighteth in the exercise of mercy and loving-kindness?"

Casting her burden of anxious thought from her, Diantha's musical practice became a song of triumph. If for an hour her soul had been submerged in bitterness, she had tasted the fruit of that tree which in the days of Moses and Miriam made sweet the waters of Marah, and rising from the piano, she carried with her to Edna's room that strength which is born of weakness, and which

"Gates of brass cannot withstand."

"I have brought my book and my sewing, and am likely to have an uninterrupted evening in this pleasant room, thanks to the beautiful snow and its hushing white drifts. Only those will go abroad to-night who are compelled by duty or necessity. God pity those who have no shelter from this storm!" said Diantha, sitting down upon Edna's couch, and pressing an arm fondly and protectingly around her young charge.

"I'm afraid my little girl has been sitting up longer than she ought to-day, and puzzling her brain again with questions which the birds are too wise to ask, because they know who feeds them and provides the sheltering pines and hemlocks for their homes. I am going to recite a little poem to you now, which will give you something to think of besides yourself; and perhaps it will give Mrs. Bartlette pleasant food for thought."

Diantha's finely-modulated voice had in reading the same sweetness and pathos as in singing. She read with a delicate appreciation of the author's sentiment, and with the added charm of self-forgetfulness, her only apparent desire being to give true expression to the subject and pleasure to her listeners. She chose Lowell's charming and pathetic little poem, "The First Snow-fall," and recited it with such effect that Edna's moist eyes and Mrs. Bartlette's forgotten work gave grateful testimony of their appreciation.

And for the next hour Diantha sang and read with as much sweetness and patience as if she had the ears of a large and educated audience to please, and upon their pleasure depended her daily bread; sang and read until sleep wrapped its mantle of rest around Edna. Then for a few minutes she sat beside the sleeper, stitching in silence, until Mrs. Bartlette asked, abruptly, —

"Have you ever known a sorrow or a disappointment, Miss Howell?"

"I have had just enough knowledge of both to give me sympathy for those who have had greater trials, but only the shadow of grief, compared with the substance of yours."

Mrs. Bartlette seemed startled a moment by the answer, but presently resumed:—

"I have sometimes thought your heart must be older in experience than in years, because you have such quick and ready sympathies for the sorrows of others, and seem to know intuitively how to apply balm."

"Father has taught me how to approach the poor, the suffering, and the degraded in such a way as to win their confidence and love. He thinks many abandoned men and women are saved by kind words, and I'm sure more than one heart has been encouraged to bear its burdens with cheerful patience, because of father's comforting ministrations. I've been thinking this evening, Mrs. Bartlette, how I might help you bear the weight of grief which so often nearly crushes you, and which you try in vain to conceal. I know you have an only son in prison, and I'm quite sure you have other trials almost as hard to endure."

Diantha's soft voice expressed more compassionate tenderness than her words, and for a minute Mrs. Bartlette's hands were pressed before her quivering face—only for a minute, when, with a shower of tears, she exclaimed,—

"God knows I am in need of a pitying friend! You shall try to help me if you will. You seem so free from guile, so pure and truthful, that I am constantly rebuked and humiliated in your presence and your father's, because I am concealing so much from you. You do not even know my name."

"No; but I suspect 'tis Atwood, and you are Edna's cousin."

"O, Miss Howell, how could you treat me with such

uniform kindness, knowing all the while I was acting a lie?"

"Father only told me to-day that your real name was not Bartlette, and your emotion when Edna's relatives were mentioned, connected with other facts, led us to suspect you might be her cousin. But had I been sure you were trying to deceive us, I should have treated you kindly from pity, and with the hope that pitying love might win your confidence. You are Mrs. Atwood?"

"Yes; and you will not blame me so very much for trying to conceal the fact, when you know all my reasons. Edna's mother was my cousin; but being left an orphan when she was a mere child, she was adopted by my parents, and became very dear to them and to me. When she went to Smyrna, I was her nearest living relative, and her husband was without family connections, save very distant cousins. I did not know Edna's name when I saw her first at the Bonsecour, but I recognized at once a strong resemblance to my cousin; and when I was sure of her parentage, and knew I was her only relative, for her future good I tried to conceal my knowledge, not only because, in my poverty, I could not provide for her, but because I did not want her to be clouded with my disgrace. My husband, as well as my son, is a prisoner for crime. When Edna's mother last heard from me, we were living in Libnah, Connecticut, and Mr. Atwood was supposed to be wealthy, but dissipated and unreliable. When it was known that he was a speculator, a gambler, and in almost every significance of the word dishonest, he commenced a roving life, and I followed him, with my only boy, from city to city, never remaining many months in a place, until five years ago he was arrested in St. Louis for forgery, was convicted, and is in prison there. I could not have borne the weight of my husband's disgrace and my own grief, had it not been

for my son. He was fifteen at that time, and, so far as I knew, was an honest boy. I took him with me to New York, living there under an assumed name, that Lewis might not suffer for his father's sins, and working hard to keep him in school. Two years ago he was generous, impulsive, and easily influenced by affection; but I knew he lacked strength of will and moral courage. He was a good accountant, and secured a situation as assistant book-keeper in a large wholesale store in New York, and weakly — perhaps I should say wickedly — I concealed from his employers his true name and his father's history. He had been in this store but a few months when a merchant from St. Louis, who had known us when Mr. Atwood was arrested, called on business. He recognized Lewis, and addressed him by his true name before his employers, and afterwards gave them an exaggerated account of his father's crimes. They were of course indignant because we had deceived them, and sent for me to make explanations. I told them all my reasons for wishing to conceal our real name, and as they were satisfied with Lewis's services, they decided to retain him; but the knowledge they had gained made them suspicious and watchful.

“After a time Lewis became acquainted with several fast young men, who persuaded him to indulge in pleasures and luxuries which he could not afford; and in order to appear manly and generous before them, he took small sums of money from his employers, intending to refund it, he says, when he had an increase of salary, which had been promised him. But his new friends made him believe his employers were niggardly, and his services not sufficiently remunerated, and that really the small sums he took were only his just due. He had been with the firm nearly a year and a half when his petty thieving was discovered, and he was discharged. They were generous enough not

to prosecute him, but they used very hard and bitter words, and taunted him with his father's crimes in such a way as to exasperate him and rouse every wicked passion. I firmly believe, Miss Howell, if a man like your father could have dealt with Lewis at that time, he might have been saved; but in the white heat of his passion he conceived the plan of robbing the firm and burning their store to conceal his crime. He succeeded, with an accomplice, in entering the store, robbing the safe, and setting fire to the building. But the fire was discovered by the police before it had made much progress, and was extinguished.

“Then the crime was easily traced to Lewis and his accomplice, who had escaped to Chicago, with only nine hundred dollars in money, and about two thousand dollars' worth of valuable goods. They were arrested there, brought back to New York, where Lewis was tried, convicted, and sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment and hard labor.”

Mrs. Atwood's narrative was interrupted by many tearful pauses and choking sobs, and Diantha's sympathy was expressed more by softly kissing the mother's quivering lips, and smoothing her thin, gray hair, than in words; and yet words of hope and comfort dropped with healing power from the maiden's tongue. But Mrs. Atwood, though she trusted God, had not learned to thank Him, —

“Through dark and dearth, through fire and frost,
With emptied arms and treasure lost,” —

for that grief which had clouded her sun at life's noon, for that evil which seemed to her only blight.

CHAPTER XI.

PLANS AND PROSPECTS.

“All is of God! If He but wave His hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo! He looks back from the departing cloud.”

LONGFELLOW.

“MUST Edna be told?” asked Diantha, when she had given her father the substance of Mrs. Bartlette’s revelations, as they lingered in the wintry twilight over their late dinner.

“You say Mrs. Bartlette desires to assume her true name?”

“Yes. She has suffered so much from fear of being recognized, and is so tired of deceit in all its guises, that she expresses entire willingness to be known hereafter as Mrs. Atwood, even if the name brings her only new humiliations.”

“She has decided wisely; and now, as Edna is remarkably mature and intelligent for a girl of her years, I think ’tis best she should know her true position as regards relatives, and not be left in expectation and uncertainty. It may not be necessary to tell her all Mrs. Bartlette’s reasons for having concealed her true name; but she should know her cousin has great griefs to endure, and should be taught how to perform little acts of thoughtful kindness, which may lighten the burden. This knowledge of their kinship may be of inestimable value to both, and the disaster

which so providentially brought them together may prove God's minister of mercy to them, as it has been to Captain Ashmead. I found him rejoicing in hope this morning, 'persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,' could separate him from the love of God."

- Diantha sat with clasped hands, downcast eyes, and a silent tongue; but the grateful thank-offering of her heart found expression in the flushing and paling of her face.

Dr. Howell observed her silence and her eloquent color — hesitated a minute, and then said, —

"Daisy, I haven't thanked you yet on behalf of the patients at the Bonsecour for the pleasure your voice gave them yesterday; but I have brought you a rich reward to-day — acts of self-denial are not often so quickly crowned with compensation. Captain Ashmead bade me say to you, that the singing of those words impressed him quite as forcibly with the infinitude of Christ's mercy and loving-kindness as the storm and wreck did with God's omnipotence."

Diantha left her seat, and, kneeling by her father's side, hid her face against his breast, whispering, —

"I do not deserve to be rewarded with such knowledge; I obeyed you reluctantly, and I haven't asked your pardon yet for my momentary rebellion against your judgment and wishes."

"Your gracious compliance quite atoned for the minute's hesitation, and you have no need to ask pardon. Rise, Daisy, and sit by my side while we talk over briefly Edna's position. She has been so providentially cast upon our protection, and is so winning, modest, and intelligent, so unfitted in her delicate physical organization for

contact with those whom she would meet in homes provided by public charity, that I have a strong desire to shield her, and, so far as possible, give her that parental affection and watchfulness which a shrinking, sensitive child especially requires. Then she is so warmly attached to you, and is so easily influenced by you, that I am willing to make great sacrifices for the sake of keeping her with you."

"Dear father, do you think it possible?"

"I hope it is. Edna's future prospects have given me much anxious and prayerful thought; and while my interest in her, and my wish to keep her and provide for her, have been increasing every day, I think the obstacles to her remaining in our home have been as surely decreasing. 'Tis quite probable Louise will marry her cousin Arthur in the spring, if he receives the appointment of secretary of legation, and will go abroad with him. Her marriage will relieve your mother of much care, will reduce our household expenses, and will make such a vacancy in our home, that I think the addition of Edna will be a pleasing novelty for a while. And when your mother has once seen her prettiness and graceful, modest bearing, and become familiar with her many charms, and accustomed to her sweet presence and helpful ways in the household, I can but hope she will consent to her remaining, even if she does not approve. You and I must economize somewhat in our other charities, and make a few sacrifices of personal tastes; but I believe we have both decided not to make an offering to our God, 'which doth cost us nothing.'"

"The pleasure of having her with us will more than pay the cost of any sacrifices I am obliged to make. I can take charge of Edna's wardrobe, and can give her lessons in everything she will need to study at present, so

that her education will be no expense to you for several years, and mother need feel no increase of care or responsibility. O, father, I have so earnestly desired to have Edna for my little sister and pupil, that I was almost glad when I found she had no relatives who could claim her. I've been wanting in patience and faith ever since I first saw her, and have found it difficult to cultivate the 'waiting and trusting' spirit you so often enjoin upon me. Your hint about Lou's probable engagement is quite new to me. I have noticed the frequent mention of her cousin's name in the hasty notes she has written, but have supposed his attentions only cousinly. Louise is so brilliant and accomplished, it seems natural and appropriate for her to receive attention and admiration."

"I didn't know the attentions were assuming a serious character until I received a letter from your mother this morning. Read it," the doctor said, handing his daughter the letter; and Diantha read.

"NEW YORK, January 26, 18—.

"DEAR STEPHEN: You complain of the shortness and infrequency of my letters; but really if you could see what a whirl of exciting pleasures we are living in, you would rather wonder that I write at all. But as a disagreeable storm of sleet and snow keeps me within doors to-day, I can promise you a long letter. You know Marvelina is the fashion in New York this winter. She has a rich and powerful soprano voice, and the most artistic expression and style; and as Ralph has a box and a season ticket for his family, and Louise and I are both passionately fond of the opera, we go to hear Marvelina every evening when we are not engaged to a party. We go out so much, and see such fashionable society, that I've found my new India shawl positively indispensable, and I've

been obliged to make several very expensive additions to my wardrobe; but, thanks to the good fortune of my first marriage, I can afford to gratify my tastes occasionally.

“ Louise is very much admired in her aunt’s visiting circle, and I must say, both Ralph and his wife have been very generous to her; they have made her handsome presents of jewels and wardrobe, and her cousin Ralph is begging the privilege of adding a diamond ring to the numerous gifts she has accepted from him. ’Tis proper that I should tell you now that Louise seems to regard her cousin with more favor than she bestows upon her other admirers. Arthur’s plans and pursuits are very congenial to her. He has been promised an appointment, which will introduce him to the political world, and, as brother Ralph has an intimate acquaintance with several members of the Cabinet and Senate, and money enough to buy influence, there is no doubt Arthur will be one of the secretaries of our legation in France. Just think for a moment of the brilliant prospects open to my Louise — three or four years to be spent in the best society of Paris, another year in visiting the principal cities and charming scenery of Europe, and then, life in Washington! Arthur intends to make politics his profession; and his talents, ambition, and money will make his career eminently successful, I’ve no doubt. Dear me! how often I have sighed for just such a life as Lou will probably lead! and if I was as young and handsome now as when my dear Arthur died, my youth and beauty should raise me to such a social position as I am fitted to adorn. Of course we see the best society in Hanthrop; but there is a puritanic narrowness about it which does not harmonize with my tastes. New York society has a broader and more liberal platform; and people don’t stop to inquire into the respectability of your

pedigree as far back as the landing of the Pilgrims; but if you have wealth and style, or beauty and accomplishments, you are received into fashionable circles, and made to feel at home by the easy, affable way in which you are treated.

“I commenced telling you about Louise, but digressed, as usual. My thoughts flow so freely, 'tis almost impossible to confine them within the limits of a letter. She is quite satisfied with her cousin's social position and his political prospects, admires his talents and his distinguished personal appearance, and is as deeply in love with him as a girl should be before marriage. Arthur is perfectly devoted to her; and in fact, her uncle, aunt, and cousin Hortense seem as proud of her beauty and accomplishments as if she were already Arthur's wife. Ralph is in Washington this week, negotiating for Arthur; and if his mission is successful, the family will give a large party to announce the engagement to their friends. Louise is having a pale lemon-colored silk made for the occasion. 'Tis her aunt's gift, and will be trimmed elaborately with point lace. Ralph's wife expressed a wish yesterday that you and Di should come on to attend the party; and you will, of course, receive formal invitations from her. I do hope you will contrive to leave your dreary, treadmill duties long enough to catch a glimpse of the gay world. It will go a great way towards enlarging and liberalizing your ideas of life. These festivities will prolong our stay in New York until just before Lent, and Lou will probably be married early in April, and sail immediately for Europe.

“She will have few preparations to make, as her bridal *trousseau* can be got up in Paris with less expense, and a vast deal more of style than at home. The stocks of the Eureka were thirty-six per cent. above par yesterday, and

Ralph says we could sell out any day, and make a handsome net gain on our investments. He was very enthusiastic, when he went to Washington, in forming a new company for the purpose of quartz-crushing in California. He has made a conditional purchase of a tract of land and a mill privilege on the Feather River, and will send an agent out to superintend the erection of a crushing mill, as soon as he finds leisure to look after the man's outfit. Arthur's business must be settled first; but Ralph says within six months after this mill is in working order, the stockholders will be receiving handsome dividends. He advises Louise to invest in the new stocks, and she has decided to buy two thousand dollars' worth. Of course her uncle is quite as deeply interested in her pecuniary prosperity as if she were his own daughter. I shall make no more investments until after Louise is married, as I shall want a large amount of ready money to use at that time. We shall be obliged to give a wedding breakfast; and then, before the young people sail, we must have an evening reception, not only because we are indebted to everybody in the way of invitations, but we shall want all Hanthrop to see what a splendid alliance Louise has made.

"And now, doctor, this brings me to the most important item of my letter. I saw yesterday in the Hanthrop "Courier" that the elegant residence on Hawthorn Avenue, formerly owned by the late Judge Carruthers, will be offered for sale next Saturday. The house hasn't been built ten years, and I've never been inside it without admiring its style, and longing for just such a home. I have heard it cost Judge Carruthers over thirty-five thousand dollars; but as he died so suddenly, leaving his affairs in bad condition, most likely the house can be bought for twenty or twenty-five thousand. Just think how desirable a residence for

us, what advantages it offers to your profession, and what an investment for you! If you buy it, the larger part of the price can remain on mortgage; and property is constantly increasing in value on that avenue. Immediate possession will be given the purchaser, and we could have it furnished, and be perfectly at home in it, before Lou's wedding cards are sent out. We can rent the dingy old house we've lived in twenty years, and I can have the satisfaction of exercising my taste in furnishing a handsome home while I am young enough to enjoy it. Do be generous this once, doctor, and let your family live in a house suitable to their position in society, and not subject me to the mortification of receiving Ralph's family in our old house. Louise is not your own daughter, and for that very reason all the eyes in Hanthrop will be watching to see if her step-father behaves handsomely at this time. You have permitted your purse to be drained so long by every beggar who tells a plausible story, that you have grown neglectful of the claims of your family and the requirements of good society.

"Tell Diantha she must be saving her money, as she and Hortense are to be Lou's bridesmaids, and I should be shockingly mortified not to see her as becomingly dressed at the breakfast and at the reception as Hortense. I suppose Stephen has gone back to college; but the dear boy has written me only one letter since I've been in New York. Perhaps he is waiting for me to answer that, but you must tell both Di and Stephen how very busy I am, and how anxious about Lou's affairs just now. When she is fairly off to Europe I shall devote myself to them.

"Have you found any one to claim that little shipwrecked girl? I never can think of her name. Has Horace Metcalf called since we were in New York? Poor

fellow. He'll be terribly shocked when he hears of Lou's good fortune; but he shouldn't have been so long in making a choice. Lou has never hidden her rare accomplishments behind a bushel, and a liberally educated young man, who has seen so much of the world, ought to know how to appreciate her talents, beauty, and style. Bless me! the dressing-bell is ringing, and I've spent three precious hours in writing, and have forgotten to alter the lace trimmings on the sleeves of my garnet silk, and I particularly wanted to wear it this evening. But I have always been just so forgetful of self when there was anything to be done for the comfort and pleasure of others.

"Let me know immediately your decision in regard to the Carruthers house. I shall write again as soon as Ralph returns from Washington. With love to Di and Stephen, I am

Yours, affectionately,

MARY G. HOWELL."

Dr. Howell stood with his elbow upon the mantel, thoughtfully gazing into the coal fire, while Diantha was reading; and when she had finished, each avoided meeting the other's eye. The doctor did not wish his child to read in his face the sorrow and regret he felt for her mother's worldliness, pride, and ambition; and Diantha did not wish her father to see the flush of pain and shame which his wife and her mother had kindled by the heartless tone of this letter. Diantha was the first to speak.

"Do you think favorably of buying the Carruthers house?"

"No, Daisy; I cannot for several reasons—the chief of which is want of means. I could raise perhaps half the

price of the estate, and allow the other half to remain on mortgage; but it would hamper me, and deprive me of the ability to help others. You do not wish it?"

"Not for my own sake,—this old house is very dear and pleasant, and quite grand enough to suit me,—but I am always glad when you can gratify mother."

"It has been my aim, ever since I married, to surround my wife with as many luxuries as my income would justify; but I dare not incur so heavy a debt for the sake of gratifying her, when I know the shadow of it would unfit me for my professional duties."

"When mother's guests arrive I can share Edna's room, and give up mine to Hortense. I shall be glad to have the entire care of Edna now, and Mrs. Atwood might leave next week if employment could be found for her elsewhere."

"We shall have three or four weeks to look around, before the advent of our distinguished relatives and the beginning of Lent. Much can be accomplished in that time, and I've no doubt healthy employment can be found for Mrs. Atwood's hands and brains. How can Edna's wardrobe be made presentable? I wish her to make as pleasant and favorable an impression on your mother as possible. Dress goes a great way, sometimes, towards awakening a kindly interest. How much money will you want?"

"Not a dollar. Mrs. Metcalf, and several others who have heard of Edna's destitution, have given me valuable articles of clothing for her; and with the help of Mrs. Atwood's needle, I am getting up a neat, comfortable, and even pretty wardrobe. She will be ready for a sleigh-ride to-morrow."

"Daisy, how could I live without you?" asked the doctor, drawing his daughter fondly to his side, and rest-

ing his face against the golden wealth of her hair. "So true, thoughtful, and unselfish —"

"Hush! dear papa, and say rather, so arrogant, self-willed, and worldly, until your teachings and Christ's merciful forbearance helped me to choose the better part."

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOCTOR'S LETTER.

“How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will,
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!”

“HANTHROP, January 29.

“MY DEAR WIFE: You desire to know as soon as possible if my wishes coincide with yours regarding the purchase of the Carruthers house, and I will reply briefly this morning to your last favor, received yesterday. For your sake I have given the subject much serious thought, and have called upon one of the executors of the estate to learn the price and the terms of purchase. I find it can be bought for twenty-six thousand dollars, and my judgment tells me 'tis a very reasonable price for such a well-built, modern house, so desirably and pleasantly located.

“I could not raise half the sum necessary to make this purchase without seriously hampering myself, and the remaining half, that I doubt not could lie on mortgage, would be a burden of debt and care which I dare not assume, when I remember the clear head and cool nerves requisite to my profession. With my views of accountability to God, it would be positive sin for me to commit an act the consequences of which would unfit me for clearness and concentration of thought. Moreover, I do not believe any man who is dependent upon his profession has

a moral right to live in a house costing double the amount of his available means.

“And supposing I could command a sufficient sum to purchase the house you desire, it would require so large a portion of my income to support a style of living corresponding with the house, that I should have little or nothing to bestow in charity, or to lay aside for the use of my family if I should be removed by death or incapacitated for my professional duties. When I think of the comforts and conveniences of our old home, which, by the blessing of God, I have paid for, I am unwilling to exchange them for the stately elegances of a house as little suited to my tastes and habits as the tortoise's shell was to the poor snail. I should feel as if I were constantly acting a falsehood, and that my grandeur was maintained with the price of some poor widow's or orphan's bread.

“I do not object to a handsome style of living for those who can afford it, and who leave a generous margin for the relief of those whom our Saviour has commended to our care; but when a house is purchased and furnished, not so much for our needs, comforts, and the gratification of our tastes, as with the intent of outdoing our neighbors, then the extravagance becomes a crime, because it fosters envy, and tempts others to adopt a style of living beyond their means. I sincerely believe, Mary, that many professing Christians are at least negatively culpable for the fearful increase of such crimes as forgery and embezzlement.

“Clerks and those who are employed in our civil service, professional men with moderate incomes, in fact, thousands of people with small means, are tempted by the extravagant and luxurious display of wealth to imitate it in the furnishing of their houses, in the expense and style of their dress, and in all the fashionable follies of the present day. And in order to keep up this false show and appear-

ance of wealth, many embezzle funds, speculate in fancy stocks, buy lottery tickets, and resort to the gambling saloon, hoping and trusting, no doubt, until blunted by frequent yielding to temptation, that some turn of fortune's wheel will enable them to refund the money, and return to honest measures for the support of their expensive habits, before the curtain rises, and their false life is laid bare.

"It pains me to deny you any gratification which you think will conduce to your happiness; but neither my means nor my conscience will permit me to purchase the Caruthers house.

"I am happy to congratulate Louise on her apparently brilliant prospects. Such a career as her cousin has mapped out for himself opens a large field for Christian usefulness; and I hope the young people will not permit ambitious struggles for wealth and political honors to eclipse those higher aims and pursuits which ennoble the intellect and purify the affections. You may be sure I will do for my step-daughter, at this important crisis of her life, whatever seems to me right and consistent with my income.

"Present my regards, please, to your brother Ralph's family, and invite them to accept the hospitalities of our home for as long a time as they may find it pleasant and convenient to do so. It will be impossible for me to go to New York to attend the party given in honor of Lou's engagement. I have a large number of patients, and several whose condition is so critical I should not feel safe in leaving them; and then, Mary, I cannot afford the expense of such a pleasure trip when I am anticipating the heavy draughts upon my purse which Lou's wedding festivities will necessarily occasion. I must rely upon that superior knowledge of style which your intimacy with the fashions of New York has given you for liberalizing my own ideas.

If Daisy feels inclined to go, and I can procure a suitable escort for her, I shall favor the trip. A glimpse of such style as Ralph's family support cannot harm my little field-flower, nor ruffle that sweet content of hers which scatters such wealth of perfume upon the lives of others.

"The little shipwrecked girl for whom you inquire is so far recovered that I am going to give her an airing in my sleigh this morning. No relatives have been found who can afford the child support and protection, and her nervous system is not yet strong enough to endure the shock of a removal from our house. She must be watched with tenderest love for many months, else grief for her great losses will prove too heavy a strain upon her extremely delicate physical strength.

"Stephen has returned to his studies, but brings back to us every Saturday the breezy freshness of his hearty, vigorous nature, his racy stories of student life, and his sophomoric quotations. Beneath this rippling, effervescing tide of poetry and sentiment in our boy I believe there is hidden the elements of strong, noble, and vigorous manhood, which I pray that Infinite Love may awaken and develop. Mary, I hope the quiet and rational pleasures which our home and my income afford, added to the affection of your husband and children, may atone for the lack of those gayeties and luxuries which your visit to Ralph's family has made familiar to you. Daisy unites with me in love to you and Louise.

Truly and affectionately yours,

STEPHEN HOWELL."

To appreciate the amount of moral courage it cost Dr. Howell to decide against the purchase of a house which his wife particularly desired to own, it would be necessary to spend months in his family, and hear the oft-repeated

hints and allusions to his want of tact and business talent, his old-fashioned notions and lack of ambition, his heedless disregard of his wife's refined tastes, superior culture, and sensitive nerves, and the rasping frequency with which his charities were cited as an evidence of his obtuseness to the requirements of fashion and the wants of his family.

The doctor had scarcely folded and directed his letter when Diantha entered the room, leading his little patient equipped for a drive; and he gladly turned from the contemplation of an unpleasant theme to the duties of his profession, which were usually so agreeable and absorbing to his thoughts as to banish all memories of personal pain and disappointment. Fortunately for Dr. Howell's peace and usefulness, he knew "the labor we delight in physics pain;" and probably few struggling, disappointed, care-oppressed souls have ever made a better use of such knowledge.

"You do not know how much your father has done, Miss Howell, to make my son's condition endurable, and to reconcile him to it," said Mrs. Atwood, when she and Diantha turned away from the window where they had watched the departure of the doctor and Edna.

"I didn't know father had much power or influence in the prison," Diantha replied, in such tones as to encourage Mrs. Atwood to speak upon that subject which was always so painfully present to her thoughts.

"It seems to me as if his influence pervaded every place in this city—as though he brought light to every dark spot—hope and healing to all kinds of mental and physical suffering. When he first met me at the prison, my life was barren and wretched; so valueless I could have thrown it away in any dark hour; but for Lewis's sake I was willing to drag out my dark days in order to relieve

the tedious monotony of his prison life; and now the activity and charity of your daily life have shown me that even I can find some work to do for others."

"And in the performance of it, I trust you may so far forget your own sorrows as to be, at least, submissive and content to wait."

"All my hope is buried within prison walls, and there is no angel's hand to roll the heavy stones away; and O, this 'waiting and trusting' is so hard! Your father has done a great deal to ameliorate the condition of my son, but he cannot remove him from the contaminating influence of prison life, nor shorten the term of his confinement. Lewis will be thirty-two years of age if he lives to be released — a man in years, but a boy in every thing excepting his knowledge of crime; unfitted for any respectable position in life; suspected and distrusted because the stain of his crime will be branded on his forehead, and its ghost will follow him wherever we may flee. Like Cain, he will be a fugitive and a vagabond; and our punishment will be greater than we can bear."

Mrs. Atwood's clasped hands and quivering lips attested the depth of her pain and grief more forcibly than her words.

"Tell me what father has done for Lewis," asked Diantha, not daring to offer words of comfort to the woman whose present was so barren of joy, and whose fears for the future were so tangible.

"In the first place he persuaded the prison officers that Lewis's work was too hard for him: it was stone-cutting; and the dust was irritating his lungs, which have never been strong since he was a young lad, and suffered from a severe attack of pneumonia. The officers would not listen to me nor to Lewis regarding the injury of the dust.

They thought he had been brought up in idleness, and was feigning indisposition; but the testimony of Dr. Howell prevailed with them, and they have taken him out of the stone-cutting yard, and given him employment in wood-carving, which is much more tolerable to him. Then your father won the confidence of Lewis by talking kindly to him, and showing him how he might be preparing for the distant future. He learned that Lewis had some desire to be taught civil engineering; and he has bought him books, and has found a man who is willing to go to the warden's office twice a week to instruct him. This permission from the officers for Lewis to have lessons was an especial favor granted to Dr. Howell, and from his purse the teacher is paid."

"Dear Mrs. Atwood, my knowledge of life has not qualified me to speak with any authority or confidence on this subject; but have you never thought these twelve years of punishment may be a wholesome discipline to Lewis? that, arrested so suddenly, before crime had hardened him, he is more accessible to good influences than he would have been had he spent a few more years in New York, taught by such companions as he had chosen? You say he always lacked strength of will and moral courage. May you not hope he will gain firmness and the power of resisting that evil which has brought him only disgrace and humiliation, and you such bitter grief and pain? Is it not possible he may acquire a love for study through the influence of his teacher, the chaplain, and my father, who are all deeply interested in him, so as really to take his place in the world at thirty-two better fitted for honest work and a respectable position than if he had spent twelve years as an accountant, and, without committing such crimes as were amenable to the laws, had blunted

and weakened his moral perceptions by yielding to petty sins, contracting extravagant habits, and gaining from his associates false views of life and work? I dare not encourage you to hope that if Lewis's character is unexceptionable for several years, he may be pardoned out; but I will help you bear the burden of your pain and loneliness, and I will go with you sometimes to see Lewis, if you think my visits would encourage him in trying to do well."

"O, Miss Howell, I should be so grateful if you would show a kind interest in my poor boy. I believe if he thought one like you had confidence in him, and really cared for his future, he would have more ambition to study, more self-respect, and the chances would be greater for his escaping from the contamination of those who are older in sin than he is. And if I dared, after all you have done for me, ask one more favor —"

Mrs. Atwood paused, timidity and native delicacy almost forbidding her to ask help, even where it had been most generously offered.

"Don't hesitate to ask, Mrs. Atwood; you cannot need another assurance of my willingness to grant favors," said Diantha, with a smile of encouragement.

"No. I heard from the patients at the Bonsecour, yesterday, of your kindness in singing to them, and I have longed to ask you to sing in the prison chapel, sometimes, at morning service. There is something wonderfully persuasive and thrilling in your manner of singing 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor;' and I believe the tones and the words might make a deeper and more permanent impression on the hearts of those poor, hardened prisoners than a dozen sermons would, if for no other reason than because they steel themselves against truth, which they

think has been prepared expressly to be hurled at criminals. But the novelty of the singing, combined with the persuasiveness of your voice, would give the words a power over these degraded men which some might be unable to resist."

Diantha's eyes were for a minute so full of tears that her needle and hands found space to rest. Her first thought was one of shrinking from the very air which so many rough, crime-stained men had polluted with their breath; and her next was one of hesitancy in using her voice in any way which would appear ostentatious. Then she thought of Christ's office and mission, "To bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," and of her desire to imitate Him in carrying balm and healing to bruised hearts; she thought of Captain Ashmead's testimony to the power her voice had given those words, and remembered the few ways in which she could offer service to her Master, that in reality cost the sacrifice of her pet tastes, pursuits, and inclinations; in fact, any sacrifice of hers seemed trifling compared with the effect Mrs. Atwood thought might be produced by the singing of that anthem.

It appeared to her so grand and noble a thing to show one human soul the possibilities of attaining a purer manhood, — to sow the seed from which, in after years, golden grain might be garnered; that while she thought, her timidity, her shrinking hesitancy, melted away, and she exclaimed, —

"If father approves, and can go with me to the prison chapel, if the chaplain thinks singing would be acceptable, and good might result from it, I will try."

Mrs. Atwood rose hastily, and touched Diantha's trem-

bling lips with her own, only saying, "God bless you!" and the maiden's tears attested the truth and beauty of this stanza: —

"Heaven is not reached at a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round."

CHAPTER XIII.

MAKING PROGRESS.

"He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living Peace."

RUSKIN.

EDNA SHREVE's visit to Captain Ashmead was not so happy in its results as the doctor and his daughter had hoped. His presence had recalled too vividly the terrors, perils, and losses of the storm and wreck, and the child's tears and nervous excitement proved too severe a tax upon her strength. She was brought back in Dr. Howell's arms, sobbing and hysterical, and several days passed before she regained the quiet cheerfulness which had been hers before this visit. When she was again strong enough to leave her chamber, the doctor permitted her neither to ride nor to call upon Captain Ashmead unless accompanied by Diantha, and only to spend an hour of each day in the parlor, listening to her patient friend's singing and playing. Music had a most soothing influence upon Edna, even when she was delirious.

Two weeks have passed since Mrs. Atwood threw off the incubus of deceit, confessing her sorrow and her humiliation, and accepting human help and sympathy; and there is now more quietude in her movements, more softness and patience in her eyes, and more hope in her face. She seems to be gaining a slight measure of self-confidence,

and athwart the heavy darkness of her grief the rays of faith's sunshine glimmer faintly.

The doctor and his daughter have attempted to offer little direct consolation to Mrs. Atwood, but have persuaded her to interest herself in the trials, sufferings, and poverty of others, knowing that such an interest is the best medicine for her own aching heart.

She goes daily to the Bonsecour Home to bandage and bathe the broken limb of an orphan Scotch boy, and assists poor, overburdened Mrs. Jenks in caring for her rheumatic husband and crippled child; and twice every week the generous warden of Hanthrop prison permits her to spend a half hour with her son.

"Daisy, I have found employment for Mrs. Atwood which promises to enlist her sympathies and busy her hands. I shall give you the pleasure of informing her," said the doctor, one bright February morning, when Mrs. Atwood and her young charge had quitted the breakfast parlor.

"I hope, father, whatever work you have found will not occupy her so closely, nor take her so far away, as to prevent frequent meetings between her and Edna."

"She will not be a half mile from us, nor a much greater distance from the prison, and will have the care of two young children. Their mother, Mrs. Pomeroy, is a patient of mine, and has been wishing for several months to procure just such a person as Mrs. Atwood."

"I have heard of a Mrs. Pomeroy in Atherton Place, who is a great sufferer, very nervous, fastidious, and difficult to please; I'm afraid Mrs. Atwood will find such a person unsympathetic, and will get discouraged."

"I have known Mrs. Pomeroy for nearly a year; she certainly is a great sufferer, very nervous, and somewhat peculiar, as confirmed invalids often are, but withal a gen-

erous, conscientious woman, and a devoted mother. I have told her Mrs. Atwood's story, and have seldom seen any one more deeply interested in a tale of grief and misfortune than my patient was. I prophesy much good to both women from the relations that will exist between them. The children have not been well managed during their mother's illness, and are a little boisterous and self-willed, but are bright, and so young as to be easily moulded by gentle, judicious treatment. Mrs. Atwood will be expected to look after their physical wants, and introduce them to the mysteries of spelling and reading. The children are twins, and nearly six years old. You may tell Mrs. Atwood about this situation, and also that she will receive liberal compensation, and be treated in a kindly, considerate, and lady-like way; and mind, Daisy, it will not be wise to weave into your statement of the case any doubts and prejudices of your own."

"How do you know I have any doubts and prejudices?" asked Diantha, raising a face which, in its delicately changing color, mirrored every emotion of her soul.

"My child, your face is like an open book to me, and I can readily detect in it anxious misgivings for your friend, and a desire to shield her from any new annoyances and trials. You must know that I don't wish to secure an easy situation for Mrs. Atwood; 'tis necessary for her health of mind that all her womanly tact and sympathies should be in constant exercise. I thought of the mental and physical welfare of both my patients when making this arrangement. Mrs. Atwood might have found employment with her needle, or as nurse at the Bonsecour, but I considered the care of young children and the companionship of a nervous invalid better for her."

The doctor finished his last sentence while drawing on his overcoat, and making ready for the professional duties of the day.

“Stop a minute, father, and read your letters before going out. Here’s the boy with the morning mail just coming up the steps, and I can’t wait until dinner-time to know if there’s any news from mother.”

The doctor looked as if he could wait; he was not expecting anything which would stimulate and strengthen him for the labors of the day; but he would not disappoint Diantha.

“We have a generous packet from New York at last,” said the doctor, glancing at his letters; and handing Diantha one from Louise, he broke the seal of an envelope bearing his wife’s superscription, and there fell from it a slip, cut from a newspaper, containing the following announcement. Dr. Howell picked it up, and read aloud, —

“We learn by special despatches from Washington that Arthur Goodenow, Esq., son of one of our most enterprising merchant princes, has received the appointment of secretary to the French legation. He will be expected to sail for Europe early in April. The appointment reflects honor and credit upon the wisdom and shrewdness of our Cabinet, as well as upon the young man’s brilliant talents.”

Dr. Howell’s whistle had not been so prolonged, nor so musical, for several days; it received inspiration from his knowledge of the large amount of money Ralph Goodenow had spent in awakening the “wisdom and shrewdness” of the Cabinet to a perception of Arthur’s fitness for the appointment; money had “pricked the sides of their intent.”

Diantha’s face, while listening to the paragraph, wore only a look of pleased gratification. “I am glad for Lou’s sake,” she said. “If she really loves her cousin, his failure would have grieved her, and deferred her marriage and the pleasures of her foreign tour.”

“If she really loves him —” The doctor commenced a

sentence, but finished it with a low musical accompaniment, perfectly understood by his daughter.

“ We have here a note of formal invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Goodenow, soliciting the company of Dr. Howell and daughter for the evening of the 17th. You can digest that and your note from Louise while I am reading your mother's letter.”

And this letter we shall venture to insert — not only because it is the last communication from Mrs. Howell's gifted pen which we shall have occasion to read, but because it so truly daguerreotypes that lady's peculiar individuality and “ interior life.”

“ NEW YORK, February 9, 18—.

“ DEAR DOCTOR: You will see by the paragraph which I cut from the ‘ Morning Chronicle,’ that Arthur has received an appointment which opens for him a brilliant political career; and you will also receive, with Diantha, invitations to a magnificent reception, which will be given by Ralph and his wife on the 17th, to announce the engagement of their son and the distinguished honors our administration has conferred upon him. I did not tell my brother's family of your impolite declination of their proposed kindness, thinking it best you should make your own excuses, and proclaim your indifference to your step-daughter's engagement and your wife's wishes, in your own conceited way. The people of Hanthrop will know, sooner or later, that Dr. Howell's charity and liberality are garments only worn in public — that his own family are obliged to submit to a daily crucifixion of their tastes, that his philanthropical measures may be paraded.

“ More than six hundred invitations have been issued for this party — not alone to the most wealthy, refined, and elegant of the fashionable circles, but to distinguished statesmen, artists, and authors, of Ralph's acquaintance. He

says this party will cost him at least ten thousand dollars; and besides giving Arthur a splendid outfit, he is going to make Lou a bridal present of ten thousand dollars' worth of shares in the 'Feather River Quartz-crushing Company.' The Symphonic Band, probably the most artistic performers in America, has been engaged for the occasion, and Ralph has already ordered over a thousand dollars' worth of flowers to be used in decorating the rooms. But you will shrug your shoulders when told of such generous expenditure of money, and think only of the number of ungrateful beggars it would support. You remember our Saviour rebuked His disciples when they intimated that the alabaster box of precious ointment 'might have been sold for much, and given to the poor;' and that rebuke has always clearly indicated to my mind that our Lord is pleased when we spend our means in the cultivation of elegant tastes. Of course a man who dares not incur a debt of thirteen thousand dollars will look at everything from the same narrow, utilitarian stand-point as did the uneducated fishermen of Galilee. I was foolish enough for a few hours to hope your own pecuniary interest would stimulate you to buy a house where I could invite my friends without a blush, and where I could be surrounded by those evidences of taste and culture which are so vitally essential to a refined nature; but my twenty years' familiarity with your narrow notions and prejudices should have taught me wisdom, and saved me the pain of a refusal from one who never understood me. You have looked at life only through your professional eyes, and, as a matter of course, have become blind to the requirements of polite society. I trust after my dear Lou's marriage I shall never be obliged to humiliate myself by begging favors of one who cannot appreciate my delicate tastes. Ralph says I may reasonably hope my small capital will increase with such rapidity as to warrant

me in purchasing a house before Lou returns from Europe, where the mother of one connected with our most fashionable as well as our most distinguished political circles can receive her daughter with becoming style.

“If Di accepts Mrs. Goodenow’s invitation, you must give her at least one hundred dollars for the party dress, which will be indispensable; and much as I want my dear girl should have a taste of such innocent pleasures as other young people enjoy, I shall be ashamed to introduce her to Ralph’s family unless she comes with a new cloak and two new dresses. Even if she has every advantage that dress can give her, she will be a striking contrast to Louise — poor Di! she is so wanting in style.

“We shall return to Hanthrop before the 25th, and shall make ready during Lent for Lou’s marriage and departure for Europe. Both events will probably occur before the 10th of April. Arthur will go to Washington to receive his instructions immediately after the engagement party, and will probably remain there until the last of March. With love to Di and Stephen,

I am yours, as ever,

MARY G. HOWELL.”

The doctor read aloud those paragraphs of his wife’s letter referring to Arthur’s appointment, the party, and Diantha, but wisely withheld from his daughter her mother’s severe and unjust criticisms upon himself. Yet there was a minor note of almost inexpressible sadness in his tones, revealing to Diantha’s quick ear his disappointment and his wound.

Never had his large and generous heart craved human sympathy more than at this crisis. His affections had long since reached the summit of that trellis which his wife’s cold, calculating worldliness presented, and now held out

tendrils, eager for that supporting love so necessary to the growth and development of every man's as well as every woman's life. Our hearts, like our intellects, demand sustenance, else they become dwarfed and shrivelled. Give us an earthly love sufficiently true, pure, and noble, and our hearts expand and deepen, our charities become broader, our labors sweeter, and our lives richer; and when this earthly love fails to reach us in our own homes, the greatest honor and reverence are due to those who seek not the sacrament God has ordained for our human needs, outside the channels He has blessed. But Dr. Howell's soul had climbed to true greatness by forgetting self, by helping others, and by drawing inspiration from the springs of Infinite Love; and only when freshly pained and wounded by his wife's coldness and wilful misinterpretation of his motives was he keenly conscious of his loss.

Diantha was the first to speak when the reading of the letter was completed.

"Dear father, I shall not go to New York."

"Why, Daisy, what excuse can you offer? This is the 10th — isn't there time enough for Madame Lavitte to get up a cloak and two new dresses in a style sufficiently magnificent to be seen by the cultivated circles of New York?" There was not only sadness in the doctor's tones, but a bitterness and sarcasm never heard when the better part of his nature was triumphant.

"I'm afraid my wardrobe would hardly be satisfactory to mother — and I know your purse will be heavily taxed for the wedding festivities; but more than all, I could not be happy to leave you and Edna, now you need me more than mother does."

"Daisy, make your choice in this matter without considering the tax upon my purse. In disposing of my income, I always lay aside a sufficient sum for exigencies,

and can now give you the required amount without making any great sacrifice. Your mother may be more than half right when she accuses me of illiberal notions; and if the peculiar duties of my profession have made me narrow and conceited, I don't want my child's life to be warped and colored by my mistakes. You have earned a holiday by your faithful attendance on Edna, and I can make some arrangement by which Mrs. Atwood can remain here during your absence. Daisy, tell me if this journey would give you pleasure, if you knew I could afford the expense of it."

"To see New York, and to visit mother's relatives in a quiet way, will be very agreeable when I am in the mood; but to be perfectly candid, father, I don't think mother or Lou have expressed much heartiness in wishing me to join them. And you know there is to be a descent of style and grandeur upon our modest home, sufficient to liberalize the most depraved narrowness — so I need not go to New York for breadth and clearness of vision."

"Then stay at home, Daisy, and we'll prepare some pleasant surprises for your mother by rejuvenating her chamber and the parlor with fresh paper and paint; and perhaps by declining the New York invitations we can afford to buy a new parlor carpet."

"If we could," exclaimed Diantha, her face radiant and flushing with pleasure, "it would be worth more than all New York to me!"

"Extravagant!" said the doctor, touching her flushed cheeks; but he carried a lighter heart to his professional duties that winter day, because of Diantha's tender love, and because of her appreciation of his motives and her hearty coöperation in his work.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MORNING VISITOR.

“ Her air, her smile, her motions told
 Of womanly completeness;
 A music as of household songs
 Was in her voice of sweetness.”

WHITTIER.

“ To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba? and the sweet
 cane from a far country?”

“ MISS HOWELL, I shall carry the remembrance of that anthem with me to the bleak country parsonage where your father says I must spend the next three months,” said Captain Ashmead, when Diantha rose from the piano. She had just finished singing for him the air from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, “ O, rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him.” Her own faith found expression in the words and music; and no wonder her voice, always tenderly sweet and thrilling, had left an echo in the captain’s heart, especially when we remember that his ears had been more familiar with the creaking of cordage and the roar of breakers than with the sound of a piano or a woman’s voice.

The captain had prolonged his first call much beyond conventional limits before he asked for music; but Dr. Howell’s parlor — rejuvenated with a delicately tinted paper and a new Brussels carpet, whose richly-blended colors harmonized with the paper, and a few modern articles of

furniture, which had been purchased as a peace-offering — looked so bright that any one might well be excused for lingering, even had the room possessed no other attraction than its pretty paper, bright carpet, and pleasant pictures. But when a dainty little girl sat upon a low stool by his side, leaning upon him with child-like trust and affection, and raising to him eyes that shone with truth and innocence, listening to him with a rare commingling of childish simplicity and womanly intelligence, any man might have sinned against the laws of etiquette, and remained almost unconscious of the lapsing hours. Edna Shreve's affection for Captain Ashmead was heightened by the feeling that he was the only connecting link between her new and her old life.

But aside from the agreeable features of the room, and the charming artlessness of the child who leaned upon him, there sat opposite him one who seemed to the honest captain complete in gracefulness and intelligence; whose low voice had sweetest music for him, and whose every word, look, and movement were garnered in his heart with a miserly eagerness known only to strong natures that have not been stirred by deep passions until near the noontide of life. Captain Ashmead was past thirty, and had been in port so few months since he was a boy, that he knew comparatively little of woman's society, until the wreck of the *Stella* brought him into friendly relations with the doctor's daughter; and alas! this very wreck, which awakened him to such sweet possibilities, had also deprived him of the power to ask any woman for her love. The cruel, grasping waves had swallowed all the captain's means; and without a home, without employment even, and crippled! He dared not dwell for a moment on his losses; but looking at Diantha Howell, whose hands were busied with a bit of sewing, which gave her brown eyes

an excuse for rarely meeting his, and whose fitful color betrayed the quickness and delicacy of her perceptions, as well as the truth and modesty of her character; whose purity, strength, and self-forgetfulness had cheered the long weeks of his hospital life, he said again and again to himself, that a man should thank God for having known such a woman as Diantha Howell; that his own life should be purer and richer in thought and deed for the knowledge he had gleaned from her.

Possibly the remembrance of his poverty gave him strength and courage to leave the charming room; and if that remembrance did not bring his thoughts down from the golden possibilities to the leaden-colored realities of life, the crutch which Edna sprang to give him, when he said he must go, was powerful enough to sweep the clouds from his vision.

"Miss Howell, I have no excuse to offer for the length of my call, excepting my selfish forgetfulness of everything but pleasure in your conversation and music," said the captain, with honest bluntness.

Diantha's reply was somewhat stammering and incoherent; but Captain Ashmead inferred from the tenor of it that he had not transgressed beyond the hope of pardon.

"We lunch at one o'clock, and father sometimes favors us with a call at that hour. Will a bit of cold chicken and the hope of seeing your doctor tempt you to stay?"

"I need no temptation beyond the charm of your presence and that of my little friend; but as mine is to be a life of self-denial, I may as well begin by resigning the cold chicken to-day."

It would have been almost amusing to see two such honest natures attempting to throw up a flimsy barrier of defence with commonplaces, had there not been a minor note of pathetic sadness woven through the playfulness.

"How soon will you leave the Bonsecour?" asked Diantha.

"To-morrow. I go to my sister Elinor's parsonage; mother has a home with her. This will be my last chance to thank you, Miss Howell, for all your kindness to a shipwrecked stranger, and words do not flow easily now that I wish to speak of my indebtedness and gratitude; but there may come a time when I shall be able to show in deeds my appreciation of your father's generous services and your own kind attentions."

"Think no more of them, Captain Ashmead. Father and I have only done what you would in similar circumstances; and we have already received our compensation in seeing you at peace with God, and waiting patiently for Him. Shall you go to sea again?"

"That question is almost constantly before me; but I cannot answer it yet, because my plans for the future are so undefined. The sea has lost its charm for me, and an eager hankering for a home on shore has taken possession of my thoughts. The perils of a seafaring life, its deprivations, and its limited usefulness, have appeared in a different light since Christ has mercifully roused me from the apathetic indifference that clouded my life before the wreck. I shrink from the isolation, and from all the associations of my past life, and would gladly engage in some business which would enable me to serve my fellow-men more efficiently than I could on shipboard, and during those short stays in port, when the captain of a ship must necessarily be much engaged with the lading and unloading of his vessel. Dr. Howell says I must make my relatives in Vermont a long visit before laying plans for my future, and meantime trust that God will open a path of usefulness before me. If I should visit Hanthrop again, may I venture to call as a friend, now that I have no longer any claims upon your sympathy as an invalid?"

“We shall always be glad to see you; and you know father wishes you to regard yourself, jointly with him, as Edna’s guardian. You must come to see your little ward as often as possible.”

“I’m afraid my guardianship will be of little use to Edna for a long time; but I shall always be interested in the child, whose brightness and delicacy impressed me so deeply when I first met her amongst the filthy and disgusting crowds that swarm upon the wharves of Smyrna. She seemed like a sweet New England wild-flower in a garden overgrown with poisonous weeds — her purity and innocence weaving around her an invincible armor;” and the captain laid a hand upon the curls that clustered around Edna’s fair forehead, and looked again into her upraised eyes, brimming with affectionate gratitude.

“Dr. Howell tells me he hopes to keep Edna with you for the present,” added Captain Ashmead.

“Yes; and if mother approves, our house will always be her home.”

“I wish Edna’s mother might have had a vision of this home during that last awful night when death hovered around the poor Stella’s disabled hull; and yet I doubt if she needed it; there was no lack of faith in her voice while she had strength to sing —” Edna did not wait for the captain to finish his sentence, but kissing the hand which she had clasped in both her own, she dropped it and ran hastily from the room.

“Have I injured the child by my heedless allusions to the wreck and to her mother?” asked the dismayed captain.

“She is easily overcome, and we shield her as much as possible from exciting causes. She will soon recover from this.”

“I should have been more guarded in my speech; but

you must remember I have seen little of women and children: my life has been spent with rough, blunt sailors. Will you attempt my vindication with Edna?"

For answer Diantha placed her hand in the large, shapely one outstretched by the captain. It was retained a minute; then, with a scarcely articulate "God bless you," the fair hand was carried to his lips, flung hastily from him, and the proudly sensitive, honorable man passed from the room.

Diantha remained standing, veiled in the bright color which her friend's unexpected salute had brought to her face and throat, listening to the sound of his crutch as he walked down the brick-paved path to the carriage that awaited him; and when the sound of the crutch was no longer heard, she listened to the voice in her heart, which persistently asked, Why this confusion because of so trifling a thing as a kiss left upon her hand by a grateful man? Why this sorrow and regret in parting from one whom she had known scarcely two months? What meant the new zest and rich flavor which the wreck of the *Stella* had brought to her life? "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country?" questioned the maiden; and standing there, she confessed to herself that nevermore should she lose the consciousness of Captain Ashmead's touch upon her hand—nevermore pass from out the sunshine of the honest, manly love she had seen in his eyes. Then Diantha laid the sweet knowledge away in her heart, vowing that its perfume should enrich her whole life, even if Captain Ashmead was never in a position where he could speak more plainly than he had to-day, and took up the work which she had dropped to give her hand to her friend in parting, softly smiling when she thought of the honor that little member had received, and the significance and sacredness it had added to her life. And if that hand could minister more heartily to

the needs of others than it had hitherto — if it could be purer and more unselfish — her heart had received the stimulus which would inspire and strengthen it.

Not many minutes did Diantha brood over her new happiness, while her swift needle fashioned a garment for Mrs. Jenks's crippled Susie, when, remembering Edna's freshly-wounded heart, she flew to the child's chamber to dry her tears and apply balm to her bruises.

"I'm so sorry to have him go!" sobbed Edna, when Diantha raised her from the couch where she had thrown herself in the passion of her grief. "He is the only one who knew mamma and Nathan, and I never thanked him for all his goodness to them, and I didn't say good by."

"Never mind now, Edna; I'm sure Captain Ashmead knows you are grateful. He went away feeling sadly because he had wounded you, and he asked me to excuse his want of thought to you."

"He didn't mean to hurt me; but when he spoke so of mamma's singing, and I thought how she used to sing the dear old hymns and ballads on the deck of the *Stella*, and Captain Ashmead used to listen and thank her, and the sailors would cheer, and Nathan and I were so proud of her, — O, it was quite too much, and I had to run quickly from the room to prevent Captain Ashmead from seeing my tears. He must think me so ungrateful and rude!"

"No; he thought you were a sensitive little girl, whose heart was still full of love for the dear lost mamma and brother, and whose tears were always ready to flow when you thought of your griefs. But wipe them away now, Edna, and let me tell you of something you can do to show your friend how kindly you feel for him, and how gratefully you remember all he did for your mamma. First, you can write him a letter, and tell what you had not strength to say before he left; and then I will teach you to embroider

him a pair of slippers, that will remind him of his little friend every time he wears them."

Diantha's sunny cheerfulness was contagious, and Edna was soon smiling through her tears; but there was still a quiver in her voice when she asked,—

"Will Captain Ashmead come here again?"

"I dare say he will. You are his ward, and of course he'll come to see how fast you are improving. I have not told you yet that papa says I may give you music lessons next week, and that we may begin to read French together as soon as we please."

Nothing more was needed to complete the child's victory over her tears; smiles were triumphant as soon as she heard of the permission to learn music of her friend.

"Now bathe your eyes and face in cold water, and we'll go out for a walk. There'll be time enough, if you are quick, to carry the apron you made to Susie Jenks. I shall be ready in the parlor when you come down."

And the two were soon walking as briskly towards Mrs. Jenks's, and talking as cheerily as if the wreck of the *Stella* had woven into their lives only golden threads.

Dr. Howell could not help observing, with some surprise and annoyance, it must be confessed, a shade of new and tender meaning in his daughter's face—an indescribable grace and self-reliance, that told him her heart and brain had gleaned a knowledge which would transfigure her whole life.

And when they were left alone in the twilight, and she described to him, with averted eyes and tell-tale color Captain Ashmead's call, he exclaimed, with a sigh,—

"My Daisy! my field-flower! has

'She too received her sacramental gift
With eucharistic meanings?'

For answer, Diantha only hid her blushing face.

“I have so constantly thought of you as consecrated to our Master’s work, that perhaps I have not been careful enough to shield you from such knowledge as has come to you to-day; and yet it would have been selfish in me to rob your life of the pure and elevating stimulus a great love gives. But, Daisy, I have some little consolation in remembering that Captain Ashmead has no home to offer you; that many months, even years, must pass before he can prove himself worthy of keeping such a treasure. Will you be content to work with me, and be, as you have been so many years, the delight and solace of my life, until I am satisfied that whoever claims your love is worthy?”

In the fulness of her trust, and with that self-forgetfulness which was the charm and crown of her life, Diantha promised.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. HOWELL'S RETURN.

“No pleader can prevail
Who prays against the laws of Time or Fate;
No matter how we murmur and bewail,
The robins will not build in winter hail,
Nor lilacs bloom in February. Wait.”

ELIZABETH AKERS.

It was Ash-Wednesday — a soft, spring-like day, that was sapping the heart of the few lingering snow-banks, and causing the buds of the maples and lindens to swell with a new, mystical life. Mrs. Howell had given her husband and daughter reason to expect her as soon as the fashionable world paused for religious and physical recuperation, and therefore the doctor's house had been made as attractive as loving thoughtfulness and willing hands could make it, in anticipation of the return of its mistress.

Flowers filled the parlor with fragrance, and a dainty neatness, a pleasing harmony of colors, a home-like air of comfort and peace glowed and sparkled, and held out invisible hands of welcome.

If the doctor was conscious of a lack of spontaneous, outgushing love for his wife, he was the more keenly watchful in bestowing upon her every delicate attention which duty could suggest; his noble nature paid all due honor and reverence to the mother of his children, and the woman he had promised to cherish. But Dr. Howell

“Loved largely, as a man can love,
Who, baffled in his love, dares live his life,
Accept the ends which God loves for his own,
And lift a constant aspect.”

Mrs. Ralph Goodenow did not receive company during Lent. She frankly confessed that *why* forty days of ball-giving and opera-going should be given up at this season was incomprehensible to her. She had a vague impression that her church intended to commemorate our Saviour's forty days' fast, or, it might be, the forty years' wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, — she was not sure; but she did know that a close observance of the fasts, and attendance on all the lectures and religious ceremonies which had the sanction and authority of the church, and which Dr. Mintwell recommended as appropriate and becoming, would make life a wilderness for her.

Mrs. Howell and Louise not only needed this season for rest and preparation for that heaven to which they trusted the church would finally raise them, but they also required the time to prepare for Lou's marriage and journey to Paris — an elysium much more real to them than the Eternal City. And so on Ash-Wednesday they came, not exactly in the garments of humiliation, and with the symbol of repentance upon their foreheads, but in handsome travelling dresses, made in the latest New York style, and with an extra trunk, nearly as large as a bureau, containing those evidences of enlarged and liberalized ideas which they had gleaned by a sojourn of two months in the metropolis.

No wonder Mrs. Howell held Diantha's fair face in both her gloved hands for a minute after she had lightly touched it with her lips, and no wonder the mother's haughty expression softened as she gazed.

“You are a true field-daisy, as your father says. Isn't

Di improving in looks?" asked Mrs. Howell of her eldest daughter.

"She is looking uncommonly well; but she's more like a red rose than a daisy just now. Di's color never did remain two minutes the same," answered Miss Goodenow, saluting her half-sister with graceful and conventional propriety. But there never was a "war of the roses" in Miss Goodenow's face; no matter what her mental or physical state might be, her color had the unchangingly artistic tint most in harmony with her hair and eyes, and persistently and triumphantly held its sway over those moods, tempers, and atmospheric changes which affect the color of ordinary mortals.

"Really, Di, you should remember ma has travelled over a hundred miles to-day, and not keep her standing so long. One would suppose we had been gone two years instead of two months, you greet us with such boisterous heartiness," added the young lady, with that air and tone of authority which is indigenous to some natures, and acquired by many others after intimate familiarity with the best society.

"I'm so glad to see you both!" was Diantha's only excuse for her hearty greeting; and while she aided in unfastening veils, ribbons, and cloaks, and in the disposing of satchels and parcels, she seized every favoring chance to express her gladness with an embrace.

Diantha's helpful hands did not prevent her from seeing the cold scrutiny with which both ladies turned their eyes upon the freshened walls and new carpet, though neither of them seemed to think the care and money which had been expended to give them a pleasant welcome worthy of comment.

"If father had known you were coming by this train, he would have managed his affairs so as to meet you; but he thought you would not arrive until later in the day; and

he's so very busy since scarlet fever has been raging in Hanthrop, that I'm afraid he'll not come home till after he has been to the depot to meet the five o'clock express train."

"Ay, well, 'business before friends' has always been his motto. "I did not expect to see him until the dinner-hour;" and Mrs. Howell sighed, as if she were taking up a heavy burden of blighted hopes.

"However, we shall have time to rest and dress before dinner," the lady added, with a tone that plainly said the bitterest cup may have drops of sweetness; and, Di, you may tell Jane to make a cup of coffee, and send it to my room, and ask Ellen to come and assist you in carrying up these parcels."

Diantha ran from room to room, executing orders, and anticipating wants, and trying to infuse the spirit of her own glad, cheerful content into the hearts of others; and when Mrs. Howell and Louise expressed a desire for quiet and rest before preparing for dinner, she went to the sunny chamber where her little pupil, Edna Shreve, waited for her teacher and her hour of French reading.

"I've been delayed by the arrival of mamma and Louise," said Diantha, coming to Edna's side, and kissing the pale face upraised to hers, with such wistful tenderness in its expression.

"I knew they had come; I saw the carriage, and the trunks, and the ladies; but I did not see their faces, though I heard their voices in the hall. You must be very glad they've come."

"O, yes, I'm pleased to see them; they've been gone two months, and so much has happened since they went away that the weeks have seemed strangely long."

The tones of Diantha's voice and the language of her eyes revealed the secret of that "so much," which had colored with tropical brightness the bleak New England win-

ter, filling her heart with a new, sweet life, and so bridging time and space that it seemed strange to the maiden how such wealth of bloom could be the growth of two short months.

“Now that I think of it, Edna, I must ask you never to suppose I am unmindful of you, or loving you less, if I should sometimes seem to neglect you while my sister is at home. She will be married in about six weeks, and will go away to France, and of course we shall all be very busy. Mamma will be so occupied with her daughter's marriage that perhaps she will seem to take little interest in you; but you must not let any indifference or neglect at this time wound you. Try to be as cheerful and helpful as possible, and I will manage to find time for the lessons, and a nice walk each day, and all my sewing and drawing shall be done in this room, and there'll be letters for you to write to Captain Ashmead, and drives with papa, and calls on my poor people. With so many pleasures, I'm sure my little girl will be brave, and bright, and happy.”

“I shall try to be, if you and Dr. Howell will only love me.” Edna, like many older persons, felt the want

“of one kind heart,
To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill.”

“You may always be sure of our love; and now we'll have the French reading and the English history, and then we must dress neatly for dinner. Mamma is fastidious about one's personal appearance and manners, and we'll try to please her, even in little things, because, you know, these every-day trifles make up the sum of our lives; opportunities for great service rarely occur, and therefore we should be the more watchful to render little kindnesses.”

But the French and history were doomed to a most un-scholarly ending on this particular Wednesday, by the

coming of Stephen Howell, Jr., who burst into his sister's room, tossed up and scattered the books and papers, lifted Edna from her chair, and seated her on the writing-table; and before Diantha could utter a protest, he had poured forth a volley of invectives against her desecration of the day.

"Positively, Di, you are more irreverent and heathenish than Diana of old. Had she lived in this enlightened age, she would have laid aside quiver and arrows on this day, set apart by the church for fasting and repentance; while I find you with your armor buckled on, and your weapons of warfare in actual use."

"Pray, tell me what are my weapons of warfare?"

"Look at the pens, papers, pencils, and books, and then at your poor, pale victim. Edna needs no further definition of the phrase."

"O, Stephen, you are spoiling my drawing-pencils, and making sad havoc of Edna's French exercises. Take my pupil off the table, please, and don't make quite so much noise. Mamma has come."

"Of course mamma has come, but that's no reason why I should keep silence. I came expressly to welcome her, and shall begin in the true Eastern style, with the sound of the voice, the timbrel, and the harp. She'll fancy an Italian opera troupe has been engaged to do her honor." And Stephen produced from his pocket a couple of jews-harps, upon both of which he contrived to make a noise simultaneously. Expostulation was vain for the next ten minutes, until the young collegian was convinced that Edna had been roused and amused enough for one day, and his sister sufficiently annoyed with his vagaries and the disorder into which he had thrown her room, and then he went quietly to repairing damages. And soon after his jubilant entrance to the house, his father found him in

the parlor, reading Macaulay as gravely as if jews-harps had never been invented.

Dr. Howell saw and greeted his wife and step-daughter before their crinkling silks and pungent perfumes floated into the dining-room. Stephen, too, had shocked their delicate nerves, and still more delicate sense of conventionality, by his boisterous happiness; but the mistress of the house had neither seen the little stranger beneath her roof, nor inquired after her welfare, until she was led forward and presented by Diantha.

Mrs. Howell extended the tips of her fingers, and touched Edna's outstretched hand, saying, coldly, "So this is Di's *protégée*! I hope she is improving."

"She's doing bravely now," answered the doctor for his little patient, taking her hand in his kindly, encouraging way, and seating her beside himself at table.

"Is that poor child still here?" exclaimed Miss Goodenow, in French; her words, her tones, and her face all indicating that she regarded the stranger as an interloper.

"Such a pale face, such large eyes, and such light hair produce a startling effect," added Louise, still speaking in French. She had often used this language in every-day intercourse with friends before going to New York, and it could hardly be expected that plain Anglo-Saxon words should be a sufficiently polite and elegant medium for expressing the ideas of one who was desirous that her superior culture and refinement should be acknowledged.

"Edna can teach us both the French, Lou. She has had the advantage of speaking it where it is the only language in general use," said Diantha, coming as quickly as possible to the rescue of the sensitive child.

"So we can dispense with the services of Monsieur Sourelle for the present. It will be charming to have a mentor at one's own fireside." Miss Goodenow's mock-

ing tones were unheeded by Edna, whose attention Dr. Howell had purposely engrossed; and owing to his tact and care, combined with Diantha's and Stephen's, the two ladies were drawn out in animated descriptions of the glories they had left behind; and once fairly plunged in such golden reminiscences, it required only judicious piloting to keep them for one evening off the rocks and sand-bars of domestic differences. The splendors of Ralph Goodenow's wealth and social standing, the distinguished people whom they had met, the delightful parties they had attended, the "divine operas" they had listened to—in short, the concentrated essence of refined elegances which had been lavished upon them, formed almost inexhaustible themes of conversation, and laid such heavy tribute upon the adjectives of their mother tongue, that without a copious use of the French they would still have felt "a pent-up Utica" within their souls.

And, moreover, the brilliant successes and triumphs of the sojourn in New York, added to the rose-colored anticipations of a wedding, and the prospect of enhanced wealth, had softened the natural *hauteur* and acerbity of Mrs. Howell's temper, and returned her to her husband's roof so satisfied with her achievements, so sanguine of future social triumphs, that, as she expressed it to her family, "She was encased in an armor of sunny memories and delightful anticipations; in fact, ready to submit to a "daily crucifixion of her tastes," and a wholesale sacrifice of self.

It is due also to the doctor's wife to state that her pacific condition of mind was somewhat indebted to the knowledge she had gained, just before leaving New York, of her husband's reputation for science and skill amongst the medical fraternity of the metropolis. At Mrs. Ralph Goodenow's last party she had been introduced to a dis-

tinguished professor of medicine, who asked her if she was the wife of that scientific Dr. Howell, of Hanthrop, who wrote such valuable articles for medical journals; and receiving an affirmative reply, the great professor spoke warmly and appreciatively of Dr. Howell's remarkable knowledge of disease and its remedies; of discoveries made by him which had ameliorated the condition of suffering humanity; and expressed a desire to know one who had such depth, breadth, and clearness of thought as had been evinced by Dr. Howell in his essays on medical and scientific subjects. And Mrs. Howell was keen and quick enough to perceive that even in the fashionable world of New York, distinguished talents might hold almost as potent a sway as wealth, and form as sure and strong a foundation for the upbuilding of an honorable name. She had vented much spleen, ill-temper, and dissatisfaction in her letters to the doctor, and his dignified and generous silence she could but confess was the fruit of something more noble in his nature than she had hitherto given him credit for; and after her conversation with the professor, she admitted to Louise that what had seemed to her apathy, indifference, and neglect in the doctor, might be attributed to the idiosyncrasies of genius, and that she should study his peculiarities more carefully hereafter, and, if possible, accord them more respect.

Mrs. Howell's tact was equal to any emergency; and for the present it suited her mood to be pleasantly agreeable; and when the doctor, after leading her from the dinner-table to the parlor, asked if the improvements met her approbation, she answered, with as much warmth as could reasonably have been expected, —

“The new carpet is neat and pretty. I had quite set my heart on having an Axminster, like Ralph's; but as I told Lou before dinner, this Brussels will harmonize better

with the house and all its appointments, and the paper, now that we see it under gas-light, is really rather stylish — isn't it, Lou?"

Thus appealed to, the young lady turned her eyes nonchalantly from carpet to paper, exclaiming, —

"Don't ask my opinion. The paper looks dreadfully common to me, after seeing uncle Ralph's frescoed walls."

"Of course, my dear, everything looks cheap compared with the elegances which your uncle's wealth commands; but Di has shown good taste in arranging her flowers, and, on the whole, I am not as much shocked with the want of style in our home as I expected to be."

An admission that more than satisfied the doctor; for he remembered that "grapes are not gathered from thorns, nor figs from thistles," and that "lilacs do not bloom in February."

CHAPTER XVI.

MISS GOODENOW'S ENGAGEMENT.

"Ambition has broad leaves, which overgrow
The feebler heart-plants, blossoming small and low."

"With what cracked pitchers go we to deep wells
In this world!"

MRS. BROWNING.

"You needn't look so shocked, Di. Of course I'm fond of my cousin Arthur; he will open for me the doors of just such society as my education and tastes have prepared me to appreciate and adorn. There's no doubt but the highest political honors will be his in due time; and, as the wife of a senator or diplomat, I can be admitted to the most select and fashionable circles. But if Horace Metcalf had as brilliant prospects and as much ambition, I should give him the preference. You didn't suppose I was so foolish as to be deeply in love with my cousin?"

"I did have some such old-fashioned idea," replied Diantha; and the soft light in her eye and the delicate flushing of her cheek spoke of her tender reverence for the unfashionable sentiment.

It was the morning after Miss Goodenow's return from New York; and Diantha's services having been required in unpacking, she had been rewarded by her half-sister with a history of the choice presents she had received, and the beautiful articles of wearing apparel which had been purchased in the city; and, in an hour of unusual confidence, Louise had spoken of her engagement, and her

regret that Horace Metcalf did not possess the ambition of her cousin, and that he had not made her an offer of marriage before she went to New York; and plain, matter-of-fact Diantha had shown in her guileless face surprise and grief, that her sister had been actuated by such unworthy considerations in making so solemn a compact; and her expressions of astonishment called from Louise the opening remarks of this chapter.

"I should never allow love for any one, not even the man whose name and position I chose to accept, to become an absorbing passion, because it would so interfere with my pursuits and happiness."

"But wouldn't there be a sweeter and purer happiness in a great love, such as would swallow up all thoughts of selfish pleasure, than could be gathered from any other earthly source?"

"That's a sentiment you've borrowed from books, Di. In real life, men and women find out what foundation there is to build love upon before permitting their fancies and feelings to take deep root. Arthur is fine looking, and has the unmistakable air and manners of a gentleman; he is well educated, and has many tastes in common with mine; but if he had not wealth and the very best social and political prospects, I should never think of marrying him."

"You never speak of his moral or religious character, Louise, but always of the social advantages to be gained through him, as if wealth and worldly honors could fill one's heart."

"When I say that Arthur is a gentleman, it implies that his moral character is above reproach; and when I promised to marry him, it implied as much love on my part as 'tis for a woman's happiness to cultivate: an intensified, absorbing passion, such as one reads about, never

shows a well-balanced mind, nor adds to the comfort of the marriage relation. I admire Arthur's talents, and honor the ambition which prompts him to seek political preferment, and I like him well enough to use my influence in his behalf; but as for being what uneducated girls would call 'in love,' I'm not. 'Tis useless to discuss this subject with you, Di; our ideas of life are so different, we must always clash. You are all Howell, amiable, and pious, and sensible, and satisfied to work with common people in a quiet way, while I must have intelligent society and exciting pleasures, or I should simply vegetate — there would be nothing for me worth calling life in such a humdrum existence as yours. Now for business. Have you found out whether Mrs. Jenks can sew for me?"

"I went to see her before breakfast this morning. She will be very glad to work for you; her husband is quite comfortable now, and little Susie is so much better that Mrs. Jenks is comparatively at leisure. I will carry your sewing to her to-day."

"No. I want to see the woman. You never did know how to make a bargain with poor people; they ask enormous prices, and I have to show them very decidedly that I won't be imposed upon. If Mrs. Jenks will take some of my old clothes in payment for her sewing, I will deal very generously by her, and won't mind throwing in several garments that can be made over for those two great girls of hers. Can you manage to bring her into our kitchen this evening between six and seven o'clock? I shouldn't dare go into Mrs. Jenks's house, nor even into Ferry Street, while there's so much danger from contagion; and, by the way, tell Jane to have a kettle of peppermint or some pungent herb boiling on the stove while Mrs. Jenks is in the kitchen; the exhalations will counteract the pestilential odor carried in such people's clothing."

“Mrs. Jenks is a lady, Louise, and keeps her own clothing, and her children’s, and everything about their poor rooms, as tidy as can be. And let me say a word or two about the bargain you propose making with her. Don’t forget that your old clothes won’t buy her family bread, and meat, and fuel; won’t pay their rent, nor supply a score of wants that cannot be enumerated.”

“And I mustn’t forget that she’s a lady with sensitive nerves and ears, and a large, shiftless family, whom she expects good, honest souls like Dr. Howell and his daughter to support; and I must pay her in gold double what her work is worth, because she is a lady!”

“Only keep in remembrance, dear Lou, that ‘whatsoever we would that others should do for us, we should do for them.’”

“Don’t set up a standard of morals for me, Di. I’ll manage my own affairs; and during the short time I’m to be at home, I wish you’d give up your ordinary pursuits, and devote as much of your time to me as possible. I must keep up my musical practice, and must find an hour every day to converse in French with Professor Sourelle; and though I’m only to have six or eight dresses before reaching Paris, yet there’ll be a vast amount of work and care, and you can be of great service, if you will.”

Diantha had the will to be useful, and the desire to please her sister, and relieve her mother from care; but she often found her willingness and her patience ebbing under the constant demands made upon them. Indeed, there was abundant opportunity for exercise of all the Christian graces under Dr. Howell’s roof during the month of March; and each member of the family looked forward to April with an eager desire for the consummation of that sacred ceremony, the preparations for which had stirred up such a hurricane of muslin, silks, laces, ribbons, and flowers.

The violence of the disturbing forces seemed to concentrate upon the doctor. In the first place, scarlet fever and a contagious throat distemper prevailed in Hanthrop, and his mental and physical powers were severely taxed; then Mrs. Howell was nervously afraid the contagion would steal over her own threshold, and had forbidden Diantha to call upon the poor or the sick, lest she should bring the infection away, and the doctor missed his daughter's soothing ministrations amongst his patients: double vigilance was demanded of him when bereft of Diantha's aid; then the doctor had no natural taste for millinery, and he didn't find his temper improving when forced to listen day after day to tedious discussions on trivial points, such as the width of a ribbon, the materials for Lou's dresses, the length of her trains, whether she should wear a pink or a buff rose in her hat, what should be the color of the travelling dress, gray, or drab, or mauve, or mouse, and whether she should wear garnets or pearls with her peach-colored silk. It was not quieting to a man's worn nerves, over-taxed brain, excited sympathies, and jaded limbs, when he yearned for an hour's relaxation, such as the soothing of music or the stimulus of sensible talk, to find his parlor turned into a bazaar for the exhibition of merchandise, and instead of Diantha's sweet rendering of music, to be regaled with a minute history of Lou's failure to match a piece of ribbon velvet, or to find just the right size and shade in buttons, or that quality and quantity of lace which Madame Lavitte had pronounced absolutely essential. The doctor tried to be interested in what seemed so vitally important to his wife, and when called upon to assist in selecting for Lou the most becoming shades and styles, would conscientiously endeavor to bring his thoughts away from the sober realities of his profession to the rainbow-hued world which they were so enthusiastically preparing for.

Had there not been frequent opportunities for him to escape to the chamber over the office, which the din and bustle of preparation had not yet invaded, the doctor's strength and patience might not have waded through those weeks with so fair a record. Even Diantha came to regard the sunny, cheerful room as a city of refuge. With a guileless, intelligent child for a companion, with books which were always fresh and pure sources of enjoyment to both the doctor and his daughter, with a rare harmony of tastes and communion of spirit, it was no marvel that when they were off duty they sought a retreat that offered so many attractions.

Had Mrs. Howell, previous to her New York visit, observed an inclination in her husband to avoid the parlor, she would have made it a subject for discussion and difference. Diantha's devotion to Edna would at any other time have been the cause of serious disturbance. In fact, Edna's presence in the house would not have been tolerated, had it not been a part of Mrs. Howell's diplomacy during these weeks to avoid matters of difference. One great desire filled her heart and colored her acts, and that was, to launch Louise upon the matrimonial tide with as much pomp and parade as her ingenuity could devise; and in order to make such a felicitous display as she deemed essential, the doctor must be conciliated and cajoled into acquiescence, if not approval. Indeed, had Mrs. Howell been quite certain of the theological correctness of such an opinion, she would not have hesitated to affirm that the unprecedented prevalence of contagious and malignant diseases in Hanthrop at this time was a providential interposition, inasmuch as it so occupied the doctor's time and absorbed his thoughts as to render him comparatively oblivious to the magnitude of her preparations.

His lack of interest in her favorite pursuits; his want of

depth, breadth, and liberality; and the concentration of all his powers on his profession,—were not an especial calamity, when such characteristics gave larger scope to her own executive ability.

The month of March was not without its trials for the principal actors in this drama. So large a portion of their modest fortune was locked up in stocks of the “Eureka,” that in order to create a sensation by the brilliancy of Lou’s wedding, and triumph for one short day over all the devotees of fashion, they were obliged to resort to such subterfuges as honest people shrink from — to anticipate that marvellous expansion of their investments which had been promised by Ralph Goodenow — and to deny themselves much that would have ministered to their worldly pride, or, as Mrs. Howell expressed it, “to make sacrifices that less sensitive and delicately organized natures could never comprehend.”

But March, with its mud, and vapors, and east winds, gave place to the uncertain sunshine of April. Maples blushed faintly, as if with tender thoughts of their own budding beauty; while willows, donning a robe of pale yellow, waved their long, pendent branches, and noiselessly heralded the new birth.

The pestilential breath of fever crept stealthily away in the rear of winter, and Easter Sunday dawned upon Hanthrop with more than its wonted joy and gladness, because the Angel of Life had again triumphed.

Mrs. Howell pronounced the preparations for her daughter’s marriage complete, and remarked to Louise, as they sat in handsome evening attire, waiting for the coming of Ralph Goodenow’s family, that “she had been sustained through all these weeks of bustle and confusion by the most heroic spirit of self-sacrifice.”

Doubtless the frequency with which similar sentiments

had been uttered robbed this last remark of its pathos and power, as Miss Goodenow made no response to it, and her mother, after a minute's silence, took up the fruitful theme again.

"It is very humiliating to invite your uncle's family into such a house as this; but I trust all my sacrifices and mortifications will work together for my spiritual good, and help wean me from the perishable things of this world."

Mrs. Howell was sure of the piety and propriety of this sentiment.

"'What can't be cured must be endured,' I suppose," replied Miss Goodenow, forgetting her usual elegance of speech in the aptness of the old proverb to express her ideas on this subject; "but I must admit that I never have desired to live so far above the world and its fashions as to be content with commonish surroundings. I was never born for a martyr, and I mean to extract all the beauty and sweetness possible from life, and keep myself as far from its vexations and cares as money can remove me."

Mrs. Howell smiled as benignantly as if her daughter's remarks had been a quotation from Dr. Blossom.

"Dear Louise, you mustn't expect to find life all sunshine and flowers. Arthur may be taken from you as my husband was from me, and just such another heavy fall may shroud your life as has darkened mine."

"I should never succumb as quietly as you have to adverse circumstances. If a woman is beautiful and accomplished, and makes a right use of her gifts, society will be ready to receive her. I shall never be broken by misfortune; it may bend me for a season, but an elastic spirit like mine will rebound from the heaviest blow."

Miss Goodenow belonged to that class who scrupulously endeavor to keep "the velvet-piled side of this world up-

permost, lest their delicate eyes should see the warp that holds it."

"You have always seemed to possess a charmed life, and your skill in avoiding disagreeable and common vexations has sometimes appeared to me a high order of talent," responded Mrs. Howell; but her comments were interrupted by exclamations from Louise.

"Uncle Ralph's family have come! The carriage has just stopped at our door; and, bless me, what's going to happen? The doctor has been polite enough to meet them at the depot."

"Well, there's no accounting for the eccentricities of genius; perhaps he'll take a fancy to keep his profession in the background for one week."

The meeting between parties so intimately connected need not be described; but people of such style and consequence can hardly be permitted to spend a week under Dr. Howell's roof without an introduction to his friends, and our readers may anticipate a formal presentation.

CHAPTER XVII.

RALPH GOODENOW.

“O, what a world of vile, ill-natured faults
Look handsome in three hundred pounds a year!”

SHAKESPEARE.

MRS. HOWELL'S excellent dinner had been discussed as properly by the stock-broker and his family as could have been expected, considering it lacked the attendance of a liveried servant, and was served upon plain white china. They had shown their hostess that the Goodenow coat-of-arms, engraved on Sèvres china, gold and silver plate, was not an essential stimulant to appetite; and with that comfortable after-dinner air and look which are becoming even to people of humble pretensions, they shall sit for their pictures.

First, Ralph Goodenow — a man near fifty years of age, tall, sparely built, with a high, narrow forehead, around which iron-gray hair curled rigidly; as if familiar with a hair-dresser's tongs; eyes as unchanging in their hue as his favorite yellow ore, and as unsteady in their sockets as his stocks on Wall Street; a thin upper lip, the most mobile and expressive of his features; for if anything grated against his tastes, theories, or policy, it could be drawn so far under his nose as to appear a part of that prominent organ, leaving exposed a glittering row of artificial teeth, from which his heavy, protruding under lip fell away

as if afraid of its dangerous neighbors; very white, restless hands, nervously toying with his watch-chain and seals, and ornamented with an emerald, whose market value its wearer seemed always desirous of proclaiming; a smile too stereotyped for genuine expression; a voice too thin and metallic in sound, too rapid in utterance, to be the medium of honest, manly opinions, — and we have a picture of the stock-broker, as he stood on the hearth-rug in his host's parlor, gazing as critically at all its appointments as if he were taking an account of stock.

Mrs. Ralph Goodenow — always faultlessly dressed, self-complacent and haughty, more religiously observant of the mint, anise, and cumin of fashion's laws than of grammar or sentiment, never forgetting, nor permitting others to forget, her wealth, style, and position — was simply a necessary and expensive advertisement of the stock-broker's prosperity. Her light, cold eyes moved slowly around from carpet to walls, from furniture to pictures, resting somewhat longer upon Diantha and Edna than upon the inanimate objects, but evidently regarding them as so far removed from her own exalted plane of existence as to be quite unworthy of more than a passing glance.

The young secretary of legation, with his really fine face and handsome figure, his genial address and ready conversation, would make an agreeable impression upon almost any circle; and if there was a trifle more of suavity in his manner than true politeness would demand, and a something in his too constant smile that caused one to think of conservatories and colored lights, and a ring in his musical voice that reminded one of a street-organ, yet the versatility of his talents and his abundant flow of words would incline the severest critic, after an evening spent in his society, to render a favorable verdict upon his appearance, even though an undefined shadow of some-

thing untrue in his nature constantly hovered around his presence.

The broker's only daughter, Hortense, was a pretty blonde, whose prettiness was enhanced by every accessory of dress. Her fair face and regular features might have been beautiful if her heart and head had received as much attention as her feet; but so long as her dancing was unexceptionable, her adjectives, interjections, and French phrases copious, her knowledge of music sufficient to cause those to shiver whose ears were especially sensitive to differences between harmony and noise, what else could the "best society" demand, after a satisfactory investigation of her father's means?

The young lady amused herself for a short time with Diantha and Edna; and then, in a whispered conference with her future sister-in-law, she told "how awfully dull it had been during Lent — nothing but the opera, and euchre, and whist parties, to take the place of balls and dancing."

The two elder ladies discussed the bridal paraphernalia, and settled a few preliminaries for the morrow. Arthur Goodenow seated himself near Diantha, to find out, if possible, why she was so unlike other young ladies, and what was the secret of that quiet, refined, nameless presence which gave such a charm to the fitful, delicate color of her pure face, and such inimitable grace to her words, voice, and manner; and the stock-broker catechised the doctor upon the moneyed interests of Hanthrop.

"It seems a much larger and more business-like city than I expected to find," he remarked; and afterwards, when the doctor learned how vague and uncertain were his guest's ideas of many towns and cities not represented on the maps and charts of stock companies, — in short, that his knowledge of geography was as liberal and independent as his use of language, — he almost wondered that a man of such

devotion to one object, and that not particularly scientific, should have heard of such a city as Hanthrop.

"Yes, our city is making progress; helping swell the great flood-tide of the metropolis," answered the doctor.

"That's true. New York is the great business centre, and naturally attracts the bone and sinew, by which I mean the energy and capital, of our country, to its heart, metaphorically speaking, of course, sir," added Ralph Goodenow, pompously. He revelled in what he was pleased to call metaphors; high-sounding phrases, picked up from jobbers in such wares, who supported the tinsel and show of much up-town life, slipped glibly off his tongue; in fact, they were an important part of his business capital.

Dr. Howell smiled encouragingly, and his guest continued:—

"How to make fortunes most rapidly is the great question of the day, sir. How best to develop the vast mineral wealth of our country is a problem worthy of—of serious study, sir."

Again the doctor nodded an assent, but seemed too deeply absorbed in taking a moral and mental diagnosis of his guest to reply in words.

"Why, sir, if you have never made it your business to become familiar with the extent and richness of our mining districts, the facts would astonish you. We have, in California alone, gold enough to make us the richest nation on the globe, not to mention Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and a score of districts, larger than all New England, where the gold crops out as freely as thistles in Canada—figuratively speaking, sir. But we must have energy and capital to develop our vast resources. Then think what we shall gain when our great copper-bearing districts are successfully worked. Why, 'tis my candid opinion—based on statistics, of course, sir—that on the shores of Lake Superior

alone, copper enough might be found to plate every vessel that floats, to put a boiler into every dwelling in America, and shingle every roof in Christendom! And as for iron, 'tis so abundant, and might be made so cheap, if moneyed men would form companies for working it, that every man's farm between the Atlantic and Pacific could be fenced with it, window sashes and frames for all the houses on the continent made from it, and then there would be enough left to span with bridges the streams and rivers, and pave a path for the steam horse to each city and town of our republic." Mr. Goodenow paused for breath, and to note the effect of his eloquence upon his auditor; while Dr. Howell, after a low, contemplative whistle, remarked, —

"Such statistics are startling; they justly make an American proud of his country. I would like to see our mineral deposits successfully developed; and yet I do not believe, as a nation, or as individuals, we should be stronger, purer, and happier in the possession of great wealth. Only so far as such resources encourage healthy industry and remunerate honest labor, so far as they assist in civilizing the world, and in cultivating the arts and sciences, and help to proclaim the glad tidings of peace and good-will to men, do I rejoice in the increase of wealth."

Mr. Goodenow looked at his host much as he would at a bit of gold, copper, or iron-bearing deposit which he was uncertain how to classify, and then asked, —

"What are the favorite investments of your heavy men in Hanthrop?"

"A knowledge of investments and capital is quite out of my way; but at hap-hazard, I should say our moneyed men invest chiefly in banking, shipping, and manufacturing."

"All legitimate, but slow — slow. When a nation has made such progress and attained such growth as ours, it

can afford to pay for capital and brains. Bank stocks, for instance, are rarely above par value, and dividends, even in the exceptional cases, are small and slow. Money invested in such ways always reminds me of the talent which the Lord's servant hid in a napkin, while, to be personal as well as figurative, money invested in the Feather River Quartz-crushing Company is like the ten talents, which gained an extra ten besides the Lord's favor."

Dr. Howell did not relish the broker's application of Scripture, nor the satisfied chuckle with which his last sentence was rounded; but his host's dignified silence was no barrier to Ralph Goodenow's flow of words.

"By the way, when our young people are fairly off our hands, sir, I shall canvass Hanthrop for a couple of days, and, if possible, exhume a portion of its buried capital and latent energies. Your citizens ought to take at least one hundred thousand shares in the Feather River stocks. It would quicken their pulses and liberalize their ideas to be stockholders in such a magnificent enterprise. Let a man own such stock in the products of California, and at once he becomes keenly alive to all the interests of the state. Money is the great lever, sir, of social and political progress; it lifts a man from the work-shop to the Senate-chamber, from the desert of Sahara to the land of Beulah."

"That money has an almost unlimited power and influence, one must admit, Mr. Goodenow; but the fact is a matter of regret and humiliation, rather than of rejoicing. When moral and intellectual worth were prerequisites for office, a seat in our legislative halls was honorable; now, when money, without regard to fitness, will buy political preferment, men of high moral tone and the most desirable qualifications keep aloof from a contest in which money is at odds with brains."

"Has it never occurred to you, doctor, that the posses-

sion of wealth, in nine cases out of ten, presupposes the existence of brains? You have been too thoroughly absorbed in your profession to note the shrewdness, energy, and breadth a man must have to cope successfully with all competitors for the golden harvest."

"I have as great a reverence for the kind of intellect our merchant princes possess as I have for that which wins success in almost any other field, and I'm well aware that to amass a fortune in the legitimate avenues of trade, one must have keen perceptions, a persistent will, and strongly developed energies; but I also know that a certain kind of tact, cunning, and shrewdness often gains a victory over steady endeavor. When I see a man's mental forces all concentrated upon the one object of making money, not for generous and ennobling purposes, but for the position and power it brings, and when I see the respect which society pays to the 'goodly apparel,' and not to the man, then I bewail the increase of riches and the influence they possess."

Diantha had not been so engrossed in the conversation of others that she could not keep an ear open to her father's remarks; and noting the emphasis of his words and tones, and the restless movements of Mr. Goodenow's white hands, she came forward, in her quiet way, to remind her father of a prescription which had been promised one of his patients, and Dr. Howell was not sorry to exchange the aristocratic air of his parlor for the odor of medicine. And then the good angel of the house managed unobtrusively to draw out Mr. Arthur Goodenow in descriptions of life at the capital, and so adroitly to fill up the interstices of conversation with an exhibition of the musical skill of Louise and Hortense, that little space was left the broker for talk of investments, stocks, and companies.

On the morrow, white silk and laces, orange-flowers and

bridal favors, held supreme sway in the house; and at eight o'clock in the evening, at St. Mark's church (which had been most profusely decorated with flowers for this auriferous marriage), Rev. Dr. Blossom, assisted by Right Rev. Dr. Mintwell, of New York, performed that solemn ceremony which made Arthur and Louise Goodenow *one* in all their social and political interests; and the gay throng of witnesses did not pause to inquire whether a sacred, mystical union of hearts had been consecrated by the rite.

Then followed the grand reception in Mrs. Howell's parlors, where the select "five hundred" admiring and envious friends congratulated the newly-wedded, exclaimed of the bride, "How beautiful! how queenly!" examined her presents, and commented upon their value and rarity. Elegant dresses were crushed by the crowd and spoiled by the spilling of coffee and creams, rapid commonplaces were exhausted, envy and jealousy engendered, and then the fashionable tide ebbed, leaving the principal actors in the drama to congratulate each other on the success and brilliancy of the play.

"The whole affair has passed off remarkably well. Indeed, one may say it has placed my fair sister-in-law's reputation for exquisite taste and style above question or cavil — a brilliant success!" remarked Ralph Goodenow, in much the same language as he would have described the successful launching of a ship, and with no deeper emotion than a ready disposal of fancy stocks would have caused.

"Very creditable, quite a select circle, and a few really stylish and handsome dresses," added Mrs. Goodenow, glancing in the mirror at her own fair figure, arrayed in an amber-colored *moire*, with only point lace and diamonds to shield the mature beauty of her neck and arms.

“How very odd not to have wine or dancing at a wedding party!” exclaimed pretty Miss Hortense, who found everything stupid where feet were not taxed to supply deficiencies of intellect.

“The doctor is a little old-fashioned in some of his notions,” Mrs. Howell answered, in a mildly apologetic tone. “He is so very utilitarian, and could not be persuaded that dancing was appropriate or wine necessary on an occasion like this.” The becoming dress she wore and general splendor of the elaborate affair had put the lady of the house in such gracious temper that she could afford to be generous in her criticisms. And the doctor hearing her comments, it should be recorded to the credit of his self-control that he did not even whistle.

Three days later the bridal party, including Mrs. Howell, went to New York, and the “Metropolitan” soon after had the honor of announcing this important item of news:—

“Last evening a brilliant company assembled at the princely residence of Ralph Goodenow, Esq., to crown with congratulations the marriage of our new secretary of legation, and to wish the happy couple *bon voyage*. They sail in the *St. Salvador*, for Liverpool, this morning.”

Meanwhile the doctor and Diantha, unruffled by the hurricane of style and fashion which had swept over them, returned to that wholesome work which brings sweet peace and contentment to the soul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER THE PLAY.

“ Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.”

GEORGE HERBERT.

MRS. HOWELL only remained in New York a couple of weeks after the sailing of the *St. Salvador*—just long enough, as she assured her friends, “to refresh her spirits after the sad strain of parting with her dear Louise.”

But she did not seem, to the watchful eyes of the doctor and Diantha, so much refreshed as might reasonably have been expected, considering the nature of the tonics used. “Ralph and his wife were so kind and so considerate of my feelings,” she repeatedly averred, “they took me everywhere. We went to the opera four times to hear the new star, and twice to Laura Keene’s, to see the most charming little comedy brought out with extraordinary talent. And there were several delightful matinées and parties, besides drives and shopping for every leisure hour—just the loveliest importations of spring goods; but I had no heart for the novelties, because it was so full of harrowing thoughts of the distance which was daily increasing between Louise and me. Every pleasure was robbed of its zest when I remembered the wide stretch of sea that must separate us for so many years.”

Dr. Howell, hearing her daily parade of this grief, was

more than once tempted to remind her of the joy and exultation she had manifested in regard to her daughter's prospects, when she had known the marriage must involve the present separation ; but he generously and wisely withheld words that could but increase her irritation, and, regarding her mental state as the natural fruit of overtaxed energies and nervous prostration, he was patient and forbearing.

With Diantha's aid he was constantly devising some quiet amusement, some healthy stimulus for her mind ; but the lady was so sure a delicate nature like hers could not be understood by common people, that all the doctor's attempts to entertain and console her failed. She entrenched herself behind "her sensitive nerves and peculiarly delicate organization," and, refusing all sympathy, declared she "had never felt so far removed from her dear Arthur, since the day of his funeral, as when she saw the *St. Salvador* steaming out of the harbor, and the only dear pledge of his love, dressed in a violet-colored poplin travelling suit, waving a good by from the deck."

Mrs. Arthur Goodenow's first letter from abroad — containing a description of her voyage and hurried look at Liverpool, Chester, and London, the arrival in Paris, and reception by the American embassy, the magnificent toilets she had seen, and the whirlpool of delights in which she was already immersed — diverted Mrs. Howell, and gave a more cheerful tone to her conversation for several days.

This letter appeared to reawaken her to the importance of keeping up that show of style and opulence which she had so adroitly managed to display in her preparations for Lou's marriage, and which she affirmed would be expected of one so aristocratically connected ; and a carriage with a servant in livery seemed to her the surest way of

maintaining that exclusiveness in rank and fashion which she now assumed was her prerogative.

She had thrown out frequent hints of the necessity of owning a carriage ever since her first visit to the Goode-nows: not only her health, comfort, and convenience demanded a new phaeton like Mrs. Ralph's, but the eyes of the good people of Hanthrop must be saved from the shock of seeing her drive about in the doctor's old buggy. And seizing a favorable after-dinner hour, when Diantha was engaged with Edna in the room which Stephen had christened the "City of Refuge," when the doctor, leaning back in his favorite chair, was thinking of those homes into which he had carried healing and hope, his wife opened upon him the complete battery of her eloquence.

"How much longer, doctor, am I to be kept in doors for want of a suitable vehicle to take an airing in?"

"Not many days, I trust. Leonard told me this morning that my buggy would be ready for use to-morrow; but we may have to wait a day or two longer. It is being very thoroughly repaired, newly painted, and relined with your favorite shade of dark-blue billiard cloth; and for the sake of your convenience, and because the increase of my business requires it, I have purchased another horse—a sorrel mare, having such an excellent reputation for docility and general good behavior, that I shall trust you and Diantha to drive her, though Robert will always be at your service."

"Do you think I shall ride out for pleasure, and to call on friends, in that old buggy that has been seen standing before every house in Ferry Street and Chandler's Lane?"

"Why not? If it has ever received taint or contamination from those neighborhoods, its new paint and upholstery will prove an effectual antidote."

“Dr. Howell, you know what I want, and what you can afford. For at least five years my health has required a daily airing in an easy carriage; and during that time I have probably asked you a hundred times to assist me in preserving my life for my dear children’s sake, by giving me the control of a family carriage that would neither jar my nerves nor shock my sense of propriety.”

“And a hundred times I have told you, Mary, that I could not afford the expense a carriage would involve, and, meantime, have made the best provision for your health and comfort that my means would permit.”

“Yes, I have been invited to ride with you from Dan to Beersheba (meaning, in a literal sense, from Ferry Street to Chandler’s Lane), stopping at ruinous old tenement houses while you made professional calls, when you knew that seeing the poverty and wretchedness of those streets always depressed my spirits, and, of course, counteracted any good effects I might have received from the air and exercise.

“To be perfectly frank with you, doctor, I must say I’m tired of the sight and sound of that old buggy. When I see Mrs. Metcalf, Mrs. Blossom, and a score of ladies who cannot afford such luxuries any better than we can, riding past me in carriages that have a family crest engraved upon the doors, and a servant in livery, I feel as if they were laughing at the old buggy, and commenting on your miserly treatment of your family.”

There were weary lines around the doctor’s mouth, and a curtain of troubled thought veiled the clear light of his honest eyes; and when he spoke there was a heavy undertone of disappointment in his voice.

“Mary, it will be a profitless theme to us both if we renew the old discussion about keeping up a show of style on borrowed capital for the sake of other people’s eyes

and tongues. I would gladly give you a carriage if I had an income that would warrant such an expense; but I have gone just as far as my conscience and purse will permit me in repairing the old buggy, and buying another horse to place at your disposal."

"But you can give to this and that public charity, besides supporting a little beggar under your own roof, and neither your conscience nor your purse feels the strain. 'Tis only in considering your wife's comfort that you find your means limited and your conscience tender."

Dr. Howell rose, walked quickly to the window, and looked out upon the fresh, sweet beauty of the May evening, whistling an old tune, while his interlaced fingers were pressed closely together, as if the mechanical action of both lips and hands were necessary to force back words that were struggling for utterance. When he spoke it was only of the variety and abundance of the brilliant blossoms which filled with brightness and fragrance the small garden-plot. Mrs. Howell made no response to the doctor's attempt to turn the conversation into a more agreeable channel, but, after a minute's silence, asked, —

"Have you decided that I'm not to have a carriage this year?"

"Only the buggy."

"Well, then, I shall only ride when I can save such pitiful little sums from the interest of my late husband's bequest as will enable me to hire a carriage from the livery stable. But if I may be permitted to know so much of your affairs, I would like to ask how your large income is spent?"

Dr. Howell walked quietly from the room, and after a minute's absence returned with a bundle of receipted bills, which, without comment, he placed one by one in his wife's hand.

As she glanced at the items and the columns of figures, and saw that since the first of January her husband had paid over \$8000 for her own gratification, and for the pleasure and benefit of his step-daughter, and remembered that many of these bills had been contracted without his knowledge, and the generous silence he had preserved regarding them, there was enough of true womanhood and wifely feeling in her heart to cause a surging of hot color to her face, and a few words of surprise to escape her lips, that such "unconsidered trifles" should assume such gigantic proportions. But, rallying from her confusion, she found courage to say,—

"A wedding does not occur in our family every year; and if I've been a little extravagant in getting my dear, fatherless child fairly started in the world, I think the peculiar position she will occupy sufficiently justifies my lavish expenditure. It's not likely she'll ever require any more assistance from you; and besides, I confidently hope to refund the money you have spent upon Louise when the Eureka disburses dividends."

"I do not expect nor wish any refunding of money, Mary; I have done cheerfully what I could for Louise, and I wish her to understand, that, though I'm not particularly pleased with the alliance she has made, yet, if reverses come to her, my home shall be as cordially free to her as if she were my own child. I showed you those bills, not to taunt you with your extravagance, but to answer your questions, and to assure you that I had sufficient reasons for refusing to set up a carriage this year. But let me entreat you, my dear wife, not to anticipate the wealth which Ralph Goodenow has promised, nor to contract debts hoping to pay them with the expansion of your fancy stocks. I have no confidence in him, nor faith in his investments, and I am prepared for any losses which you and Louise may sustain through him."

“Doctor, you are unjustly prejudiced against both Ralph and Arthur, simply because their lives flow in such different channels from your own. Ralph may be a trifle too sanguine and worldly, but you must admit that Arthur is very distinguished in manners and conversation, and that his present position is a highly complimentary one to his talents.”

“He is not without talent, and has no lack of tact and shrewdness; but I infer that his appointment is more complimentary to Ralph’s money than to Arthur’s intellect. His present position is at best a temporary one, and, relieved from that, he proposes to seek office at home. He must become involved in political imbroglios, be tossed about with every wind and wave of party strife, and be exposed to the wear and tear of public life, the temptations and vexations of which have dragged many stronger natures than his into mad storms of vice and wretchedness. If, in devoting himself to politics, he had a great and high-toned principle in his soul, stimulating him to secure the welfare of our republican institutions, to legislate with purity and singleness of heart for the upbuilding of the people, I should predict an honorable career for him. But as far as I could discover, he seeks office only to obtain rank, influence, and money as a sinecure for ease and emolument without manly effort.”

Diantha’s opportune entrance at this point in the conversation was like an unexpected gleam of sunshine through the rifts of an angry cloud. Mrs. Howell’s chagrin and disappointment at the result of her appeal for a carriage were not softened by the doctor’s reasons for refusal, coming as they did in the shape of those bills; and since the glamour of Lou’s engagement and marriage had somewhat paled, there had crept into her heart a shadow of distrust regarding Ralph Goodenow’s stocks and investments, which made

allusions to that subject rather unwelcome, and probably accounted for the dissatisfied, captious, and critical spirit that had clung so tenaciously to her since her return from New York. Dissension was as foreign to the doctor's genial, generous soul, whose windows were always "open to the whole noon of nature," as the frosts of January were to midsummer, and therefore he greeted Diantha with a grateful, welcoming smile. She approached her father with a conscious blush, and placed in his hand an unopened letter, the superscription of which had become familiar to her during the last two months; and perceiving that some disturbing influence had robbed him of his after-dinner rest, and that a shadow of injured pride marred the cold beauty of her mother's face, she seated herself at the piano, and, selecting such passages from her favorite composers as breathed the purest and calmest spirit, she played and sang with a heart so full of earnest desire to scatter healing and perfume, that her sweet tones could hardly fail of their beneficent mission.

"Your style of singing is wonderfully improved of late, Di," Mrs. Howell remarked when her daughter turned from the instrument. She spoke with a coolness that implied her own superior appreciation of artistic merit.

"Have you had lessons this winter?"

"One term, while you were in New York."

Such a question from a mother, under ordinary circumstances, would have sounded strangely unnatural; but we must remember Mrs. Howell's peculiar preoccupation of thought during the winter, not only for her eldest daughter, but for the securing of a higher round on the social ladder than she had previously attained.

"I imagined you had neglected all self-culture in your devotion to Edna," added Mrs. Howell, carelessly. "Have you kept up your French?"

"Never so successfully as since Edna has been with me, mamma, because she speaks the language with remarkable readiness and purity. I have been wishing for a chance to exhibit some of my little pupil's accomplishments before you; but she is so shy and modest, and you have been so very much occupied, that I've never found a favorable hour."

"How much longer will it be necessary for us to give Edna a home?"

This was a question which the doctor and Diantha had been expecting for several weeks, and both desired to thrust direct opposition to Mrs. Howell's wishes as far into the future as possible, hoping, meantime, that she would become reconciled to the child's sweet presence in the family. Dr. Howell roused himself from the reverie into which the music and the letter had plunged him to answer his wife's query.

"I have a letter here from Captain Ashmead; you remember, Mary, he was one of the survivors of the *Stella*, the person who found Edna and her mother in great distress and poverty in Smyrna, and gave them free passage in his ship to this country. As no relatives have been found who can protect this child, Captain Ashmead and myself have voluntarily assumed the rights and responsibilities of joint guardianship. He is coming to Hanthrop next week, and we shall then take counsel together concerning Edna. We must cast her forth unprotected upon the charities of the world, or send her to an asylum for orphans, or support her in a boarding-school, unless you can consent to her remaining under our roof as Diantha's *protégée*."

"How much less than the expense of a carriage, with horses and driver, will be this child's board, clothing, and education?" asked Mrs. Howell, with flashing eyes and quivering lips.

“It will cost from three to four hundred dollars per year to keep Edna in a good boarding-school; in our own family, under Daisy’s care and tutelage, the expense of keeping her will be a comparatively trifling sum. I cannot buy such a carriage and span as you desire for less than one thousand five hundred dollars, and the expense of board for the horses and wages for the driver will be as much more. Think for a minute, Mary, which will afford us the highest gratification when the fashions of this world are fading from our eyes, the memory of assistance rendered to a helpless orphan, or of an income spent solely on selfish pleasures? and remember, He whom we have promised to obey and imitate delighteth in the exercise of loving-kindness and mercy.”

Dr. Howell, quietly bidding his wife and daughter good night, passed from the parlor with the calm dignity of a soul so firmly anchored, so strong and pure in its instincts and convictions, as to rise unruffled above the jars and discords of his domestic life. And Mrs. Howell, in no envious mood, sat reviewing the history of her winter, while Diantha, with admirable tact, sought with music and reading to pour oil on the troubled waters of her mother’s heart.

CHAPTER XIX.

GUARDIANS AND WARD.

“Why, man, she is mine own;
And I as rich, in having such a jewel,
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.”

SHAKESPEARE.

CAPTAIN ASHMEAD came to Hanthrop, as his letter had intimated that he would, ostensibly to see Edna, and consult with the doctor about her future; and presenting himself at the office before seeking the hospitalities of his friend's house, the two guardians of the orphaned child discussed her welfare, and arranged plans for her education; but the captain's lingering hesitation, after his ward's affairs had been talked over, revealed to the doctor's quick apprehension a shadow of something which he feared to meet; and Dr. Howell never lacked moral courage for combating anything whose boundaries of right and wrong were distinctly defined, and where he was sure selfish interest did not blunt his perceptions, and warp his judgment.

“I shall have no reservation with you, Dr. Howell. I have come to Hanthrop more for the sake of seeing your daughter than because I supposed Edna Shreve could be benefited by my visit; but I must tell you, before I have your permission to call, that I love her.”

Captain Ashmead's brown face flushed for a moment

almost as deeply as a young girl's would in making such a confession; but he looked straight in the eyes of his friend while pausing for encouragement or reply to his implied question. No word escaped Dr. Howell's lips, and no look or sign bade him proceed.

"I love her, doctor; but while I could see no signal-lights, nor chance of anchorage, I tried to conquer the feeling, and persuade myself it was a fancy that would float away; still, despite my struggles, this new emotion has given shape and color to all my thoughts and plans ever since you permitted her pure hand to touch mine."

It did not mollify the doctor's hard trial to remember that his own wishes had led his daughter to the Bonsecour, and that, in obedience to his own request, she had been an angel of mercy to his patient. "My Daisy," he sighed; and even in the utterance of those two words, in the emphasis placed upon the possessive pronoun, the father betrayed his fear that another's love should rob him of the exclusive right to say "my own." And looking in the captain's clear eyes, noting the earnestness, purity, and strength of his face, he could but acknowledge that a woman's happiness might safely be trusted in such keeping.

"I'm not conceited enough, doctor, to think I'm worthy of such a gift as your daughter's love, and of course it will be a long time before I can offer her a suitable home; but I should sail for Cuba with a light heart if I could only carry the hope that she would some day be mine. I'm not used to the ways of the world; but it didn't seem straightforward to call again at your house until I had your permission."

"I thought you had decided to seek employment on shore," said the doctor, trying to evade an answer to the captain's request.

“And so I have; but, meantime, I couldn't afford to be idle while waiting for something to turn up; and when Elliot Prime wrote last week, offering me the command of the Aurora, and the loan of a thousand dollars, with which to do a little business for myself, that should not interfere with the legitimate trade of the Aurora, it did not take me many hours to decide that this was a providential opening. I go to New York to-morrow to superintend the outfit and lading of the brig, and we hope to sail for Cuba the last of next week.”

“Is Elliot Prime owner of the brig?” asked Dr. Howell; not that he cared for information on that point, but to learn, perhaps indirectly, more of his visitor's antecedents.

“She belongs to the firm of ‘Dillingham & Prime;’ and for three years before I commanded the Stella, I was mate of the Juniata, one of their merchantmen. Prime feels indebted to me for the care I took of a brother of his, who made a long voyage in the Juniata for the purpose of breaking up habits of dissipation. The young man was confided specially to me; and as he was returned to his family sound in mind and strong in body, they overestimate the personal influence I had in his restoration, and express their gratitude by heaping favors upon me.”

“How long do you intend to command the Aurora?”

“If she is successful, and I give satisfaction to the owners, I ought, in consideration of all they have done for me, to command her at least a year.”

“And then what do you propose doing?”

“Well, sir, I have no well-defined plan; but when I wrote Elliot Prime that since the change in my religious views I had been hoping to find a berth in some snug harbor where I could be more actively useful than a seafaring life permits a man to be, and that if I took command of the Aurora, it would be only until some more congenial

employment presented itself, he returned this answer." And the captain took from the side-pocket of his coat a letter, which he handed the doctor, adding, "I couldn't thrust my affairs upon you in this wholesale way, if I didn't recognize your right to learn as much of my past life and future prospects as possible before permitting me to call on your daughter."

Elliot Prime's letter was a warm testimonial of grateful friendship, expressing sympathy with the captain's desire to obtain business that should secure for him a permanent home on shore. The ship-owner alluded to the great indebtedness of his family, and their wish to render him material aid, and then added that his influence and that of his friends should be used to secure for him some lucrative employment. "My wife's brother," he wrote, "is a senator, and a man of large political and social influence. It is often in his power to secure honorable and profitable positions for his friends; and I confidently trust within a year something may be found that will promote your activity, usefulness, and happiness."

"What kind of business are you best fitted for?" asked the doctor, returning the merchant's letter to Captain Ashmead.

"I believe I have a natural tact for teaching; and I have friends who think I am qualified for a professorship. My knowledge of navigation, civil engineering, and mathematics, is sufficient to give me confidence to teach those branches. Then my business has made me quite familiar with custom-house duties. I made several voyages as supercargo before I was twenty-five. Partly from an innate love of study, and partly because the leisure of a long voyage hangs heavy on a man, I have acquired some knowledge of books during my seafaring life, which I trust can be made of service; and until I was eighteen

years of age, I had received excellent and thorough instruction from my father, who was an educated man. But, Dr. Howell, at thirty-two years of age I am without means, and have never tested my ability to succeed in any business or profession on land, and, with a keen sense of my unworthiness, I come to you empty-handed, but with an honest heart, full of love for your daughter."

There was a reverence in the captain's tones, a light in his eyes, and a dignity in his bearing, that were powerful pleaders in his behalf.

"Do you intend to tell Diantha of your love?" asked the doctor.

"Not unless you give me permission, though you must know, if I could receive from her an assurance that my love might win a return, it would be a great incentive to exertion, and would give my life a zest and sweetness it has never known."

"Captain Ashmead, your frankness demands from me equally straightforward dealing. While I have great regard for you, and admire certain qualities of your heart and brain, I remember you have no home to offer with your love, and no definite vocation; that your business capacities have never been tested; and that at least two years must elapse before you have a right to ask any woman to share your uncertain fortunes. I have discovered in Diantha a stronger feeling of regard for you than has ever quickened her pulses before; and if you should tell her in words of your love, I've no doubt the strong tide of her generous nature would be turned towards you; and then, if, after a long, tedious waiting and trusting on her part, you should be found unworthy of such a treasure, your love would prove a crown of sorrow rather than rejoicing to her. If I seem cold and politic, my good friend, set it down to the depth and tenderness

of my fatherly love, which would shield, if possible, this little Daisy of mine from every rough wind and sad experience. I cannot refuse your request to call at my house as a friend, though my judgment tells me it would be better for you both not to meet until your position gives a pledge of your ability to protect the woman you love; but I inadvertently spoke of your coming to Hanthrop, and as Diantha and Edna are expecting to see you, I will not disappoint them."

Captain Ashmead sat with bowed head for a minute after the doctor ceased speaking; and if, when his face was raised, there was a shadow of disappointment in it, he did not permit the feeling to escape in words.

"I see the justice of your decision, Dr. Howell, and thank you heartily for softening it, by speaking as you did of your daughter's regard: even that slight encouragement will be a mine of strength to me. Am I to understand, if my record for the next two years is fair and satisfactory, that I shall then have your permission to tell your daughter of my love?"

The doctor's hesitation was not in keeping with the genial honesty that characterized his dealings with his fellow-men: coldness, reticence, and selfishness were never permitted to stain the tablets of his soul; but here was a man asking for his one pet lamb — the solace and light of his home, the cheerful sharer of his toils — her who was so familiar with his pursuits, and always so ready to write for him, read to him, and soothe him with her music, that parting from her would be almost like giving up his right hand, or his sense of sight and sound. But when he asked himself if his daughter's life could always flow on as sweetly and cheerfully if he withheld from it that share of Eden which is the birthright of woman, his soul could make but one answer.

“Captain Ashmead, I will endeavor so to purge my love for Diantha from its selfishness, that it shall never cloud her happiness. I shall doubtless be as willing to yield my treasure to your keeping as to that of any other man.”

Dr. Howell extended his hand while speaking; and the captain's eager grasping of it was his only expression of thanks; but the moisture in his eyes told of the fountain in his heart, upon which a heavenly benediction had fallen.

“Come and dine with us at six o'clock this evening,” said the doctor, with a flavor of his accustomed heartiness in voice and manner; and with a grateful thank-offering, the captain accepted the invitation.

If Dr. Howell had nourished a secret hope that absence from her friend and a multitude of absorbing pursuits would banish him from Diantha's memory, or cool the ardor of an attachment formed under circumstances peculiarly calculated to draw out the wealth of a woman's nature, the meeting between the two convinced him of the poverty of such a hope. Diantha's words were few, and such as would have been used in greeting any friend; but the eager welcome in her eyes, and the quick flushing and paling of her face, would have freighted the commonest words with eloquent meaning; and no matter how conventional and guarded Captain Ashmead might be in speech, there was a language in his heart that could never be quite controlled; it found utterance in his eyes, and in the long, firm clasp of the small hand that trembled in his.

Mrs. Howell, not knowing that their guest was more to the doctor or Diantha than an ordinary patient, received him with as much favor and courtesy as she usually bestowed on a stranger who had not the recommendation of

wealth or acknowledged position; and that was a formal politeness, cold enough to chill the most tropical nature. Edna alone was natural and untrammelled. In her gladness at finding herself once more with the friend who had been kind to her mamma, she even forgot the restraints of Mrs. Howell's presence, and laughed and chatted with a bird-like gush and freedom.

"What have you done with your crutches?" asked Edna, as soon as she was installed in her old place by the captain, upon whom she leaned as familiarly as if he had been her father.

They were left in the parsonage at Hollyville, and a curly-headed little nephew of mine makes horses of them. I doubt if the sailors would permit me to command the *Aurora* with such companions on board; they are superstitious."

"Don't you need them any longer?"

"No; thanks to the skill of Dr. Howell and the inventor of cork limbs, I have but a slight limp, and need only a cane. And I see that my little ward has been improving as rapidly as her guardian," said the captain, laying his hand upon Edna's short, thick curls. "She never had as much color or plumpness in her cheeks even when they were kissed by the sea breezes. But what has become of that long hair?"

"Dr. Howell said it must be cut, because my sickness made it so thin."

"I'm not sure but I like the short curls better; and I'm very certain that I like the color and brightness that have crept back to your face and eyes. And what about the lessons, little one?"

"You must ask Miss Howell; she makes study so easy and pleasant, I cannot help learning."

"Captain Ashmead knows a quick and docile pupil

makes pastime of a teacher's work; and then the assistance I give Edna is hardly worthy the name of teaching; we help each other," answered Diantha.

"I'm sure Di spends as much time on your ward, Captain Ashmead, as a dozen pupils need require. I hope Edna appreciates what is done for her," said Mrs. Howell.

"We could hardly expect a chit of thirteen to know the full value of the services she is receiving," answered the captain. "However, I have faith that seed sown on such soil will in time yield an abundant harvest;" and then, turning to the doctor, he added, —

"My sister wishes Edna to spend a couple of the summer months in her parsonage, where she will have the benefit of the mountain air, plenty of new milk, delicious berries, any quantity of romps with my nephew and nieces, and as much petting from my mother and sister as will be beneficial to our ward."

"Your sister is very kind, and we may be glad to accept her proposal for Edna, as our plans for the summer are still unsettled; we usually treat ourselves to the luxuries of the country for a few weeks," said the doctor.

"Then let me say a few words in favor of Hollyville, one of the most charming summer resorts I've ever seen, and getting to be a favorite with pleasure-seekers, my brother-in-law tells me. You will find mountain, lake, hill, meadow, and river scenery as daintily combined in the landscape as if the Great Artist had tried to see how much beauty could be lavished and concentrated on a few miles' space."

"You have been a great traveller, Captain Ashmead," remarked Mrs. Howell, apparently willing to be entertained by her guest, though still preserving her critical and reserved air.

"Yes; and you may infer, madam, that a man tossed

about upon the salt water for fourteen years cannot be a very good judge of scenery; but I've sometimes thought the very monotony and barrenness of ocean life make one more keenly alive to the variety and richness of the land. I've had glimpses of some of the fairest islands in the world, some of the grandest mountains and most picturesque rivers; I'm familiar with the scenery of the Rhine and the Shenandoah, the Alps and the Andes; but I think I've found as much graceful harmony and sublime grandeur in New England as in any other part of the world."

Captain Ashmead was fast losing his unnatural reserve, and, with a little encouragement from his host, was drawn out in such animated and intelligent descriptions of towns, cathedrals, ruins, places of historic interest, pictures, works of art, and natural scenery, that at least one of his auditors was convinced he had garnered from his travels a wealth, culture, and development far exceeding in value that more tangible substance which the wreck of the *Stella* had swept from him. His urbanity, sailor-like frankness, and heartiness gave such piquancy to his conversation, that when he rose to make his adieus, even Mrs. Howell's *hauteur* melted; and the doctor observed the lingering clasp in which Diantha's hand was held with less regret than he would have felt three hours before, and, when his guest was gone, comforted himself with the remembrance that

" things done well,
And with a care, exempt themselves from fear."

CHAPTER XX.

PASSING CLOUDS.

“God’s dealings still are love. His chastenings are alone
Love, now compelled to take an altered, louder tone.”

“Prosperity’s the very bond of love,
Whose fresh complexion and whose heart together
Affliction alters.”

SHAKESPEARE.

“DOCTOR, I have a letter here from brother Ralph’s agent, or lawyer, and some parts of it I don’t quite understand. I must ask explanations of you, and advice.”

Dr. Howell rose from his writing-desk with an exclamation of surprise at the call, joined with a word of welcome to his wife; and clearing a chair of the books and pamphlets, which were somewhat carelessly disposed during his study hours, invited her to sit while he read the letter she handed him.

Only on very rare occasions had Mrs. Howell’s handsome presence ornamented the doctor’s office: the odor of drugs offended her olfactories, and reminded her of that daily drudgery which warped her husband’s intellect, dwarfed his ambition, and contaminated him with plebeian associations; and rarer still were the occasions when she had sought his advice, since her elder daughter had acquired that habit of dictation which is the natural fruit of egotism and certain kinds of culture; and it cost the lady no little sacrifice of pride to appeal to the doctor at this

crisis, though she could not recall a single instance where he had even implied reproach by saying, "I told you so," when any project of hers failed which had not received his sanction.

The lawyer's letter briefly informed Mrs. Howell that, "owing to unforeseen and adverse circumstances in the excavating and smelting of copper ore, the officers of the Eureka Company found it absolutely necessary, in order to prosecute the mining operations, to assess the shares of the stockholders. Ten per cent. of the par value of the shares had been levied, and Mrs. Howell, owning twenty shares, valued at one hundred dollars each, would be required to pay two hundred dollars."

When the doctor had finished reading the agent's letter, his lips almost involuntarily assumed such peculiar relationships to each other that his characteristic expression of disturbed mental equilibrium might have escaped, had he not remembered in season his wife's antipathy to his inartistic performances; but observing the anxiety and annoyance that ruffled her fair face, he made no comments, and only asked, —

"What part of this letter do you want explained, Mary?"

"Why, I have been expecting every day for the last two months a dividend of at least ten per cent. on each of my shares, and no one ever told me they might be an expense, instead of an income."

"I could have told you of such a possibility before you invested, only I hoped Ralph Goodenow would have explained to you all liabilities. I knew you trusted more confidently to his judgment in business matters than to mine. Latham's letter is a concise statement, and, doubtless, may be thus explained: The Eureka Company has consumed its capital in the purchase of machinery, mining

implements, and in the hire of laborers. They have, probably, found the ore less abundant, and the obstacles in the way of securing it much greater than the original owner of the claim represented; and now to avoid losing what has been expended, they must assess the shares to raise funds for further operations."

"Must I lose my two thousand dollars unless I raise two hundred dollars more?"

"It may not be an entire loss to you. I believe, if a stockholder refuses to pay his assessment, his shares are sold at auction to raise the amount. Then I suppose there is a chance that the new capital may be so successfully managed as to increase the value of the original. Why did not Ralph Goodenow write, and explain more fully the reasons why an increase of funds is demanded?"

"That is one of the mysteries; but most likely he was absent from the office when this letter was written, and I shall hear from him to-morrow."

"If you would like his advice before you pay the tax levied on your stocks, I will send a telegram this morning, asking him to write by return mail."

"I wish you would; but what do you think of paying this assessment?"

"I should rather accept the risk of losing what I had already invested, than to increase that sum without more reliable security than Ralph Goodenow's representation of the value of those copper mines."

"You forget that his representations are based on statistics; that geologists have certified as to the value of the claim, and that scientific experiments have proved the abundance and richness of the ore."

"I should have no confidence in the testimonials obtained by speculators in stocks. I don't wish to judge your brother-in-law harshly, but I studied him carefully

and without prejudice during his short visit here, and I believe him to be a man so wanting in integrity that he would not hesitate to raise money on false pretences — so sanguine as to accept the flimsiest foundations for the forming of stock companies, and so selfish as to be utterly regardless of the suffering and disappointment occasioned by the failure of them. I know you will feel the loss of your investment keenly for yourself and for Louise. As she gave her uncle the power of attorney to act for her in money matters during her absence, his selfish interest will prompt him to manage her affairs as honorably as he would for himself; and I hope, with the blessing of God, I shall be able to make all needful provision for your comfort and happiness, so that the loss of your money shall make no essential difference in your sources of enjoyment. I can but pray, dear wife, that this new instance of the insecurity of worldly wealth may cause you to place a higher estimate upon those riches that are eternal, and have no recognized value on Wall Street.”

“If I only had your phlegmatic temperament, or if I could be interested in such common things as you and Di are, and if I was not so ambitious for my children’s sake, the loss of money would not disturb me so; but with such tastes and such desires as mine, it is particularly hard to know my small fortune is decreasing, just as I was beginning to see my way clear to a more distinguished and congenial style of living than I’ve ever enjoyed since Arthur died. But you never take the most hopeful view of any scheme which Ralph favors, just because you don’t happen to fancy the man; and I’ll wait until I hear from him before I yield to despondency.”

“Let his opinion be favorable or adverse, you must not be despondent. The loss of two thousand dollars will not ruin us, and it may be an experience of great value.”

“I'd rather have the money than the lessons taught by the loss of it. Those can be learned from any of your sentimental and religious writers, who love to harp on the elevating influences of adversity. They are welcome to them. How shall I contrive to keep up my spirits until I hear from Ralph?”

“Why not take a long drive into the country? The day is lovely, and everything is in bloom. You can have no more agreeable diversion for your thoughts than such a ride will bring.”

“Well, it don't much matter what I do. I'll write to Lou this morning, and you may tell Kingman to send up his best carriage and span, to be here at twelve. You can't go, of course, and Di must always have Edna tied to her apron-strings, besides giving one the blues with her histories of low life; and as I'm sadly in need of cheerful company, I'll send Robert round to ask Dr. and Mrs. Blossom to ride with me. She told me last evening about their horses taking fright and running, two or three days ago, and the carriage was so injured that they've sent it away for repairs. She was regretting the loss of their daily drive, and will be glad to go with me.”

The carriage was ordered, and Dr. and Mrs. Blossom accepted Mrs. Howell's invitation; but neither the beauty nor the perfume of the hedges and orchards, nor the green luxuriance of the old earth's carpet, dotted with the golden heads of dandelions; neither the jubilant songs of “the street musicians of the heavenly city,” nor the musical rhythm of the rejoicing season; neither the high-toned discourse of the reverend doctor, who recognized God's love of beauty and harmony in the tiniest violet that fringed the wayside, His mercy and provident thought in the prophecy of autumnal bounties, which was written upon the tender blades of wheat, and flung out in the

prodigal bloom of orchards and meadows; neither Mrs. Blossom's animated history of the preparations for a strawberry festival which was to commemorate the doctor's settlement over St. Mark's, nor her enthusiastic praises of a new soprano voice which was rendering still more attractive the Sunday service at this fashionable church; in fine, neither the tender grace and blossoming beauty of the season, nor the clergyman's sentiment, nor his lady's rippling flow of small talk, sufficed to restore that tone and elasticity to Mrs. Howell's spirits of which the morning's news from the Eureka stocks had robbed her.

And then the party had the misfortune to be caught in one of those soft, spring showers whose drops seemed scattered playfully, as if to enhance the effect of the sunshine which bathed the larger part of the landscape; and before the curtains of the carriage could be raised, Mrs. Howell's lilac crape bonnet had received its death warrant. In a plaintive rehearsal of the misfortunes of the day to Diantha, she said, "her new chene silk would always have an association with the assessment of her stocks;" but she thanked Heaven, with a sigh, that "her India shawl couldn't be harmed by a few drops of water."

"There has been one oasis in the dreary day," added Mrs. Howell, "and that's an assurance from Mrs. Blossom that we are to receive invitations to a very exclusive picnic on the old Bosworth Park grounds, followed by an evening festival in the vestry of St. Mark's Church: it is to come off the first of June."

"The invitations were brought while you were out riding, mamma."

"And you are included?"

"Mr. Horace Metcalf asks for the honor and pleasure of being my escort; he has called again to-day."

"Really, it seems to me Horace Metcalf is trying to

make me believe he wasn't more attentive to one of my daughters than the other; but if he doesn't carry a sore and heavy heart for the loss of Lou, I've no skill in reading his actions and looks. Of course you accepted his invitation?"

"I told him I would go if you approved, mamma; but I've been sorry since, because I don't want to encourage any marked attentions from him."

"Why not? He belongs to one of our first families, and has wealth, education, and good manners. It would be an unaccountable freak if he should take a fancy to you after his decided preference for Louise, but highly complimentary, Di, and a much more eligible chance for you than I've ever dared hope for; so don't let me hear of your shunning marked attentions from Horace Metcalf."

"But if I'm very sure I can only like him as a friend —"

"Stop right there, Di; and let me tell you, a girl of twenty, who has seen so little of the world as you have, can make no distinctions between friendship and love. If Horace is agreeable to you now, you'll find it easy enough to cultivate a stronger feeling, if he should ever honor you so much as to ask for your love. I shall expect you to regard my wishes in this matter, and to throw off all puritanic reserve and shyness, and show to the best advantage your talent for singing and painting. You must have a white, embroidered muslin for the party, and with blue trimmings. Let me see," added the mother, taking from her wardrobe drawer a bunch of blue, buff, pink, and scarlet ribbons, and trying the effect of each against Diantha's delicately colored cheek and golden-brown hair. "Yes; blue and white are more in harmony with your hair and complexion than decidedly brilliant hues. Lou could be dressed like an Eastern princess, she was such a bright, tropical flower; but you are strangely like the Howells, Di, in face, and

figure, and coloring, and I may add, in character, too. But you are improving in looks and manners, and with more attention to style and dress, and a better control of your foolish color, you'll be thought pretty and attractive, now that you don't suffer from contrast with Louise. I'm glad and thankful these invitations came to-day; they'll give me amusement and occupation in planning our toilets until I hear from Ralph; and remember, I shall exact from you compliance with my wishes in reference to this party and all future attentions of Horace Metcalf. You may leave me now; my head aches, and I must have rest before dinner."

Diantha went to her chamber wondering how a girl could help knowing the difference between love and friendship, when the knowledge had come to her heart as stealthily and naturally as wildflowers turn towards the sun; and wondering, too, whether, the boundaries once crossed, love could be recalled and turned into the quiet channels of friendship; whether a woman ought not to uproot every growth that bore semblance to the immortal flower, until she had been asked to cherish it. If Captain Ashmead could have told the story in words, which his looks and tones clearly intimated, Diantha's trustful heart would have been a stranger to misgivings; waiting for him would have been a hope-crowned prelude to the sweet psalm of life; but not to know her hero's reasons for silence, and to feel conscious that her father disapproved of her preference, and that her mother would in every possible way encourage the attentions of young Metcalf, disturbed the healthful tone of her nature, and called for the constant exercise of all her courage, faith, and patience. She concealed her own pain so adroitly, while ministering with her wonted cheerfulness to the needs of others, that even Dr. Howell observed only the richer perfume of her life without seeking its cause.

And Mrs. Howell's real and fanciful troubles were so great, during that memorable summer, as to render her oblivious to the griefs of others; her remarkable sensitiveness to mental and physical ailments quite unfitted her, as she often remarked, to help bear another's burdens.

The doctor's telegram brought another letter from Latham, the broker's lawyer, stating that "Ralph Goodenow sailed in the Golden Gate, for California, a week previous to date; that the interests of the Feather River Quartz-crushing Company demanded his presence on the ground of operations, and that the enterprising broker, wishing to become personally acquainted with the claims of that vast gold-bearing region, had left his financial matters in care of his agent for two or three months. He said the heavy spring rains had so retarded the progress of the Eureka mines, and the difficulties of transportation had been so great, that the cost of supplies for the miners had been more than double the original calculation. These impediments and delays called for patience on the part of the stockholders; but the property was good, and would make ample returns for the capital spent upon it. Mrs. Howell need have no anxiety when such men as Hon. Carlos Hapgood, Right Rev. Dr. Mintwell, and Colonel Keenman promptly paid their assessments, and moreover made arrangements for securing all the Eureka stocks which should come into the market. Latham could find a purchaser for Mrs. Howell's shares at their par value if she wished to dispose of them."

And the same mail brought a letter from Louise, descanting on the glories of Paris, and the delights of foreign travel, and the honorable distinctions which money secured, and begging her mother to trust implicitly to Ralph Goodenow in business matters.

"I shall pay the assessments," said Mrs. Howell, in

answer to the doctor's query regarding her decision, "even if I'm obliged to give up my trip to Saratoga in consequence. I'm used to making sacrifices," she added, with a sigh.

"If the Eureka turns out badly, the Feather River stocks will redeem the failure; and I may as well tell you now that I have two thousand dollars invested in Ralph's quartz-crushing operations, though, of course, as the money belonged to my first husband, there's no need of my telling you what I do with it."

"None whatever," answered the doctor, while an amused smile hovered in his eyes and around his lips. He was thinking of the nature of his lady's sacrifices and the expansiveness of her first husband's bequest, the income of which had been her excuse for indulging in pleasures and gratifying tastes which must have swallowed her entire fortune years before, had she been dependent on that alone.

CHAPTER XXI.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

“ I will this dreary blank of absence make
A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o’ertake
More good than I have won since yet I live.”

FRANCES KEMBLE.

EDNA SHREVE had not seen so bright a day since the wreck of the *Stella* as that which was crowned with the pleasure of finishing Captain Ashmead’s slippers in season to send them to New York before the *Aurora* sailed; and it must be recorded that, without substantial aid from the nimble fingers of Diantha, the slippers would have missed the honorable service for which they were destined. If the captain could have known how much love and gratitude had been wrought into the pattern with the bright-hued worsteds and silks, the gift of his little friend would have possessed almost a talismanic charm; but if the slippers failed in one iota of their intended mission, Edna’s accompanying note supplied all deficiencies. “I could never have made them if Miss Howell hadn’t shown me how,” wrote the conscientious child, not dreaming what sweetness, strength, and hope lay hidden in her words. “She worked the purple pansy and the scarlet geranium, and helped me with all the rest; and every day she asks me if I’ve prayed that God would hold the sea in the hollow of his hand, and keep the *Aurora* from all harm. She’s so gentle with me, and so loving, and you and Dr. Howell are so kind, and I

love you all so much, that I'm not grieving for my lost mamma and Nathan as I used, and am quite content to live. Miss Howell says, perhaps some time, when you have a home on shore, you may want me to live with you and your mother; and she is teaching me how to sing, and play, and draw, and do all sorts of nice things to please you."

The care and confusion attending the Aurora's outfit and lading did not prevent Captain Ashmead from sending his little friend a letter of thanks, as well as more tangible tokens of his generous thought for her. Edna's happiness "waded in tears" when she saw the proofs of the captain's loving remembrance of her needs. He had selected a white cambric and just the shade of merino for a gown and cloak which would harmonize with the hue of her eyes and the delicacy of her complexion. And a large photograph of the Aurora, neatly framed, to ornament the "City of Refuge," was more valuable to Edna than his other gifts.

The bouquet of sweet-scented geranium blossoms and velvet-coated pansies, which was enclosed in Edna's box, and directed to Miss Howell, did not win from that young lady such outward demonstrations of welcome as the child bestowed on her gifts; yet their messages were like manna to her hungry heart, telling, in quaint, old-time fashion, of the giver's preference and remembrance, and strengthening her for many a hard conflict, long after their beauty and perfume had perished.

If Diantha's timid yet glad acceptance of the flowers and their delicately conveyed intimation could have been revealed to Captain Ashmead, he would have been sorely tempted to disregard the doctor's injunction, and to tell her of his love in words that could not be mistaken for a mere floral compliment; but it was doubtless better for the harmonious development of his character, as well as Diantha's, that both should remain in ignorance of the strength and

depth of affection each cherished for the other; for without the misconceptions, disappointments, and thwarted desires of our daily lives, we should lack the trustfulness, devotion, and energy which are the fruits of surmounted obstacles.

The captain's flowers arrived one day when Diantha's filial regard for her mother's wishes had clashed with her own ideas of duty and propriety, and when she more than ever before needed the inspiration and strength brought by the sweet-voiced messengers.

The forthcoming picnic party of the St. Mark's Church would be a rare opportunity for Mrs. Howell to display her artistic tastes and that maternal solicitude for Diantha, of which, as she expressed it, "her dear, fatherless child had hitherto received the lion's share;" and then the possibility of securing an alliance with the Metcalf family had awakened her to the importance of immediate attention to Diantha's style in dress and manners.

"You make a great parade of piety and conscience, Di; but I wish it was a part of your religion to honor and obey me, and show a becoming deference to my tastes. I've been more than once reminded, since the invitations to this picnic came, of what Solomon, or Shakespeare, or some old writer said:—

'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!'

Mrs. Howell's face and voice wore the emphasis of severe displeasure, because her daughter had quietly objected to the purchase of what seemed to her unnecessary and inappropriate for the picnic party.

Diantha rose from her chair, and, coming forward, knelt at her mother's side, saying, with a tremulous voice, and eyes full of tears,—

"Mamma, you mistake my motives; I'm not unthankful,

and I appreciate your desire to see me prettily dressed, and I know your taste is better cultivated than mine; but I cannot ask father for an increase of my allowance, and I spent so much on my dress for the wedding party that really I have not half enough in my purse to buy a new gown."

"You might anticipate your next quarter's allowance."

"Father has forbidden me ever to run in debt; and then my wardrobe is so abundantly supplied, I should have no need of an embroidered muslin after the picnic. I don't want to differ from you in matters of taste, but I should feel over-dressed for an out-of-door party in such a gown as you propose."

"You seem to forget that the most important part of the entertainment will be in the vestry of St. Mark's, in the evening, when there will be dancing, and music, and speeches."

"Yes; but Mrs. Metcalf told me this morning the ladies wouldn't appear in full dress; 'tis more like a large family party, where fashion yields to pleasure and convenience."

Mrs. Metcalf's opinion was an authority which even Mrs. Howell did not care to gainsay, and she was willing to accept it in the present instance, rather than supply the coveted articles for Diantha from her own purse, or appear to yield to her daughter's judgment.

"Where did you see Mrs. Metcalf?" asked the mother, in a softer tone than she had used when speaking to Diantha for several days.

"She went with me to the Bonsecour Home. I was driving there in the buggy to meet father, when I overtook her on Locust Street, and she asked to go with me."

"Just another one of her odd freaks. She thinks she can do anything because she is the daughter of old Squire Bosworth, and her husband was a judge, and they are

known to have an income of twenty thousand dollars a year. She wouldn't be seen riding in your father's old buggy if she didn't own as handsome a turnout as anybody in Hanthrop. People who have carriages, and servants in livery, and more money than they know how to spend, can afford to trudge about on foot, while those who've got to build up a reputation must use every device, and strain, and twist, and turn their means, as well as their wits, to keep up appearances."

"Wouldn't the straining, and twisting, and racking of brains depend on the kind of reputation we wished to enjoy, mamma? If we desired only the distinction of wealth, we might spend our entire means in making a show, and in imitating others; but wouldn't you rather father should be known as a skilful physician and a scientific scholar, whose name is honorably mentioned in medical and literary journals, whose opinions are quoted as authority, than have him referred to simply as the owner of factories, ships, and blocks of houses?"

"You are all Howell, Di, as I've told you a hundred times, and have no sympathy with anything but your father's crotchets. If you and he were as ambitious as I am, we might have the honors that are conferred on wealth in addition to literary fame. But I've never been understood by any one excepting Louise, since her father was taken from me; and I suppose 'tis too late now to expect appreciation and sympathy from you."

"Please don't think, mamma, because our tastes in dress sometimes differ, that I can't appreciate you, and that I've no sympathy with you because I'm so interested in father's pursuits. I'm afraid his writings would never see the light if I didn't copy them for him, and correct the proofs; and I always feel, while doing such work, that I'm helping make the world better and wiser."

“Well, you must follow your own bent now, I suppose; I’ve tried in vain to mould you, and give you a taste for becoming and lady-like pursuits; but if copying such dry medical essays as your father writes is more agreeable to you than cultivating the graces and accomplishments of your own sex, I’ve nothing more to say; at least, not while you confine your strong-minded notions to your father’s study. Don’t lean on me any longer; you’re crushing my dress.”

Diantha resumed her chair, while her mother added, “To return to the picnic party: if you are sure the ladies are not to go in full evening dress, I won’t insist on your buying a new muslin; and really, I suppose my health isn’t equal to the care of superintending the making of it, as I’m having so much trouble in matching my lilac grenadine with trimmings. If Madame Lavitte don’t find something *recherché* to-day that exactly matches, I shall have it trimmed with black thread lace, and puffings of the grenadine. And then I must have a new bonnet, because that disagreeable little shower spoiled my pretty crape one. Everything has gone wrong with me ever since that unfortunate assessment of my stocks; and notwithstanding your father knows I was obliged to pay out the two hundred dollars I had saved for a trip to Saratoga, where I was expecting to meet Ralph’s family and the Hapgoods and Mintwells, he hasn’t said one word yet about making up the loss to me; and he knows very well that a summer excursion is as necessary to my health and happiness as scientific study and professional work are to him.”

“Father is never so busy as to forget your health or pleasures, mamma, and I’m sure he’ll give you as much money as he can afford. One of my principal reasons for not wishing to buy a new dress for this picnic was the desire to relieve father as much as possible from petty cares,

so that his thoughts may be clear for the work he's engaged in; and I'm very thankful you haven't insisted on the new dress."

"Well, I hope you'll show your thankfulness by making yourself agreeable to Mrs. Metcalf and her son. I saw by the way he listened to your singing last evening that he's very much pleased with you; but he's fastidious, and won't marry a dowdy girl, even if she is talented. What dress are you going to wear?"

"The buff berege you gave me last summer is pretty and seasonable, and you always said it was becoming; but, mamma, please don't talk as if Horace Metcalf were weighing me in the balances, or as if we were trying to show off accomplishments to secure an offer from him. Such thoughts will embarrass me in his presence, and rob me of all the pleasure I might otherwise have in his conversation and friendship. Even if I thought it possible to love him, a deliberate attempt to secure his regard would desecrate the sacred purity of the feeling I must have for the man who chooses me; and I'm still firm in my conviction that I can only like him as a friend."

"I trust a daughter of mine will never have any warmer feeling than friendship before marriage. A girl of your age should know that a connection with an aristocratic family of wealth and fashion is in every way desirable for her, especially when this connection may be brought about by cultivating friendly feelings, which already exist, for an agreeable and talented young man."

"But if I find him agreeable for an hour's chat, or a drive, you mustn't infer he would be an agreeable companion for life. The man I marry must have such intellectual strength, such nobility of soul, and such purity of life, that I can honor and reverence him, and such power over my affections that they will spring intuitively to meet his.

Horace Metcalf can talk well, and is quite familiar with books and works of art, and is fond of music, and there are many themes which have a common interest for us; but he has no reverence for religion, and no especial object in life, and so long as he is comfortable, and has means to gratify his luxurious tastes, the poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness of the world present to him no incentives to action."

"You've picked up the most peculiar notions, Di, from such women as Miss Wheeler, who think they are set apart as examples for the rest of humanity; but a persistent lover will set you all right, and show you that one's individual comfort and happiness may be secured first, and then there will be time enough for such philanthropical labors as are becoming to women. There'll be no end of your charities when you have control of Horace Metcalf's wealth, and as his wife your influence will be ten times as great as 'tis now. You needn't say another word on this subject to-day; but I warn you not to refuse an offer of marriage from such a quarter, and expect me to forgive such childish folly. You may order Robert to harness the sorrel horse into the buggy; it looks so much like rain, I won't run the risk of getting wet, and adding to my cold, and I'm obliged to go to Madame Lavitte's. I've said I would never ride in the old buggy for pleasure, or to make calls; but that promise needn't prevent me from riding in it when business obliges me to go out."

The preparations for this picnic party gave to Mrs. Howell's restless spirit just the kind of exciting food it demanded. It is not pleasant for a woman to record a fact so prejudicial to her own sex; but the doctor's wife belonged to a large class whose intellects never crave a higher theme than the trivialities of dress, and the conventionalities of society, — for whom a party or an opera is an event of such

importance as to consume much precious time in preparation, — not because such a gathering is a favorable opportunity for the interchange of thought, the cultivation of friendship, or a taste for refined pleasures and broader views of life, but simply because it presents an arena for the display of wealth and style.

One of June's fairest days smiled propitiously on the fortune-favored parishioners of St. Mark's Church, who assembled on the Bosworth Park grounds to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Blossom's settlement by eating strawberries, making speeches, and presenting gifts to their pastor: a silver-wedding festivity it proved, for the gifts were of no baser metal than silver, and the congratulations flowed from silvery voices, and even the clouds that floated over the gay throng presented nothing darker than their silver linings. The rector of St. Mark's, while listening to the silver-tongued orators, and holding in his hand a purse generously filled with the precious ore, might almost have been forgiven if he failed to remember a class of laborers in the Lord's vineyard who were obliged to confess, "Silver and gold have I none."

The exclusiveness of the clique in which Mrs. Howell found herself, the superior richness and fashion of her own attire, and the devotion of young Metcalf to Diantha, raised the doctor's wife for this one evening quite above the fluctuations of the stock-market. She was graciously disposed to all, but particularly communicative and confidential to Mrs. Metcalf, whom she favored with a history of her daughter Lou's Parisian pleasures and honors. She alluded in such an easy and accidental way to such circumstances as reflected honor and distinction on the Howell family, that the very perfection of her artfulness was concealed beneath a mask of guileless honesty. Diantha's spirit caught the exhilarating brightness of the June day. The rarity

of the holiday, and the pleasure of seeing the old Bosworth estate, added to the delights of intelligent conversation, gave to her delicate features unusual animation; and possibly Captain Ashmead's flowers, which served instead of a brooch to confine the lace at her throat, lent their grace, sweetness, and inspiration to her face.

"Diantha seems in perfect harmony with the day," remarked Mrs. Metcalf; and as her pleased glance followed her young favorite, one could see the lady would throw no serious impediments in the way of her son's choice.

"O, yes! Di is always in tune. She has such excellent health and spirits, 'tis no wonder she takes pleasure in everything bright," answered Mrs. Howell.

"Yet I believe she finds her purest happiness in places very far removed from this. I was surprised to see how ready and helpful she was at the Bonsecour the other day; her cheerful words and smiles seemed to give the patients a new lease of life, and I am told she often assists Dr. Howell in the most difficult operations."

"She's very courageous, and has strong nerves, and so much power in her hand and voice, that she sometimes assists her father in cases which require particularly delicate and tender treatment. Di is so sweet-tempered she can do anything her father requires of her; but her tastes are all refined, lady-like, and domestic; she doesn't belong to the strong-minded class, and can conform to her surroundings with as much ease and grace as any one. You must forgive a mother for complimenting her own daughter, Mrs. Metcalf." Mrs. Howell's words were uttered with as much show of tender emotion as if she were capable of appreciating Diantha's pure and heroic life.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SPRINGS.

"No earth-born will
Could ever trace a faultless line;
Our truest steps are human still,
To walk unswerving were divine."

O. W. HOLMES.

THE St. Mark's festival lost none of its silvery brightness in Mrs. Howell's descriptions of it to the doctor and to those of her friends who were not witnesses of its dazzling sheen; but neither the brilliancy of the day nor her social triumphs were potent enough to shield her from the effects of fatigue, nervous excitement, and a heavy cold. Dr. Howell had been anxiously observant of his wife's physical condition for many days previous to the festival, and had urged her to abandon preparations for it, and avail herself of rest, quiet, and simple restoratives. She had met all his persuasions with the answer, —

"I shall certainly be sick if I give up going to the picnic; anticipations of that keep my thoughts from dwelling on disagreeable symptoms of illness, and from the loss of my dear Lou's society, and from constant worry about the assessment of my stocks. With such a large practice as you've had for nearly twenty years, we ought to be so wealthy that I should have no anxiety about money matters."

The doctor had so often been favored with the pith of

the last observation that he permitted it to pass without comment.

Mrs. Howell could say, with Victor Hugo, "Life is a dish that owes its charm to its sauce;" and as nothing of exciting interest immediately succeeded the picnic pleasures, her strong will was obliged to succumb.

For several weeks she was prostrate with a slow, nervous fever, which, though not particularly painful, kept her so irritable and so difficult to please, that any common stock of patience must have been exhausted. But no matter how unreasonable the invalid's caprices were, the doctor's temper remained unruffled, and no word or sound escaped his lips that was not intended to soothe. And if the long June days sometimes found Diantha weary in body, her willing spirit was never dismayed. She was as buoyant and fresh as if her daily food were an extract of the month's fairest blossoms. Indeed, her soul was filled with deeper and purer fountains of sweetness than Nature's most devout worshipper could gather from June's rarest loveliness.

Her patience and cheerfulness in the sick room often reminded her father of the passage, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth;" and Mrs. Howell, always slow to acknowledge excellence that did not flow through the veins of her own or the Goodenow family, or such conventional channels as society recognized, said,—

"Di was born for a nurse: she has remarkable tact in doing little things to beguile an invalid's thoughts, and break up the monotony of this dreary chamber. She knows just when to sing, and read, and talk, and has such strong nerves that she's never disturbed by my sufferings. It's fortunate she didn't inherit my sensitiveness." There was an echo to the last remark in the doctor's thoughts.

“What a tedious confinement!” she exclaimed one evening when her husband was sitting by her couch, and Diantha and Edna were entertaining Horace Metcalf in the parlor: the young man had found abundant excuses for calling, since the picnic, to inquire for the invalid, and to bring her such rare flowers from his mother’s conservatory as were not found in the doctor’s small garden, and the last new book and music for Diantha; and Mrs. Howell had instructed the servants always to admit Mr. Metcalf, and had positively forbidden her daughter to excuse herself from seeing him, or riding with him, no matter how imperatively she might be needed elsewhere. Edna could always take Diantha’s place with the invalid when Mr. Metcalf was to be entertained, though at all other hours she was most unreasonable in keeping her constantly within sight and call. “Such a weary time!” Mrs. Howell added, with a sigh; “this is the last day of June, and I haven’t been out since the picnic. It will be absolutely necessary for me to have a change of air before the close of another week; I feel as if I were suffocating in this room. How much longer do you mean to keep me here?”

“Not a day after you are strong enough to be removed, Mary; and if you continue to improve as you have for the last week, I think you may safely journey by boat to Carrhaven in eight or ten days.”

“And why to Carrhaven, I would like to ask? You know ’tis just the dreariest place under the sun. There’s nothing within reach of the eye but rocks, and waves, and sand, and a few ruinous old farm-houses, and one great, bleak-looking hotel.”

“I mentioned Carrhaven because I think the sea air and bathing will be beneficial to you; and the quiet seclusion of the place is one of its greatest advantages in your present state. Mr. Dinsmore told me yesterday of a farm-

house in Carrhaven where he and his family are going to spend the next two months. He says I can secure a large, sunny room for you and Daisy in this house, which is so near the sea one can hear the waves break upon the beach; and he says he will warrant you the best of country fare. I'm afraid you've never looked at Carrhaven with an artist's eye; it has a beautifully curved beach, and some really grand cliffs; and its old farms, and orchards, and pine groves, and sloping hills make it as lovely a bit of coast as can be found in New England."

"You know I detest sea-bathing; and as for the air, I get enough of damp, easterly sea-breezes in Hanthrop. Too much quiet mopes me to death; and just think, for a moment, of my being cooped up in a farm-house with no society but Diantha and Mr. Dinsmore's family for two months! You might as well send me to the penitentiary as oblige me to listen to Mr. Dinsmore's stale talk out of the pulpit; and his wife is as prim and puritanic as if she'd just stepped out of the 'May Flower.' I need bright, cheerful surroundings; and if you had allowed me to see more pleasant company for the last month, I might have been ready to start for Saratoga as soon as next Monday. The mineral waters always strengthen me, and give tone to my spirits; and there's nothing so good for my delicate lungs as the odor of the pines and evergreens which abound at Saratoga. Dr. Lovering has often told me the air of a pine-growing region was the best tonic in the world for me."

When the doctor's professional opinions differed from his wife's, she strengthened her position by quotations from Dr. Lovering, her first husband's medical adviser.

"I should think favorably of the air and the mineral waters of Saratoga if you could enjoy them without getting drawn into the whirlpool of fashionable society. This

sickness of yours is the fruit of your winter gayeties; your nervous system has been strained and overtaxed so long that you will require at least two months of quiet, and Carrhaven affords the best facilities for recuperation. You will have the aromatic odor of the pines, and sea-bathing will more than compensate for the loss of the mineral waters. I propose to keep the horse and buggy there for your daily use; and when 'tis warm and sunny, Daisy can drive you to the pine groves, and read to you while you sit and enjoy their fragrance; and then I will manage my practice so as to spend at least two days of every week with you."

"You don't understand me, Stephen," said his lady, in a tone intended to be particularly pathetic, while her eyes required the service of a dainty kerchief: the real distresses of humanity had never so much power over the fountain of her tears as her own imaginary griefs had. "I must have a change that will interest me, and turn my thoughts into new channels, or I shall never get well. All my friends will be at Saratoga; and if I don't join them, as I promised to, they'll think we can't afford the expense, especially when they hear I am mewed up in a farm-house at Carrhaven, with no society but a minister's family."

"Your friends can be told the truth — that your husband thinks sea-bathing and quiet more necessary for you than mineral waters and fashion; and then, if they choose to infer there are pecuniary objections to spending the summer in Saratoga, we need not be troubled about their inferences."

"You and Di can act as independently as you choose; but I'm so sensitive, the slightest breath of harsh criticism just withers me. I've told you what is necessary to my health and happiness; and now, if you withhold from me all aids to recovery, I shall know what your desire is.

When you see the grass growing over my grave, it may not be pleasant to remember your neglect of my wishes."

Mrs. Howell sobbed behind her handkerchief for several minutes, while the doctor, in thoughtful silence, was trying to decide what was best for his wife in her present unreasoning mood. To insist upon her going to Carrhaven, or to any other quiet place, when she had set her heart upon Saratoga, would keep her so disturbed and unhappy that she could reap no benefit from sea-bathing or country fare, and he hoped the medicinal virtues of the fashionable watering-place might counteract its dissipations. Neither her temper nor her health would be improved by thwarting her desires, and Dr. Howell was always ready to tax his purse and his energies to their utmost to provide his wife with those luxuries which she deemed essential, and to avoid her oft-repeated lamentations over the loss of any coveted pleasure. If there was a prophecy of yielding to her whims in his next words, it should not be charged to the doctor as a weakness, but rather as a generous choice between two evils, and a choice that involved much self-sacrifice on his part, not only of opinion, but of money which had been set apart for charitable purposes.

"You are not able to superintend preparations for a stay of two months in Saratoga, Mary."

The tone, rather than the words, brought Mrs. Howell's face from behind its shield, and with an animation which had been foreign to her for the last month, she exclaimed, —

"Thank fortune, I've little or nothing to do. I had several handsome dresses before Lou was married, and when I went to New York to see her off, I was anticipating a summer trip, and bought every necessary article to complete my wardrobe, and Madame Lavitte has finished my dresses in her most artistic style. I can lie on the sofa, and

Di can bring everything to this room with Edna's help, and pack my trunks without the raising of my own hand. And then I can take the steamer to New York, and from there a Hudson River sail to Albany will be charming, and won't fatigue me half so much as the dreary monotony of this room does. You can leave your business long enough to escort me to Saratoga?"

"I shall go with you and see you comfortably settled there, if you feel certain Saratoga is the best place for you."

"I'm sure I shall never get well unless I can have the tonic of those Springs, and the air, and then the delightful people I shall meet will do me more good than all the rest. By the way, Stephen, you owe me a liberal indulgence of my wishes, because I've yielded to you and Di, and allowed Edna Shreve to stay here six months."

"I have hoped you would grow so fond of the child, Mary, that it would be as much for your pleasure as for mine to adopt her."

"She's pretty, and graceful, and intelligent, and I'm willing to admit she's shown herself so capable since I've been sick, that I've sometimes thought, if Di should be married in the course of a year or two, Edna might be made useful in the family. She could read and write for us both, and help entertain company with her music; she has really a sweet voice, if it were only cultivated."

The doctor leaned forward and kissed his wife, in token of his grateful appreciation of the concessions she had made; and probably for a minute he forgot that selfish policy moulded every act of her life.

"Don't take it for granted that I shall ever consent to your adopting Edna; but I'll say this much to please you and Di: if the child makes herself useful, and puts on no airs, I won't object to her staying with us through the

autumn and winter; and then, if Di should marry, it may be for our convenience to keep Edna until Captain Ashmead can provide for her. She must go to his sister's to spend the summer."

"What are your plans for Daisy?"

"I am not quite certain what will be best for Di. The dear girl really deserves some change and recreation; but she would be sadly out of place amongst the friends I shall join at Saratoga. It would be pleasant for me to introduce her there if she only had as much style as Lou; but it would cost a mint of money to make her wardrobe presentable for any fashionable resort; and then she would take no interest in the gayeties. I believe she's happiest when she is copying for you, or looking after the wants of poor people. If Mrs. Metcalf and her son were going to Saratoga, I'd make any sacrifice for the sake of taking her there with me. They are both very much interested in Di, and I think Horace's attentions look as if he means to make her his wife, though possibly he's only flirting with her to pique Lou, and to hide his own disappointment."

"You surprise me, Mary, by intimating that Horace Metcalf's attentions are more than the common courtesies of friendship; and it would shock me to think Louise could be piqued by the transfer of his attentions, or that Horace would have so little principle as to flirt. He's not the man I should choose for my Daisy, though I believe him to be honest and well-educated."

"You are blind as a bat, doctor, to every interest outside of your profession. The common courtesies of friendship don't bring a young man to the house every day in the week with flowers, and books, and music, and invitations to ride, and don't cause him to look, while a girl is singing or talking, as if he were in the seventh heaven. Pray tell me what you'd ask for Di more honorable and eligible than a connection with the Metcalf family."

"I don't object to the family, nor to the young man, if he's Daisy's choice, though I don't covet the honor of such an alliance for our daughter. But you are getting excited, Mary, and we'll drop this subject for to-night. I'll arrange a summer trip for Daisy; perhaps she would like to spend a month with the Dinsmores, at Carrhaven, and, if so, I shall send Stephen there for his holidays."

"That will be a delightful arrangement, and will relieve me of all anxiety about the dear children. Di and Stephen will enjoy the boating and bathing, the country fare and the society of the Dinsmores, better than anything else. I've no doubt I shall gain so rapidly, now there's such a load of care lifted from my mind, that I can travel to Saratoga in a week or ten days from this."

And, forsooth, the lady's progress from a state of interesting convalescence to the resplendent glories of full dress and the parlors of Congress Hall was marvelously rapid. As soon as the doctor's consent to her pet plans was gained, she had an object in life; and the excitement of overlooking her handsome wardrobe, and the careful disposition of it in immense trunks, were, to use her own felicitous mode of expression, "better than drugs for both mind and body, and similar in their effects to the overture of a charming opera."

The sail to New York and up the Hudson was, to Mrs. Howell, only the bridge from the stale routine of home to the full fruition of her present aspirations; and to weary herself by looking at the picturesque panorama of the river's shore would only unfit her for the grand performance which awaited her journey's end.

Arriving at Congress Hall, and finding only a small room, twelve by fourteen feet in size, in the rear of the building, could be obtained, the doctor ventured to suggest that board in a private house, where the effect of the

aromatic odors and medicinal waters should not be counteracted by the confusion and inconveniences of the hotel, would be vastly better for his lady; but no, she came to the Springs to partake of the waters and to inhale the breath of the pines in the conventional mode. Mrs. Ralph, the Mintwells, and Hapgoods were at Congress Hall, and only there could she recover that physical strength and elasticity of spirits which she was seeking for "the dear children's sake."

And when the doctor protested against the stifled aspect of the room, its cheap furniture, suggestive odors, and exorbitant price, Mrs. Howell replied, with an heroic spirit of resignation, —

"One never expects to find home comforts in a summer hotel; and as the ladies all spend their time in the parlor and on the piazza, it doesn't signify what kind of a room I occupy: you know I am always ready to make sacrifices."

And when the doctor left his wife to the enjoyment of her sacrifices, she might have said, —

**"Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer."**

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONNECTING LINKS.

“ I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men ;
The angel wrote, and vanished.”

“ The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.”

JOB.

“DAISY, have you seen Mrs. Atwood since I went away?” the doctor asked, on the evening of his return from Saratoga.

“No; and I've scarcely spoken with her since mamma was taken ill, and I've not been to the prison for more than a month. Mrs. Jenks has been in so much trouble since the day you left that I've given her nearly all my time. Her poor little cripple died in my arms yesterday, and the mother is so overcome with grief as to be almost insensible to the wants of her family. Mr. Jenks is worse than usual, the baby is sick, and Bessie and Mary can only work under my direction.”

“I'm sorry this should occur in my absence; but we ought to rejoice that Susie is released from suffering. She would always have been a cripple and imbecile, had she lived. The poor mother's love has been given without stint to this unfortunate child, and now her heart takes no counsel with reason in her sorrow. Has there been no one to help the family in this crisis but yourself?”

“Miss Wheeler has done all she could; but Mrs. Metcalf left town before this new trouble came upon the Jenkses. I’ve missed her advice and the contents of her purse.”

“You’ve been having too much care and responsibility, Daisy, for the last six weeks, and I’ve seen no way to relieve you from it until now. I shall take Edna to Hollyville on Monday, and you and Stephen must go to Carrhaven in the evening boat.”

“I should be glad and grateful for the rest and change if I could keep Edna with me, and if you could leave your patients only half of each week, and enjoy the sea-shore with us.”

“I’ll break away from work as often as possible; and as Carrhaven is but four hours’ sail from town, I shall spend all my leisure there. ’Tis better for Edna to go into the country. She’s had enough of the sea during the last year; and then I have other reasons for wishing her to spend the summer with Captain Ashmead’s relatives. But to return to Mrs. Atwood. Have you heard there is a prospect of her going to San Francisco with the Pomeroy’s?”

“Indeed, no! How can she go so far from Lewis?”

“I’ve a long story to tell you, Daisy. You know how necessary Mrs. Atwood has become to the Pomeroy family, and how interested she is in them. Well, some time last May, Mr. Pomeroy told me he had a large business in San Francisco, and it would be decidedly for his interest to settle there, but his wife’s invalid state made such a removal impossible, he thought; and as he would be obliged to spend the coming winter there, he was regretting the necessity for a separation from his family. I told him the sea voyage and the change of climate would be beneficial to his wife; and when I represented to her all the

advantages of a residence in San Francisco, she was quite willing to go, if Mrs. Atwood could be induced to accompany them, as companion for her and governess for the children; but, of course, Mrs. Atwood could not think of leaving Lewis, when she had come to Hanthrop purposely to be near him. Mr. Pomeroy has been a prison inspector for the last year, and had become interested in Lewis; and he proposed, if by any means we could secure the young man's pardon and release, to take him to San Francisco, and keep him in his employ and in his family, until his strength and integrity had been tested. Then I went to the governor, and laid Lewis's case before him, and the prison chaplain, the warden, Mr. Pomeroy, and I have been working hard since May to secure a pardon for the poor boy. Only the day before I went to Saratoga, the governor gave me a conditional promise that Lewis should be pardoned when one year of his sentence had been served. That will be in November, and much depends on Lewis's behavior during these months of probation."

"I'm sure he must do well with such a hope to cheer and prompt him. I've had great confidence in his repentance, and in his desire to redeem his character."

"But Lewis *knows* nothing of what we've been doing for him, and is not to have the prospect of pardon held up as an incentive to good behavior. However, there seems such a genuine change in him, he is so quiet, studious, and faithful in his work, that I have scarcely a fear for him. It will be well for you to encourage him with as much attention as you can. The last time I saw him, he told me, with many tears, that his mother's devotion to him, your kindness, and my care had given him confidence to think God had pardoned him."

"The Master's rewards are very sweet and precious, even in this life, dear father," Diantha said, raising the

doctor's hand to her lips, and then holding it against her flushed and tear-stained cheek in a way peculiar to herself, when reverence, gratitude, or any deep emotion overcame her. "Tell me how Mrs. Atwood bears the great hope."

"She seems a new creature. I believe, if such a joy had come to her suddenly, it would have proved too much for her strength; and her gratitude to us is beyond expression or measure. She has no doubts or fears for Lewis, if he can be removed where his crime and punishment are unknown. You must visit the prison before going to Carrhaven."

"Yes. Little Susie will be buried in the morning, and by two o'clock I can be released from my attendance there; and I'll take Edna with me, and leave her with Mrs. Atwood while I go to the prison."

Diantha had more reasons for wishing to spend a few weeks in Carrhaven than she could have explained satisfactorily to her father.

First of all, she rejoiced to have Stephen where he would be chiefly dependent on her for society, and on rational and healthful out-of-door pursuits for amusement. His nature was so unsuspecting and pliant, he was so buoyant, and so fond of the sports of college life, that his wise and cautious sister feared he was losing the power to discriminate between wholesome recreation and those dissipations which are the highways to positive vice. Her fears for Stephen were somewhat shadowy and undefined, and desiring to keep her father's mind as clear from perplexing thoughts as possible, she had not shared them with him. Mrs. Howell had been too much preoccupied with self to notice any change in the boisterous mirth of her son's weekly visits.

And then, for once, Diantha was so considerate of her

own happiness as to be glad of an excuse for a short absence from Hanthrop. Since the St. Mark's festival, the attentions of Horace Metcalf had been tinged with a meaning which she could not fail to comprehend; and she intuitively felt that to avoid giving him the pain and humiliation of a refusal would require of her much tact and a gracious wisdom born of Christian charity. To retain his friendship would be agreeable to her, and to refuse a direct offer of marriage from him, she knew, would not only involve her mother's severest displeasure, but the loss of her friendly relations with Mrs. Metcalf. She dared not go to her father for counsel in this emergency, though a rare intimacy and harmony of feeling existed between them; for she feared, in this strait between two evils, his influence would be thrown on the side of one who could offer her an honorable name, an ample fortune, and a home in Hanthrop. Not that she suspected her father's choice would be governed by worldly considerations; but she knew he had a high regard for the moral excellences of Horace Metcalf, and his great love for her would make him almost selfishly desirous of keeping her near him, and placing her in a position where her influence and her ability to help others would be broadened and deepened. She knew her father was deeply interested in Captain Ashmead, but that gentleman's uncertain fortunes would weigh heavily against his virtues, even when the balances were held by a mind as clear, generous, and unselfish in its judgments as was Dr. Howell's. Horace Metcalf was not more than five years Diantha's senior; polished and courtly in demeanor, well read in polite literature and history; consistently true and pure, so far as the world could take cognizance of his acts; strictly observant of the letter of the law; yet he lacked the "one thing needful" — a high-toned religious principle.

Captain Ashmead had little of that outward polish which often conceals the lack of intellectual strength, was not as familiar with general literature as his rival, and knew less of those topics which are the warp and woof of conversation in polite society. He had, moreover, the misfortune to limp upon a cork limb, was twelve years older than Diantha, had no fortune and no settled vocation, and had never said in words she was the one woman whom he could love, cherish, and honor; yet in the maiden's heart

"Love had nought to do
With meetness or unmeetness."

She recognized in him a master, and in his character that moral excellence, religious principle, and manly strength which are the fruits of victory over self—of temptations and obstacles met and mastered.

Truly, Diantha's feet had crossed the brook and entered the strong, deep river; but if its tide carried beyond her grasp many coveted joys, and bore to her only withered leaves when she had looked for golden fruitage, yet she was one who would carry through life a spring-time freshness and perfume, and her quiet heart would accept unquestioningly whatever discipline of trial, temptation, and disappointment God chastened it with.

Before Diantha went to Carrhaven, Dr. Howell took Edna Shreve to Captain Ashmead's relatives in Hollyville; and though he had but one day to spend with the occupants of the parsonage, he was more than satisfied, at its close, to leave his little ward in such charge. True refinement and intelligence without ostentation characterized the elderly Mrs. Ashmead and her daughter. The minister, Rev. William Osborne, was one of those scholarly, hard-working, self-denying men whose real worth, because of his modesty and reticence, would never be rewarded with

a large salary; but he labored cheerfully in the Master's vineyard, not for that scanty pittance which afforded himself and family only the plainest food and clothing, but because he loved the truth, and was willing to sacrifice all worldly considerations for it. Dr. Howell felt, while communing with the minister and his family, as if he were in an atmosphere far above the petty rivalries, frivolities, and dross of common life. He parted from them richer for the wisdom which had dropped from the clergyman's lips, and happier for the glimpse of unpretending but contented home-life he had seen; in fine, so well pleased with the plain country home and the majestic scenery, as to promise a visit from himself and Diantha before the fading of Hollyville's summer glories.

Edna Shreve, notwithstanding her shrinking timidity, was quite as much at home in the parsonage before the close of her first week's stay, as she was in Dr. Howell's family; she learned to call Mrs. Osborne aunt Elinor, and very quickly acquainted her new relative with all her reasons for admiring Captain Ashmead and loving Miss Howell.

She found Mrs. Osborne an attentive listener whenever Diantha's excellences were the theme of conversation, while the little Osbornes never wearied of her stock of childish stories, and her reminiscences of the little girl who was buried under the cypress tree in Smyrna.

The minister introduced her into the brown farm-houses which dotted the hills and meadows, aunt Elinor made her useful in the kitchen and with her needle, and Mrs. Ashmead taught her knitting and lace-work; and no wonder Edna thought, if all the people in the world were like those whom she had met since the wreck of the *Stella* left her homeless and friendless, it would be pleasant to live.

And while Edna Shreve is gaining strength and buoy-

aney from the pure country air, and the simple pleasures which her new friends provide her with; while Diantha and Stephen are rowing, and riding, and walking to all points of interest in and around Carrhaven; and the doctor unweariedly crosses those thresholds where sickness and poverty have preceded him, — Mrs. Howell's cup is overflowing with the delights of appearing in full dress every day, and her intellect and heart are becoming more shrivelled and callous, with only such sustenance as she gathers from the particularly gay Saratoga season. For example, she asks of Mrs. Goodenow, in a whisper, as the two matrons sit in a favorable position for watching the dancers, —

“Is that a *real* lace flounce on that buff glacé silk?”

Mrs. Goodenow's eye-glass is called into service before replying.

“Certainly; the Hartshorns of Baltimore never wear imitation laces. That flounce cost, at least, three hundred dollars; and look at her pearls — they're fit for a princess! She's engaged to that gentleman in uniform, Major Bickford. He's terribly dissipated; but he has an elegant figure, and is in the best society.”

“Hortense is lovely in her blue grenadine, and she's the most graceful dancer on the floor. Who's her partner?”

“Theodore Mintwell. He's very devoted to her, and would be a good match; but I don't want to see her engaged until after we've brought her out in Paris. American girls, if they are rich, handsome, and stylish, stand a good chance of marrying titles on the continent.”

“Hortense is stylish enough for any position. See what a horrible combination of colors on that pale brunette! a bright buff silk, with green trimmings and coral ornaments!”

“Not quite so loud, Mary; we may be overheard. She's a Spanish heiress, from Havana; and they say there's no

end to her dresses and jewels. She's a little fast, but very stylish and popular, and I'm half crazy for an introduction."

At this point Mrs. Hapgood came up, and a new turn was given to the flow of words—one could not say to the thought nor to the conversation, for these articles were used as sparingly in Saratoga as if frequent use would diminish the stock. This lady's husband, the Hon. Carlos Hapgood, had been sent to Congress by the citizens of New York, and had been so fortunate as to secure a government contract; therefore there was no question about Mrs. Hapgood's pretensions to fashion, or her right to wear diamond-eyed beetles in her hair, a golden serpent with emerald eyes and tongue coiled around her delicate wrist, and diamonds and emeralds swinging in her ears, and flashing on her white hands.

"You go to the races, of course, Mrs. Goodenow?" asked the owner of the jewels; and then, without waiting for a reply, she continued:—

"I've bet on Donna Maria; she's sure to win; steps out as clean and spiritedly as if she knew how many ladies had staked their fans, and rings, and costly knickknacks on her good behavior. The General is a heavy-limbed beast, only fit for a cavalry charge, and the Duchess broke last week into a decided gallop, at least three times. I shall be vexed enough to pinch Donna Maria's pretty ears, if she don't win for me the emerald that sparkles on Major Bickford's left hand, and a box of Paris kids, from Barton Oliver, and Stewart's best point lace collar, from that jolly old Cuban, who bets at hap-hazard, without knowing anything more about horses than I know about Hebrew."

The lady was so amused with the aptness of her allusion to the Oriental language, that Mrs. Goodenow found space to say,—

"I lost on the Duchess last week three stakes, and I've no courage left for betting."

"You are the last lady who should mind a few losses. Doesn't everybody know Ralph Goodenow is made of money? And there's such fun, such excitement, in betting! The races are the real life at Saratoga this summer. Do you bet on Donna Maria, Mrs. Howell?"

"I haven't been strong enough to go to the races yet, and I won't make a venture till I've seen the horses trot. I shall go on Wednesday."

And with little variation the talk veered from the races to the ladies' toilets, from the worth of jewels to the last bit of gossip; and cards, billiards, dancing, and dressing filled up the days and nights. This is not an exaggerated picture of that gilded life called fashionable, which tempts men to speculate, embezzle, forge, and procure money at all hazards, for the sake of revolving within the charmed circle.

"Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

CARRHAVEN.

“She is most fair, and thereunto
 Her life doth rightly harmonize;
 Feeling or thought that was not true
 Ne'er made less beautiful the blue,
 Unclouded heaven of her eyes.”

LOWELL.

A MIDSUMMER'S sun shone upon Carrhaven; the sultry breath of the day seemed laden with narcotic power; the cattle stood knee-deep in brooks, or lay in the shadows of the maples. Only the shiver of aspen leaves whispered of life and motion in the vegetable world, while the click and hum of insect life fell harshly on the universal hush. Even the restless waves of the Sound seemed strangely benumbed as they broke in lazy ripples on the hot sands of the beach.

“Come, Di; get your hat and Tennyson's Poems, and we'll be off in the Mermaid. This heat is intolerable, and I dare say there's a stiff breeze not a mile from shore; we'll drift out with the tide; and while I use the oars, you shall read the Princess.”

The brother and sister were sitting under a thick-leaved tree, whose branches swept against the brown farm-house where they were domiciled, and Diantha had just closed the book from which she had been reading aloud.

“O, Stephen, you are not serious! This is Sunday.”

“Of course it is, or I shouldn't have listened to your long

sermon; but as I have conquered my prejudices, so must you. There's a passage floating in my memory something like this: 'It is lawful to do well on the Sabbath day.' Your religion don't forbid acts of mercy on this day, and you may consider me a sheep fallen into the pit. I'm certainly in the Slough of Despond, and your reading of the Princess may help me out."

"Please never misapply passages from the Bible, dear brother, to strengthen you in what your conscience tells you is wrong. I can't go out boating, and I can't read the Princess, to-day; but I'll go with you to a shady nook, where we can get the fresh breeze from the sea, and I'll read such selections from Whittier, and Mrs. Browning, and Peter Bayne's Essays, as will interest and profit you, too."

"And what if I don't want to be interested and profited, but simply amused, while the dog-star rules? If you can't break away from your puritanic platform just for this once, I know of some one who'll be glad enough to share the Mermaid with me, and read Tennyson's Princess, too."

"You wouldn't have spoken so disrespectfully of conscientious scruples two years ago."

"May be not; but of what use is a college course if it don't lift a fellow out of the stereotyped and narrow channels of thought, and clear his vision from the cobwebs of early prejudice? The fact is, Di, you don't think enough for yourself. You are so trustful, and obedient, and pious, you just accept father's faith without investigation, forgetting that the world has made progress in religion as well as in science during the last twenty-five years."

"I want no more recent revelations of truth than have been our dear father's beacon. There can be given us no higher, purer, or safer principles than those taught by our Saviour, and we are expressly forbidden to add to or to

take away from the book upon which God's holy seal has been set."

"O, the book is well enough, Di, and, I've no doubt, contains the best moral code that has ever been given the world; but new light has been thrown upon old truths, and altogether a more liberal interpretation of the Christian law prevails. I didn't intend to throw contempt upon my father's faith. I believe if there's an honest man living, 'tis Dr. Howell. So don't look so solemn, Di. I mean to keep my eyes open, and have intelligent, well-grounded beliefs. When I get what you call religion, it must have the sanction of my intellect."

"God grant it may purify and sanctify not only your intellect, but your heart."

"That was piously said — one of Diana's keenest shots. And now, as the goddess won't condescend to share the pastimes of mortals, I'll go over to the hotel, and ask Horace Metcalf to lend the music of his voice to the dipping of my oars."

"Do you mean to say Horace Metcalf is in Carrhaven?"

"Just that. I saw him in excellent condition last evening, dutifully assisting his mother to carry her parasol and satchel from the pier to the hotel, and I had the honor of extending to them the right hand of fellowship, and welcoming them to this rock-bound coast and dog-day sun. They inquired for Diana, and sent her their worshipful salutations. Will the presence of a gallant young knight in the Mermaid tempt you to drift out upon the summer sea?"

"Now that you are registered for your junior year, Stephen, do throw away your sophomoric superfluities and quotations. Affectation in men seems more puerile than in women. You know Horace Metcalf's presence in the Mermaid will not alter my decision. What brought him to Carrhaven?"

“Seeing him alight from the deck of the Cohasset, I logically inferred she had the honor of bringing him, backed, doubtless, by his mother’s watchful provision for his health. I wonder if there isn’t a golden mean somewhere between Mrs. Metcalf’s devotion to her son and our mother’s devotion to dress. Now, Horace would be wonderfully improved and strengthened, in my opinion, if left for a time to govern himself, while a little judicious pruning from a mother’s hand might be useful to me.”

“You’re in the strangest mood, Stephen; don’t think nor speak disrespectfully of mamma. And now let me persuade you not to go out in the Mermaid to-day. I’ve been out boating with you every day since we came to Carrhaven; not because I like the water, — for I’m always timid in a sail-boat, — but because I hoped my reading and talking helped make your holidays agreeable. Now, if I share your sports six days in the week, won’t you help me spend the seventh in such a way that we shall have no regrets nor misgivings?”

“We’ve only been here five days; therefore this is the sixth. I will make no promises for to-morrow, but let that take care for itself. Good by, my little Puritan.”

Diantha carried a troubled heart up to her chamber, which overlooked the waters of the Sound, fruit-laden orchards, fields of ripening grain, and green hills, against whose sides old farm-houses nestled with an air of comfortable repose, as if sure of Nature’s sustenance and protection; and while she gazed upon the summer’s beauty and promise, the soft hush of the country Sabbath fell upon her spirit, and she sang, “Trust in the Lord; wait patiently for Him.” The last note of the anthem had scarcely floated from her tongue when Mrs. Metcalf’s arm was thrown around her, and her face was drawn where it could receive that lady’s caress.

“Your good hostess told me you were in the front chamber, and your voice guided me. I shall make no excuses for this Sabbath visit, because I have come to ask you to go into Nature’s grand cathedral, and worship with me. Horace and Stephen have gone out in the boat. Haven’t you found some place where we can read, and talk, and enjoy the sea-air unobserved?”

“I know of one charming little nook where we can be sheltered from the sun, and get the breeze from the water. I wanted Stephen to go there to-day, but he’s wedded to his boat.” Diantha took up her hat and books, and prepared to show Mrs. Metcalf the sheltered nook. “Do you mind a long walk?” she asked; and her friend noticed the slight tremor of troubled thought that clung to her voice.

“I’m a good walker, but I don’t crave a long exposure to this merciless sun. Stop a minute, Daisy. I may use your father’s pet name for you, may I not?”

“If it pleases you, certainly,” Diantha answered, with heightened color.

“You are vexed about something; is it because Horace and Stephen have consulted their own pleasure instead of ours?”

“I’ve been so sorry for Stephen to spend his Sabbath in such a way as would displease father;” and in the clear eyes upraised to Mrs. Metcalf’s there could be read no other annoyance.

“Then forget it, my dear, and remember, when there’s no church service in a place like this, young men must have some way to kill time; and boating is a quiet, harmless amusement. You haven’t asked why we altered our plans, and came to Carrhaven,” Mrs. Metcalf added, as they took the worn footpath through the orchard, leading to some high rocks nearly a half mile from the farm-house.

“I was sure you would tell me if you wished me to know.”

“You haven’t as much curiosity as our sex are credited with, and I like your quiet trustfulness. Most girls nowadays seem so restless, so wanting in self-reliance and in mental resources for enjoyment, so eager for novelties and excitements, that I sometimes think they mistake the glitter and rustle of life’s husks for the golden kernel. ’Tis refreshing to meet a girl who seems unconscious of her own claims, who lives for some purpose, and who doesn’t appear to regard the world as created expressly for her own gratification. But now for my changed plans. We went to the mountains, expecting to meet some friends from the South; but disappointment met us instead at every stopping-place. The season has been so dry that where cascades and brooks fell and rippled last year, now only a tiny thread of water tells of former abundance and beauty, and in many places the beds of streams were dry. Parched and brown hill-sides, clouds of dust, and hosts of caterpillars, hotels crowded with a throng of restless, vulgar, purse-proud guests, robbed the mountain scenery of its glory, and made us thirsty for the sea. And hearing you were at Carrhaven, and wishing to become acquainted with this picturesque coast, we have dropped anchor here for a few days. Are we welcome?”

At this moment a turn in the orchard path brought them in full view of the Sound, and pointing to its glittering waves, Diantha asked, —

“Isn’t there a welcome for all who seek refreshment and peace? But look; do you see that one solitary white speck? That is the sail of Stephen’s Mermaid; and if you were not always a congenial friend to me, I should welcome you for the society you have brought my brother. I don’t understand his present restless mood. It fills me with anxiety.”

Mrs. Metcalf was not quite satisfied with Diantha’s

answer; and yet it was impossible to feel displeased with the calm face and pure eyes looking wistfully towards the solitary sail. "If she lacks enthusiasm," thought the elder lady, as they walked in silence along the narrow, rocky path, "compensation is made in the purity, delicacy, and tenderness of her nature, and in her constant thought for others."

"This is the place," said Diantha, pointing to a rustic seat, overhung with shelving rocks, and protected from the sun by the friendly shade of clematis vines, elder bushes, and a wild cherry tree which found sustenance in the scanty soil upon the rocks, several feet above high tide. Only the sea was visible from this covert.

"How lovely and deliciously cool! What a place for day-dreams and the reading of poetry!" exclaimed Mrs. Metcalf; and after a few minutes of silent enjoyment she asked, "Have you anything to read which will be in harmony with the spirit of the day?"

"I had selected an article on 'Howard and the Rise of Philanthropy' to read before I knew you were to share my pleasures to-day. If we don't find it in harmony with our mood, we'll try something else."

There was no lack of enthusiastic interest in Diantha's voice and face as she read; none in her words when some sentiment of the author roused her to discuss his merits.

"Please read that last sentence again, Daisy," asked Mrs. Metcalf; and with a delicately fitful color in her face Diantha read, —

"Love has a thousand modes and forms, all of which may be consistent with reality and truth. It may come like the burst of morning light, kindling the whole soul into new life and radiance. It may grow inaudibly and unknown, until its roots are found to be through and through the heart, entwined with its every fibre."

“I doubt if love can grow so silently as to become a part of one’s nature before its voice is heard and recognized,” said Mrs. Metcalf. “It certainly came to me like a sudden burst of light.—not only my great human love, but the Christian’s faith, hope, and charity were sudden revelations to me. Do you accept the author’s statement, Daisy?”

“Mamma says a girl of twenty should know nothing about love,” Daisy answered, with an evasive smile and blush; and then, after a minute of eloquent silence, she added, “I think it would not be in harmony with my nature for love to transfigure it suddenly. My Christian faith was a silent growth, and not until two years after I had learned to pray that my heart might be purified for the indwelling of Christ’s spirit did I dare hope that His atonement extended to me;” and unwilling that her interior life should be drawn out even by her congenial friend, Diantha resumed the reading of the essay.

Its deep interest for both ladies, and their frequent pauses for comment, made them unmindful of the lapsing hours; and in their sheltered nook they could not see a dark cloud with a white, broken, and ominous crest slowly creeping up from the western horizon. The sunlight still bathed the shimmering sea, when a loud peal of thunder, followed by a rushing current of wind, brought the reading to a sudden close; and both ladies ran from their covert up the rocky path, until a wide stretch of sea and sky could be seen. They had scarcely time to scan the heavens, and read the alarm in each other’s face, when a more terrific peal burst upon them, and the gathering blackness of the clouds proclaimed the fast approaching storm.

“We must run to the farm-house!” exclaimed Mrs. Metcalf.

“Yes; but the boat! It cannot live an hour in such

a wind;" and Diantha, with blanched cheeks, turned towards the sea.

"It may be they saw the coming storm, and made for the harbor. We can't aid them by remaining here, and if we run to the hotel or farm, and do not find them, we can send strong men and boats to their assistance. 'Tis the only thing we can do."

"We can pray," said Diantha; and the maiden's clasped hands, trembling lips, and upraised eyes told of her agonizing fears, as well as her knowledge of our very Present Help.

Not half the distance from the rocky coast to the farm-house had been traversed by feet that scarcely touched the rugged path, so rapid was their flight, when the storm, in its wrath, broke upon them. Their summer wraps and cambric dresses were but a flimsy shield against the blinding sheets of mingled hail and rain. Slipping and stumbling upon the wet stones, rudely brushed by the swaying branches of the trees, often obliged to kneel upon the drenched earth with arms clasped around each other to recover sufficient breath to grapple with the storm, they at last stumbled, half-fainting, into the welcome shelter of the farm-house porch.

"Have they come? Is my brother here?" Diantha called, regardless of the exclamations of the farmer and his wife upon their torn and dripping clothes and pallid faces.

"We thought he was with you, and reckoned you had both found shelter in some neighbor's house," answered the farmer.

"He went out in the boat with this lady's son. Run to the hotel, please, and see if they are there."

No; the Mermaid had been seen drifting out upon the becalmed sea; but no glimpse of returning sail had been

caught, and the farmer affirmed that to go in search of the boat while the thunder storm raged would be only at the cost of his life, without hope of saving others.

“Don’t be worried about the boat,” said the farmer. “She is a light craft, and there are a dozen places within as many miles where she can be run in to the shore. The young men would, of course, see the first signs of the storm, and make for a landing. I’ll bet almost any sum they’ll turn up safe and sound within an hour after the storm passes over. The Lord have mercy on us! If that clap didn’t strike within fifty rods of this house, my name isn’t Abner Perry.”

All eyes were instinctively turned towards the windows; and lo! fallen athwart the orchard path lay the ruins of of an old cherry tree, rent from root to branch by the destroying angel of the storm.

There was nothing for the anxious mother and sister but to wait and watch the heavy clouds, the quivering tongues of flame, and the angry waves that tossed and glistened in the lurid light — nothing but to wait, watch, and pray!

CHAPTER XXV.

STEPHEN.

“So should we live that every hour
May die as dies the natural flower—
A self-reviving thing of power;

“That every thought and every deed
May hold within itself the seed
Of future good and future need.”

MILNES.

THE hours seemed long while the anxious mother and sister were waiting in suspense, racked with forebodings which each strove to conceal from the other. But at last the forked flames grew fainter, the crashing peals softened into distant mutterings, and then “God’s autograph” — His glorious bow of promise — spanned the heavy clouds. The gleams of sunshine and the rainbow would have brought joy and gladness to Mrs. Metcalf and Diantha, could they have known that in a fisherman’s cottage, some six miles distant, Horace and Stephen were watching the dying tempest. They had, as the farmer supposed, seen the approach of the storm, and were, fortunately, so near a cove, into which Stephen had run his boat the day before, that they made a landing without much difficulty. But, springing with characteristic fearlessness from his boat to the shore, Stephen’s foot slipped on the wet rocks, and a sprained ankle was the fruit of his impetuous haste. With the aid of his friend he reached a shelter, and waited in pain, and almost unbroken silence, until the storm had

passed, and Horace Metcalf had procured a horse and wagon to convey him to the farm-house.

The pain and swelling of his limb had increased so rapidly that the farmer's strong arms were needed to lift him from the wagon, and to carry him over the threshold he had crossed in such proud, defiant strength a few hours before.

"Thank God, they are safe!" Mrs. Metcalf exclaimed, with an overflow of tears, which her woman's patience and will had restrained while watching in anxiety and uncertainty.

"Of course we're safe. The rowing matches and gymnastic training of college boys would be of little use to us if we couldn't make our muscles serve in time of need. We saw the ominous clouds, hauled in our canvas, took to our oars, and landed in a snug little cove, while the sea and land were shuddering under the first peal of thunder," answered Horace Metcalf.

"I told you so," the farmer cried, exultingly, as he deposited his burden on a couch; "but what has happened to my lodger?" he asked.

"I think the lightning must have dazed him, for he missed his footing, and twisted his ankle."

"Only retributive justice; the penalty of Sabbath-breaking, Di, but not serious enough to steal the color from your face," Stephen said, in answer to the questions in Diantha's eyes.

The farmer and his wife and Mrs. Metcalf eagerly questioned the young men, who were both talking at once, making light of the accident, and laughing at the anxiety they had occasioned, while Diantha was removing the bandages with which the fisherman's wife had bound Stephen's swollen limb.

"You see Diana knows how to serve unfortunate mor-

tals. The accident has a purpose: she'd hardly feel at ease in Carrhaven without a broken limb to expend her sympathies on." Stephen's raillery was hardly checked by pain, which caused him to wince and groan, even, while protesting it was such a novel sensation, he was glad of the excitement.

"If father were only here!" Diantha sighed, while bathing the inflamed ankle.

"His face would be a cordial just now; but I shall do well enough with your care, Daisy: it's only a sprain, an awkward, uncomfortable thing, that will keep me on the sofa for a few days, and give you an excellent excuse for reading aloud all those precious sermons and essays that your trunk is filled with. But, Metcalf, I reckon the castles we built this morning have floated off on the wings of the storm."

"You'll take no longer excursions than to the shady piazza of this farm-house for the next ten days, I'll warrant," Metcalf replied; and then, turning to Diantha, he continued: "We had planned some long walks for the purpose of making botanical and geological researches; but we must content ourselves with this glorious sea-view, and such pleasures as we can gather from reading and conversation for the present;" and as the young man watched the ready service of Diantha's small hands, and the tender anxiety that alternately paled and flushed her face, he was quite reconciled to the accident which would give him an excuse for sharing her ministrations, and would gladly have been the sufferer for the sake of receiving such attentions as were bestowed on Stephen.

"Miss Howell, you must command my services at all hours; helping take care of your brother will be balm to my conscience, and the only recompense I can offer for my participation in his Sabbath-breaking. You will not look upon it as a very serious offence?"

“I dare not sit in judgment on the acts of others; the water certainly offered a great temptation to escape from the oppressive heat of this morning.”

“Thank you for the admission; Stephen and I will submit cheerfully to any penance you may impose, if we may receive absolution from you.”

“Make no promises for me, Metcalf; it will be penance enough to endure the pain; and I don’t promise to be cheerful or patient. Daisy will need as much skill and as many resources as the goddess whose name she bears, to make confinement to this couch even tolerable to me. And, by the way, if you haven’t an amusing novel or a chess-board along with you, I wish you’d send an order for them in the morning’s mail.”

“I shall write for father to come by the boat to-morrow, Stephen, and I’ll ask him to bring whatever may be needed.”

“Pooh! he’ll think of nothing but bandages and liniments, splinters and medical treatises as dry as Greek roots. I tell you I must be amused; and I shall be as exacting and unreasonable as if the accident had occurred on a week-day, and I had got maimed while performing an act of mercy for some of your miserable waifs.”

And in good sooth he was no false prophet—history, essays, poetry, novels, chess, and backgammon had almost lost their power of amusing before he was able to walk with the aid of a crutch.

Dr. Howell came to Carrhaven as soon as he received Diantha’s summons. He found Stephen’s ankle severely sprained, and the limb so inflamed and swollen, that rest and careful treatment would be necessary for many weeks. He wisely withheld all comment on the act which had been the immediate cause of the accident, and treated his son with more tenderness than if he had always shown

deference to his wishes and the strength to conquer temptation.

For Stephen's sake he did not particularly regret the accident, as he hoped the discipline of pain might have a beneficial influence on his character; but for the burden of care it brought to Diantha he sorely grieved.

"Stephen will not need the daily attendance of a physician, Daisy," Dr. Howell said, after explaining the nature of his son's injury, and teaching Diantha how to treat the ankle; "but it would be a great relief and comfort to me if I could see you both each day, and as I cannot, in justice to my patients, I must bury the wish, and content myself with coming to Carrhaven twice a week. I don't know how to relieve you from care and fatigue, and it seems very hard when I sent you here for rest and recreation. It would not be prudent to remove Stephen to the city in his present state, even if our house were open and your mother and the servants at home; and besides, I think his recovery will be more rapid here, and the bracing air will help you endure the fatigue of nursing him."

"I'm sure 'tis best for us to remain here, though at first I was sorry not to be at home, because I thought your anxiety would be greater if we were away from you. Please don't worry about us, father; you have given me the courage and confidence to believe I can take care of Stephen, and I shall have plenty of help. Mrs. Metcalf and her son are very attentive, and while they are amusing my patient I shall have time for exercise and rest."

"I bless God for such a courageous and helpful child, Daisy;" and the tears in Dr. Howell's eyes, and the kiss he left upon his daughter's lips, betrayed no lack of manliness.

Mrs. Howell wrote pattern letters, expressing admira-

tion of Diantha's strong nerves and ability to nurse her brother, mingled with regret that she, "the mother, whose natural prerogative it was to minister to her children, was so delicate and sensitive, that even thinking of her poor boy's sprained ankle caused palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, and other alarming symptoms, which could only be alleviated by copious draughts of the mineral waters."

Edna Shreve's letters contained many crumbs of comfort, besides her tenderly expressed love. Edna had seen Captain Ashmead; he had made a successful voyage to Cuba and back to New York, and while in port, waiting for a cargo, had found time to visit his relatives. He had brought a wonderful work-box to Edna, and a small package for Diantha, and presents for his mother and sister, and after a two days' visit had sailed again for Cuba.

Diantha's patience and courage were severely tested before the waning of the summer, and she needed all the sweet hope contained in Edna's guileless letters, all the aid and strength brought by her father's visits, Mrs. Metcalf's constant friendship, and Horace's devotion to the invalid.

Stephen was full of whims and caprices; sometimes jubilant for hours, and again irritable and despondent; sometimes so reverent and attentive while Diantha was singing and reading, that her heart was filled with happy confidence, only to be exchanged for trembling fear, when, a few hours later, Stephen would scoff at what she most revered, and treat as lightly and contemptuously the sacred truths of revelation as if they were the devices and imaginings of heathen philosophers. He had been a voracious reader during the two years of his college course; with the intent of knowing *what* to believe, he had crammed his brain with such plausible sophistry as the miscalled liberal

school of writers use to becloud and daze their own and their readers' intellects.

A pure, warm, life-giving faith — the soul's steadfast anchor — was lost in the cold bank of fog in which Stephen was wandering, and which served only to conceal the lack of thought and vitality in his favorite writers. He had not learned that misty, impalpable assertions, and a dogmatic stringing together of meaningless phrases, were often accepted as philosophical reasoning by those who were not honest enough to confess their inability to comprehend.

Dr. Howell was not ignorant of Stephen's unrest — his clouded vision, and his hungry craving for something which could not be found in speculative generalities; and in a quiet way he had endeavored to meet his doubts, and give him wholesome food for thought. But he knew little of Diantha's forbearance, and her wise treatment of Stephen's foibles, until one day, coming unexpectedly to Carrhaven, and hearing the voices of his children on the piazza, he paused in the thick shade of vines and shrubs to listen. It required but a few phrases of the earnest conversation to show the doctor that Diantha was bravely meeting Stephen's cavils, sowing seeds from which a harvest of high-souled deeds might spring; but the weariness in his daughter's voice caused him to mature a project suddenly, which he had been weighing for several days.

He came forward with his usual warm greeting. "Hard at work on stubborn soil, Daisy, I infer from the little I have overheard. You must remember, for your encouragement, that when ground requires deep ploughing, it makes a generous return for the labor expended."

Diantha laid her face against her father's shoulder to conceal her emotion and her weariness, and Stephen, roused at once to buoyancy and good humor by his

father's unexpected coming, seized his crutch and paraded up and down the piazza, to show off his returning strength.

"Not too fast, nor too far, my boy; sit down and listen to a plan of mine, which I think will be of service to you in many ways. You have heard me say before that a sprained ankle requires much time and rest for healing; now, as you will not be able to return to college during the fall term, how would you like a sea voyage?"

"Nothing would suit me better, if I could choose my companions, and visit such ports as I'd like to see."

"You mustn't crave impossibilities, and you must remember that in planning a sea voyage for you, I'm not thinking so much of your pleasure as your benefit. I have learned from the owners of the *Aurora* that Captain Ashmead will probably sail for the Mediterranean by the middle of September. His ship was spoken off Cape Hatteras several days ago, and doubtless she's now in New York harbor. The *Aurora* is a large merchantman, and Mr. Prime writes me that she usually carries three or four passengers; and on this trip she'll touch at several ports in Southern Europe, and return by way of Liverpool. Captain Ashmead is a thorough gentleman, and his conversation is always refreshing. I couldn't ask for a better companion for you."

Diantha's head still rested on her father's shoulder, so that the grateful gladness of her face was hidden, and Stephen, after a rare silence of perhaps two minutes, was the first to speak.

"The plan looks as promising as Ralph Goodenow's maps and charts. I'd like to see the ports of the Mediterranean, and I think Ashmead would be a jolly companion on a long voyage. If Metcalf could be persuaded to go along, I should want no better fun. However, I am ready

for the Aurora, or for anything you advise, that will bring change and excitement."

"If I didn't hope the voyage would assist you to a self-reliance, trust, and peace, which would make change and excitement unnecessary, I wouldn't favor it for a moment. Can you pack your trunk, and go home with me to-morrow, Daisy?"

"With the greatest pleasure; I long to take up home duties again."

"What will the Metcalfs say to your sudden flight, Diana? If you'll sail in the Aurora with your troublesome patient, Horace and his excellent mamma will find abundant excuses for a change of climate and sea voyage, and then I shall have no lack of agreeable society."

"Daisy is needed at home. Your mother expects to return next week, and I have two essays waiting to be copied, besides a host of little things which only her hands can do for me. You mustn't expect to monopolize your sister," Dr. Howell replied, as seriously as if he supposed Diantha might be tempted to sail with her brother.

And thus the little party in Carrhaven, whose acquaintance and friendship had grown and ripened by reason of Stephen's accident, went their different ways. Diantha returned to the home which borrowed brightness from her cheerful spirit, Stephen sailed in the Aurora, and Mrs. Metcalf and her son went to the Catskill Mountains for the month of September.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GOING ABROAD.

“The sea of Fortune doth not ever flow;
 She draws her favors to the lowest ebb:
 Her tides have equal times to come and go;
 Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web.”

SOUTHWELL.

“MARY, I have news from your investments.” Dr. Howell spoke with a seriousness that roused the eager attention of his handsomely dressed lady. It seemed almost a pity to disturb the complacent smile which rested on her face, and which had appeared indigenously to her nature since her return from Saratoga, nearly a week previous to the September day that now threw its mellow light as serenely on the old earth as if there were no ebbing of the tides in fancy stocks.

“Ralph said I should hear soon. Have you good news?” she asked; but the brightness faded from her face when she saw the answer written on her husband’s. Its grave displeasure made words unnecessary.

“Ralph Goodenow’s lawyer has written me a letter which will answer your question;” and the doctor read aloud the following concise statement:—

“NEW YORK, September 10, 18—.

“DEAR SIR: I am sorry to inform you that the Eureka copper mining stocks are now valueless in the market. The treasurer of the company, being unable to account for

about two hundred thousand dollars' worth of funds, absconded last week, and the agent, whom we sent out to inspect the claims, reports so many obstacles in the way of successful mining, that we have decided to abandon the project. You are doubtless aware that the quartz-crushing operations failed because of the unparalleled freshet on the Feather River.

"Hoping you and Mrs. Howell will suffer no inconvenience from the loss of her small investments, I remain,
Yours truly,

DANIEL LATHAM."

"Do you think that lawyer means to say I shall never receive any return for my four thousand dollars?"

"Nothing more nor less, Mary; and I have still another piece of news which will surprise you. Ralph Goodenow has failed, and to avoid the public odium of it, he sailed for Europe with his wife and daughter only two days after you left them in Saratoga. His affairs were managed so secretly that the worthlessness of his stocks was not known until after his departure."

"Gone to Europe! What can it mean? I parted from them only last Monday without a single hint of their going abroad before spring; and it was arranged between us that I should go with them to see my dear Lou. There must be some mistake. How did you learn the news?"

"From Mr. Dinsmore, who returned from New York to-day. He called at Latham's office yesterday, and learned all the particulars of Ralph's dishonest failure. There's no doubt but the defalcation of the treasurer is a patched-up story."

"You've always been ready to believe the very worst of Ralph; but, notwithstanding my losses, I have charity for

him, and am sincerely sorry for the family. Must they lose their elegant home on Montague Square?"

"O, no! Latham told Mr. Dinsmore it was a gift to Ralph's wife, when such a calamity as the failure of the Eureka and Feather River stocks could not have been foreseen; and, moreover, he has a large amount of property secured to each of his children."

"Thank Heaven, my Lou won't suffer on account of the failure; and the family won't be robbed by creditors of the luxuries that have become a necessity to them."

"Of course not! 'Tis exactly in keeping with Ralph's character to take himself and family away from the annoyances and disgrace of his failure. A man with the least particle of honor or honesty, when reverses came, would have remained at the helm, and shared the misfortunes of his creditors; but Ralph Goodenow can consume money, fraudulently obtained, on Parisian pleasures and frivolities; can remain abroad until his speculations and failures are forgotten, and then return to New York to make a greater parade of wealth and elegance than ever before. I tell you, Mary, my soul is sick with disgust when the knowledge of such meanness and perfidy comes to me."

"You needn't be so harsh in judging a man who hasn't injured you. The money he invested for me was my own, and I suppose you'll admit he might have been honest in thinking the investment safe."

"There's no such element as honesty in his character. How to control the largest amount of money, how to make the most ostentatious parade, are the only questions that occupy the empty chambers of his brain. Think for a moment of the numbers of honest, credulous people who have trusted to Ralph Goodenow's plausible representations, and have invested their hard-earned savings in his fancy stocks. Contrast their disappointments, their sacri-

fices, their distresses, with his luxurious living in Paris. One instance in our own city illustrates the folly of listening to speculators, or trusting to anything but honest endeavor and talent God can bless for a livelihood. Mr. Dinsmore, by careful economy, had saved five thousand dollars, which was invested in real estate. He listened to Ralph Goode-
now's glowing descriptions of California quartz-crushing, and sold his property at a great sacrifice for the sake of investing in Feather River stocks; and with tears in his eyes he said to me, 'My little fund that I had gathered with so much care for the purpose of educating my children is gone. If I should die to-morrow my family would be homeless and dependent.'

"Don't trouble me with other people's burdens, doctor; my own are greater than I can bear. Mr. Dinsmore's losses will make no difference in the dull, prosaic routine of duties which he and his family pursue, while the loss of my investments will oblige me to sacrifice tastes that are as essential to me as the air I breathe. I can't understand why Ralph should go to Europe without giving me notice, and inviting me to join his party. How could they have made preparations for such a journey in so short a time?"

"Very likely their plans were matured, and their preparations made, weeks ago; but to avoid suspicion and creditors, nothing was said about it."

"They might have told me. I could have kept their secrets; and they knew how I was longing for a sight of my child. My autumn and winter will be dreary enough with nothing to think about but the loss of my money and my cruel disappointment in not sailing with Ralph's family. My whole life seems to be made up of sacrifices!"

"Don't say so, Mary, when you've just enjoyed two months of such pleasure as you delight in. Has your

home no attractions, and have our daughter's intelligence and sweetness no charm for you? And think of Stephen's promise and Edna's loveliness. It seems to me you have blessings enough to make your life full and rich."

There was no reply to the doctor's questions and remarks; but an ominous raising of his lady's kerchief to her eyes delicately intimated that her sacrifices could not be appreciated by ordinary mortals. After a minute or two of thought and silence, the doctor spoke again.

"I didn't know you were expecting to go to Europe in company with Ralph's family; but knowing what I do about his disgraceful failure and his entire want of principle, I couldn't consent to your going abroad with them."

The handkerchief made a sudden descent.

"As if I'm not capable of choosing my own friends and pleasures! Thanks to my dear Arthur's provident love, I've still money enough, so that I can afford to visit his dear, fatherless child, and ask no favors of anybody. You admit that Ralph's failure will not deprive his family of their home, and such elegant surroundings as theirs will insure them admittance into the best society; and as for myself, give me my late husband's brother for a travelling companion, and I'll be satisfied. I've always wanted to go abroad; and especially since Lou's marriage I've hardly been able to control my wishes. Everybody, who has any claim to style or respectability nowadays, travels in Europe; but I haven't said much about my desires to you, knowing you were narrow in your ideas, and grudged every dollar spent for pleasure or the cultivation of taste."

"Mary, have I ever denied you any pleasure that could enrich your life or elevate your tastes when it came within the compass of my means?"

"O, you've done your duty, and have been generous enough when my tastes didn't clash with your prejudices

and your charities; but I've heard you speak so disparagingly of foreign travel that I didn't think it best to say much about my desire to go abroad until I saw my own way clear."

"I've never intended to disparage the culture, the diversion, and the many benefits which may arise from foreign travel; but 'tis the aimless and simply fashionable fitting of our American people that you've heard me condemn. The masses do not go in search of anything which can rouse worthy aspirations: without that knowledge of history or art which gives foreign travel its highest charm, they rush along indiscriminately with the tide, only confirming their habits of dissipation and extravagance; spending money lavishly on such articles as shall proclaim the fact that they've been in Paris, and imitating snob-bishness, which they mistake for true refinement. It has been one of my cherished hopes to earn the right to a long holiday, and to take you and Daisy with me to Europe, where we could improve our tastes by studying pictures, statuary, architecture, and scenery, and add to our future the charm and wealth of Old World memories and associations; but the family expenses have been so great during the past year that our holiday must be indefinitely postponed."

At this point the conversation was interrupted by callers, and not resumed again for many weeks. The domestic tide flowed and ebbed much as usual through the autumn. Mrs. Howell was apparently less disturbed by her losses than the doctor had supposed she would be; and if not more reconciled to her separation from Louise, she certainly said less about it—perhaps because she had found a subject sufficiently novel and exciting to interest her thoughts and engross her time. She was engaged in getting up a fair for the benefit of the Orphans' Home. It

was an enterprise under the especial patronage of Mrs. Metcalf, and therefore a fashionable charity, in which Mrs. Howell could afford to show a becoming interest. Riding with Mrs. Metcalf in a handsome carriage to present the claims of the orphan and awaken the sympathies of the wealthy citizens of Hanthrop was very different from going into garrets, and cellars, and stifled rooms, and holding out her hand to the crushed and destitute: it did not disturb her delicately sensitive nerves; and moreover, as she was to preside at a table in a large hall, which would be thronged with the curious, the fashionable, and the benevolent during the exhibition of the fair, there would be an opportunity for displaying her artistic tastes and her elegant wardrobe; and this would be abundant compensation for the loss of her time. In fine, Mrs. Howell's interest in the fair bore a marked resemblance to the many sacrifices she was so ready to boast of. And Diantha, because her ear was always open to the cry of the needy, was active in forwarding the interests of the fair.

The intimacy between Mrs. Metcalf and Diantha had been strengthened and cemented during the summer at Carrhaven, and both the lady and her son took excellent care that not one thread of the golden web should lose its lustre. Horace Metcalf's attentions were so delicate, his frequent calls were so acceptable to both her parents, and his conversation was so refreshing, that Diantha hoped he would never ask her for any more tender and exclusive regard than now existed. Her calm, frank, and sisterly manner of accepting the young man's friendship, while it did not encourage him to speak of love, was an irresistible charm; and the beauty, purity, and self-forgetfulness of her character attracted him to her presence, and was insensibly drawing him up from the idle enjoyment of his patrimony,

and the selfish indulgence of his æsthetic tastes, to an active participation in the duties of life.

Edna Shreve came back to Hanthrop greatly improved by the country fare and the invigorating influences of the parsonage, expressing in her artless way such joy to be again in "her dear Dr. Howell's home, and with her darling Diantha," that even Mrs. Howell's cold, calculating heart was so moved as to confess to the doctor that "it would be a pity for such an affectionate and pretty child to be sent to an asylum, when with proper care she might become not only ornamental, but useful in their home."

The fair proved brilliantly successful, not only in its exhibition of the cunning handicraft and enterprise of its fair patrons, but in the harvest gathered from its sales for the Orphans' Home. The novelty of Mrs. Howell's charitable efforts having worn off, and no new excitement arising to busy her brain and hands, she fell into her old critical and fault-finding mood. "Hanthrop was dull; its air did not agree with her constitution; Dr. Lovering had said she ought always to winter in Cuba, Florida, or Italy."

Dr. Howell listened to her complainings patiently; but he regarded them as the prognostications of an impending storm, and there came a day late in November, when the heavy clouds settled down upon his heart — a day when Mrs. Howell came to his office with unusual animation in her face and voice, and with an open letter in her hand.

"You can raise no objections now, doctor, to the friends who offer me their protection if I will go with them to Europe," she said, with an air of triumph.

"What friends are going?" he asked.

"None other than the Right Rev. Dr. Mintwell and his charming family. They sail in the St. Salvador, on the 4th of December — just one week from to-day. You remember, I told you that my last letter from dear Lou

spoke of her delicate health, and her strong desire that I might spend a part of this winter in Florence with her; and I've been so anxious ever since for an opportunity to go to her! This is such a providential opening! Everything beckons me to my fatherless child, and favors my immediate departure. I really believe if you throw any obstacles in my way now, it will be at the cost of my life. My sensitive nerves won't endure many more harsh shocks, and you know suspense and anxiety are worse for me than actual disease."

"What will be your course, Mary, if I place before you, calmly and plainly, all my reasons for objecting to your joining the Goodenows without the protection of your husband?"

"I shall assert my rights as a woman and a mother, and go without your consent. I won't willingly quarrel with you, doctor; but when I know your reasons for not wishing me to go, and remember your prejudice against all my first husband's friends, I cannot respect your judgment, nor submit to it. Lou's need of me, and my own delicate health, are sufficient reasons why I should be governed by my instincts and impulses."

"Have you no home claims and duties, Mary?"

"Of course every wife and mother has home claims; but no one should be tied to her own hearth-stone. It will cost me a great sacrifice of home comforts to go abroad; but is there any gain or pleasure in this world without its corresponding sacrifice? 'Tis a duty I owe my children to avail myself of every means in my power for the prolonging of my life. And, besides, your thoughts are so absorbed in your profession and in your writings, and Di is so mature, and domestic, and companionable, that you'll hardly miss me. I've still nearly four thousand dollars' worth of bank stock left; and if you're not generous enough

to pay your wife's expenses from your own purse, I shall fall back on the remnant of my dear Arthur's fortune. It would gratify him to know I used it in seeking a little healthy recreation for mind and body after more than twenty years of such cares and sacrifices as only mothers can appreciate. It will be useless to bandy words, doctor; my reason tells me that a year in Europe is my just due, and you may consider the question settled."

And settled it was, without further objections from Dr. Howell. He had good reasons for allowing her to use "the remnant of her fortune;" but he made every possible arrangement for her comfort, went with her to New York, and parted with her on the St. Salvador with many misgivings.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PARDON.

“For still we deem
That every keenest pain and carking care,
Like the sharp winds of the autumnal air,
But loosen tender buds to earth that cling,
And ripen the ear for Heaven’s great harvesting.”

“WE have news from Stephen, father,” said Diantha, as soon as she had greeted her father on his return from New York, and had looked in his face long enough to see that he had brought back no serious trouble. “And such pleasant news, too! The letter came yesterday, and was directed to you; but I was so impatient to hear from Stephen, I ventured to open it. Will you read it now?”

“Tell me what it contains, Daisy, while I enjoy the luxury of looking at you, and hearing your voice, and feeling at home.”

Diantha came to her father’s side, and touched his forehead with her lips; and to him her kiss was an eloquent pledge that, so far as her loving watchfulness could make it, his home should be a haven of rest and peace.

“Stephen writes in the best of spirits; says he is perfectly well, and his ankle is as good as new. He is extravagant in his description of the voyage. They encountered but one storm worthy of recording; and though the ship was in peril for a few hours, Stephen says he would gladly meet it again, for the sake of witnessing the majesty

and sublimity of the scene. He thinks he was born for a sailor, and says you must secure him a situation in the navy."

"What! a new caprice?" asked the doctor. "I wish he had more of your stability and gravity."

"He is two years younger than I am."

"Yes; I ought not to expect steady purpose and wisdom in a lad who is hardly nineteen; there is much to be grateful for both in his intellect and heart."

"He had been in Florence only a few hours when he wrote; but he had lingered near the Casa Guidi windows, hoping to catch a glimpse of Mrs. Browning, and had forgotten his dinner in a picture-gallery. He is enthusiastic over Florence, said he should visit Naples, and Venice, and Rome before the Aurora would be ready for her return voyage."

"What a treat for Stephen! With his fondness for poetry and the fine arts, it will be a mine of wealth."

"And by the way, father, Stephen has sent us a specimen of his rhyming, entitled 'Sunrise on the Ocean.'"

"Dr. Howell laughed, and begged she would not ask him to read it until he was quite recovered from the fatigues of the journey.

"I've never known a sophomore yet who didn't make rhymes; but I scarcely remember one who blossomed into a poet. What does he say of Captain Ashmead?"

"I cannot remember half the fine things. One would infer from Stephen's account that his captain has the greatest fund of knowledge, and wit, and good humor that ever fell to the lot of one mortal. He seems to have remarkable power over Stephen, who says he has never had so great a reverence for any man, save his father."

"I was fortunate in securing such a berth for Stephen; it will be of more service to him than a year's close appli-

education to study; and I pray God Captain Ashmead's influence may bring him out of the clouds of speculative thought. Does he say when we may look for the Aurora?"

"She will be due in New York about the middle of February; and Stephen thinks by that time he shall be ready for hard study, or for any work you may think best for him."

The doctor seemed lost in thought for a few minutes; but the entrance of Edna, and the announcement of dinner, roused him; and during the meal he gave his daughter a description of the few pleasures he had treated himself to in New York, which consisted simply of visits to picture-galleries, bookstores, infirmaries, and hospitals.

Dr. Howell's new sorrow and disappointment were not permitted to embitter his life after the sailing of the *St. Salvador*. His generous, forbearing heart made every possible excuse for his wife's selfishness, and the gossips of Hanthrop found nothing in Mrs. Howell's sudden departure to make capital of. "If her own and her daughter's health made a winter in Italy advisable, she was justified in leaving her home and family," they said; and there the subject was dropped.

Work, stern and uncompromising, filled the doctor's days; and if it did not satisfy his human needs, his Christian faith and charity were to him such deep wells of peace, that hungry cravings for the tender love and sympathy of his wife rarely disturbed his spirit. There was always a healthy stimulus for him in his professional duties, and an inspiration in the use of his pen, which brought forgetfulness of care. There were relaxation and refreshing for him in the home which his daughter's thoughtful love made attractive, a balm in her reading, singing, and conversation, that was compensation for many griefs and wants. And Edna was growing up as fair and sweet

a maiden as ever blessed a man's hearth-stone. Imitating Diantha in all things, she studied the doctor's tastes and wishes, and in her artless way was like a spring-time perfume in his house.

The horrors of the terrible storm, and the wreck that left the child of thirteen desolate, and the long illness that followed, had given her a maturity which many quiet years guarded with parental love could not have bequeathed; and grateful love for the friends who had sheltered and nourished her quickened her perceptions, and instinctively taught her what returns to make for their generous care. The Christmas holidays were approaching; and lest the anniversary of the Stella's wreck should rouse Edna's grief, Diantha devised many little things to interest her pupil's thoughts. She took her to the bare homes, where affliction and poverty were abiding guests, and taught her to fashion with her own hands such garments as the necessities of these homes demanded. Mrs. Jenks declared to Diantha, —

“That young girl's reading is wonderful, and gives my poor, rheumatic man a sight of comfort. Tom and Fred will do e'namost anything when she promises to tell them about Smyrna, and the wreck, and the sailors who were so kind to her mamma and Nathan; and once, when she sang us a hymn, we all cried; and tears don't come easy to poor folks' eyes, Miss Howell. I sometimes think 'tis because we get so used to all sorts of disagreeable things that there's no softness left in our hearts, and we just dry up and harden.”

“God's discipline, whether it be adversity or prosperity, should never harden us, Mrs. Jenks. Don't you sometimes permit little troubles to overshadow great mercies?” asked Diantha, as she sat for an hour by the overworked mother's side, plying her needle swiftly and skilfully upon a garment which Mrs. Jenks had promised to a wealthy lady

on that day, and which, but for Diantha's aid, must have remained unfinished.

"Well, may^e be I do; but I reckon as how the greatest mercy as has come to us for many a day is the friendship of your father and yourself; and I never let any trouble come between me and my remembrance of what you've done for us. No matter how tired I am, I go down on my knees every night to pray for you."

"I hope, by so doing, your own heart is strengthened and comforted. I shall certainly be encouraged in my work by remembering that you are praying for me."

"O, miss, the prayers of such a poor sinner as I am can be of no use to one like you. I've often wondered how you could know so much about poor people's wants, and how to help them. Bessie and Mary are like two different girls since you begun to visit us; and they'd work their hands off for the sake of doing you or Miss Edna a good turn."

"The time may come when they can be as helpful to others as you think I've been to them. There is scarcely any one so weak, or so poor, or so unlearned, but there is work waiting for him to do."

Edna was no stranger in the poor room that sheltered Martha and Sylvia Keith; her young eyes often did service for their dim ones, and her sweet voice made the precious book "so much plainer;" so they assured Diantha.

"We were never handy at reading," Sylvia said. "The long words always puzzled us; and since our eyes are failing, we can't make out the meaning as well as we used; but Edna can make it as clear as you or Elder Dinsmore can. And the dear lamb brought us only yesterday a half pound of tea, and a nice parcel of white sugar; and she said the money that she paid for them was her own. I tell

Martha the child is growing to be as like you as one Scotch rose is like another."

Mr. Pomeroy's family, accompanied by Mrs. Atwood and her son, were to sail for California in the Golden Gate, on the 1st of January; and Diantha and Edna busied themselves in helping Mrs. Atwood prepare for her long journey.

Lewis Atwood's pardon had not been obtained without the exertion of all Dr. Howell's personal influence; and probably no man in Hanthrop carried a greater moral force than did our good physician. He was not known as a radical or an enthusiast; neither was he dogmatically persistent in bringing forward, at all times and seasons, some great philanthropical measure. He was as far removed from an egotistical reformer as was the good Samaritan from the priest and Levite. The charities that interested him were not heralded with sounding brass or upon tinkling cymbals, but were presented in a plain, practical, unostentatious way, that carried conviction of their worthiness to all who listened. Wherever the crushed, fallen, and hopeless could be taught to raise themselves from the mire of vice; wherever human suffering could be alleviated; wherever the oppressed and the needy called for succor, — there Dr. Howell's moral and religious influence worked like leaven.

"I more than half believe young Atwood should serve out his full sentence," remarked his excellency, the governor, as he handed the official pardon to Dr. Howell; "but as there are some extenuating circumstances in the prisoner's favor, besides his youth, and as the warden, chaplain, and prison inspectors petition that Atwood may be the recipient of the state's favor this year, I have set aside my own convictions."

“I think if you could have seen as much of the young man as I have during the past year, you would thank God for your official prerogatives. He has never received a hint that it was possible for his term of punishment to be shortened; and yet he has shown as much deference, docility, penitence, and steadiness as if the length of his incarceration depended upon a manifestation of these traits rather than upon the sentence of his judge.”

“’Tis remarkable for a man who has seen as much of the world as you have, doctor, to retain so much faith in human nature.”

“Perhaps so; but I’ve never yet met a man so degraded, but a spark of some better life seemed waiting beneath the crust of sin for the revivifying touch of a friendly word or a helping hand. Years have given me a broader charity for those whom temptation has conquered, and a stronger reverence for those who have come off victors in the strife. Allow me to thank your excellency, on behalf of the prisoner and his mother, for the clemency you have shown.”

“I deserve no thanks; they are wholly indebted to your zealous perseverance for his pardon.”

Lewis was told of his great good fortune on Christmas morning, the doctor and his mother only being present while the warden read the official document; and, after a few words of congratulation, he explained to the young man what untiring zeal Dr. Howell and the prison officers had used in obtaining his release, the reasons for their efforts, and the utter hopelessness of obtaining a pardon the second time, should the just retribution of crime again overtake him.

Familiar as were both the gentlemen with all phases of human suffering, grief, and joy, they were hardly prepared

for a scene so pathetic as that which followed the warden's announcement. Kneeling at his mother's feet, burying his face in her lap, for a few minutes convulsed sobs choked his utterance. Mrs. Atwood's tears fell hot and thick upon her son's hair, and her trembling hands clasped his; the delicate woman proved stronger now than he whose crime and punishment had nearly sapped the fountains of her life; but for many months she had been buoyed with the hope of his pardon, while to him it was an unexpected boon.

The mother was the first to speak.

"My dear boy, calm yourself; you have only heard half the good news."

"O, mother, if I ever wound or disappoint you again, may a worse punishment —"

"Hush, Lewis! I rely on your past bitter experience, your repentance, and the restraining power of God's love, as your safeguards for the future. Rise now, and thank Dr. Howell for all he has done."

The young man rose, held out his hand, for the first time voluntarily, towards his benefactor, but words again failed him.

"Those of us who have been at work for you, Lewis, don't want thanks; we only want your future life should show us our labor has not been in vain. Your mother will tell you the remainder of the good news."

"I want to hear nothing better than that you and those who have known me during the last year can trust me."

"You need no other assurance of our confidence than what is contained in that official document. We should have made no efforts to obtain it, had you continued to manifest the same spirit that governed your actions during

the first two months of your imprisonment. Come with your mother, and dine with us at four o'clock, and then you can tell me how you like our plans for your future."

Neither Lewis nor his mother attempted further expression of gratitude in words; but there was that about the young man's face and tearful eyes which gave a stronger testimony of his thankfulness than mere words could give—a something which was to the warden and the doctor a pledge for the future, and an assurance that their zealous efforts to obtain his pardon had not been unworthily bestowed.

Lewis Atwood's appearance in Dr. Howell's parlor was a marked contrast to what it was when he was first introduced to our readers: then, with the mark of his crime and punishment branded on his face, sullen defiance and hardness in his tones and in his eyes, none but the most sanguine could have looked forward to such a complete transformation. Wholesome exercise had developed a fine physique; penitence and humility had washed the stains of guilt from his face, while hope lighted up the features that one year ago were so clouded with despair, moroseness, and crime. His hours of study had not passed without leaving their footprints on his face; while the influence of the noble-hearted warden, the faithful chaplain, the accomplished professor, who had taught Lewis civil engineering, and Dr. Howell, the Christian philanthropist, added to the tender watchfulness and self-sacrificing devotion of his mother, and the interest and confidence of Diantha, had more than counteracted the pestilential breath of prison life; they had given him new aspirations, new motives, and shown him the possibility of making his old life the stepping-stone to a future which should be crowned with honest endeavor, and deeds that

might be bound in God's sheaves. And Dr. Howell, noting the calm trustfulness of Mrs. Atwood, and her son's manly courage, asked no other reward for his labor; while Diantha, with a full heart, sang, —

“Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.”

“And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOREIGN AND HOME ITEMS.

“And now what rests but that we spend the time
With stately triumphs, mirthful comic shows,
Such as befit the pleasure of the court?”

SHAKESPEARE.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.”

PERHAPS neither the Golden Gate nor any other brave ship ever bore to a new land of hope and promise two persons more truly and humbly grateful than were Mrs. Atwood and her son Lewis. The mother's rejoicing did not overflow in words; it was tempered by the remembrance of those depths of grief and despair from which she had so recently risen; and though her faith in Lewis's regeneration was unclouded, yet the future rarely reveals itself in brilliant colors to one who has lived to see the wreck of so many hopes.

The small party of emigrants were waiting for the train which would take them to New York, from whence sailed the Golden Gate; and Dr. Howell and Diantha, not satisfied with their mission of love, which had wrought such a marvellous transformation in the mother and son, were standing near to sustain and encourage them as long as possible. It was a picture full of pathos to see the confidence with which the pale, worn, but peaceful face of Mrs. Atwood was turned towards the more hopeful one of the

strong figure on which she leaned — a picture to moisten the eyes of all who knew what agony she had suffered because of this son's weakness and crime, and with what utter self-forgetfulness she had clung to him in his disgrace, softening his punishment with her forgiving, uncomplaining love, and trusting him now as completely as if her hair had not been frosted before its time by grief for his crimes.

"We can never make any return in deeds for what you and Dr. Howell have done for us," Mrs. Atwood said, as she held Diantha's hands in a last embrace; "but my life shall be a constant breathing prayer for your success. You have taught me how to forget my own sorrows in helping bear the burdens of others, and you have shown Lewis that a great crime need not blight a whole life. Your help and your confidence have brought to us a quiet peace and rest, which I supposed were forever lost; and your —"

"Don't talk about it," said Diantha, kissing away the tears that filled her eyes and choked her utterance; "we have only tried to do right, and we ask no other reward than seeing Lewis in his present state. You must write or come to us, if any new trouble arises; your relationship to Edna will keep alive our interest in you and Lewis, even if you had no other claims upon us. Have you any desire or advice for your little cousin that you haven't expressed?"

"I can trust her to you without one misgiving; but I have wanted to ask your father to allow us to assist in educating Edna, if the time ever comes when Lewis and I can earn more than enough for our own needs."

"Father will not refuse your assistance, if it will be a pleasure to you to help support your cousin; but you know he regards Edna as a daughter, and is grateful for the privilege of supplying her wants."

It was not an hour for many words, and with a fervent hand-clasp the doctor uttered his farewell blessing, which fell upon the hearts of both mother and son like a heavenly benediction. And while the good ship Golden Gate is speeding towards the Pacific coast, freighted with so many new-born hopes and resolves, and followed by so many prayers, we will take a bird's-eye view of the doctor's wife in Paris.

“This is living! The dream of my youth is realized! One week in this most charming and interesting of all cities is worth a year of existence in Hanthrop,” wrote Mrs. Howell. “It seems as if I were breathing my native air, and had suddenly come into possession of a long-lost birthright. The novelties and the refined pleasures which meet me everywhere are such a tonic to my spirits, such a diversion to my thoughts, that I already feel my intellect expanded, and my entire nature rejuvenated.”

The uplifting of the doctor's heavy brows, and the smile that crept into his eyes and lurked around his mouth, as he read aloud extracts from his wife's letter, were piquant annotations to one who understood his moods.

“Ralph's family, the Mintwells, Arthur, Louise, and myself have pleasant rooms, opening into an elegantly-furnished saloon, where we can meet and spend as many hours in each other's society as we choose. There are a great many Americans in Paris this winter, and our saloon is the popular resort of distinguished statesmen, scholars, and, in fact, of all who are so fortunate as to obtain an introduction to the family; but, connected as we are with the American Embassy, only people of distinction and wealth dare seek an acquaintance. My dear Lou is a belle in just the kind of society she was born to ornament. I was surprised to find her looking handsomer than ever, and in excellent health, too, as she had written me that her lungs

were sensitive, and she had been advised to winter in Florence; though why one should need ever to leave Paris, where the Christmas holidays were as soft and sunny as October in Hanthrop, I can't possibly conceive; but the dear child had a stubborn influenza in the autumn, and I suppose her desire to see me, and to emancipate me from the narrow grooves of my stale life, caused her to exaggerate its symptoms; and knowing so well what a peculiarly delicate constitution she had inherited, my own fears were easily roused."

The doctor paused in his reading, and indulged in one of those prolonged and significant whistles which needed no interpretation in words.

"Does mamma say anything about her own health?" asked Diantha.

The doctor, for reply, read another extract aloud: —

"The climate of Paris seems to suit me exactly; I can spend a whole day in riding and visiting art galleries without feeling as much fatigue as I would in sitting through one of Mr. Dinsmore's shortest sermons; and then, after a day spent in sight-seeing, I can dress and go to the opera, or a reception, and never once think of fatigue! It is astonishing how the voyage, change of air, and new pleasures have renovated my system and given tone to my life!"

"Really a marvel!" the doctor exclaimed, in a sarcastic voice, which his forgiving and generous nature at once checked; and he added, "Poor Mary! her life has been very unsatisfactory, because of her overweening ambition. It might have been better for her if I had never crossed her path; and yet, God knows, I have loved her truly and honestly, and have tried to make her happy. We'll hope and pray this year of pleasure and indulgence won't make her home more distasteful to her than it has been ever since Louise was old enough to point out causes for grievance and discontent."

Diantha saw that her father was pained by the tone of this first letter from Paris, and she saw, too, he was grieved and humiliated to admit, even negatively, that his wife had no enjoyment in home duties. She knew his freshly-wounded heart could not be soothed with words, and she only lifted tenderly the locks of gray hair from his broad forehead, touching it with lips that had a world of sympathy in their gentle caress.

“Will mamma spend the winter in Paris?” she presently asked; and the doctor, referring again to his open letter, read,—

“I should never weary of this delightful city, with its magnificent public buildings and squares, its constantly playing fountains, and its immense galleries of fine arts. I could sit all day and look at the crowds of people who pass our hotel; and I should never lose my relish for such society as I meet here! And such music! such novelties! As dear Lou says, ‘Paris contains the concentrated essence of all that is elegant, elevating, and refining.’ But as everybody sees Italy while abroad, and as the Mintwells are going to Rome before Lent, Lou and I have decided to accompany them. Ralph has business which will keep him in Paris all winter; but he is going to spend the summer with his family in Baden-Baden; we shall join them there for a few weeks, and of course shall visit the principal points of interest in Switzerland before returning to Paris.”

The doctor folded his letter without offering it to Diantha for perusal, and after a short silence, when the hunger of his heart for that companionship which is man’s natural heritage was written on his face, he said,—

“I have never told you, Daisy, all my causes for disquiet, nor why I have so seriously objected to your mother’s spending so much time with her brother-in-law’s

family. I have good reasons for believing Ralph Goodenow to be an accomplished gambler, and without doubt he is retrieving his fortunes at the gaming-tables of Paris this winter; and for no more worthy or legitimate purpose will he spend the summer in Baden, which you may know is the great resort of speculators and gamblers. Even women play openly in those gilded saloons, and may be seen sweeping their unlawful gains from the roulette-tables at all hours of the day and night.

“I have no fears that your mother will contract the vile habit of gaming, even when she sees fashionably-dressed women engaged in it, because her tastes have always been too refined to permit of an indulgence in gross pleasures; but while she is associating with those people, there will be, unconsciously to herself, a gradual lowering of her standard of right, a blunting of her moral perceptions, and a constantly increasing thirst for novelty and excitement. She will be induced to imitate the glitter and false show of the life she sees, and I'm sometimes afraid she'll be lost to all quiet, pure home influences before her return.”

“You are a little distrustful of God's power to keep her, dear father.”

“No, Daisy; but He has not promised to keep His children when they wilfully thrust themselves into temptation. We are told, ‘Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart:’ surely, I, who have been the recipient of so many mercies, can wait and trust; but I can't be quite patient and reconciled when I feel certain my wife's name must be linked with those of doubtful reputation.”

“You must remember, she has the protection and companionship of Rev. Dr. Mintwell's family.”

“That fact will draw a veil, I trust, between her and the odor that must attach itself to Ralph Goodenow's

name; but it will not shield her from the subtle and degrading influences that surround her."

The doctor had rarely betrayed so much emotion in the presence of his daughter as in the present instance. Self-control and calm dignity of manner were habitual to him, and a generous defence of his wife's most selfish acts had hitherto sprung spontaneously to his lips. Diantha knew his anxieties and apprehensions were not the "baseless fabric of a dream," and therefore, to lure his thoughts away from his disquietude, she brought out her most winsome powers of pleasing; and so well did she succeed in diverting him with music and conversation, that he was soon describing to her, with his wonted enthusiasm, the plan of an essay he was preparing for publication. 'Tis fortunate for men, as well as women, when brain-work holds out to them a refuge from the poverty and hunger of the heart.

"I had a long talk with Horace Metcalf in my office this morning, Daisy," said the doctor, dropping the subject of the essay, and looking at his daughter with critical eyes. "He came in to ask my advice about preparing himself for a profession."

"What, Horace Metcalf, the fastidious, the cultivated, the wealthy lover of ease! Has he learned that there's anything more noble in life than selfish enjoyment?"

"I think he has. Didn't he see some exhibitions of patience, gentleness, and self-forgetfulness in Carrhaven last summer, which might teach a young man that there were beauty and worth in life aside from the world of music, art, and books?"

The doctor's keen eyes were fastened on Diantha's face while he spoke; but there was no shrinking from his gaze, and her color, always fitful and changing with every emotion, was not to be relied on as evidence of any

especial self-consciousness; and when she replied to her father's question there was no tremor in her clear, sweet voice.

"I had no intention of giving Horace Metcalf lessons, and there were no exhibitions of what you are pleased to term self-forgetfulness made for his benefit; but if he has learned that active usefulness can yield a higher enjoyment than merely living for the gratification of his tastes, I am truly grateful, and care not how or where he learned the lesson. What profession will he choose?"

"He inclines to be a physician, because his great wealth will enable him to give his services to those who cannot afford to remunerate him, and he thinks that profession will open to him broader channels of usefulness than any other. He has already made some considerable preparation for his work, by taking a course of medical lectures when he was in Germany, simply for the intellectual enjoyment and discipline; and he now proposes to read under my tutelage for a few months. I think Horace Metcalf's heart, and soul, and conscience have been regenerated; and, so far as I could gather from his very modest history of the change in his plans and aspirations, your conversations with him upon the use of wealth and culture, and the honor and dignity of living so as to elevate others, and your high-toned principle and decided Christian character, have been the means which God's Spirit has used for his awakening."

Tears dropped from Diantha's eyes upon the sewing in her lap; but they were only a thank-offering to the Power which had made her simple acts an evangel to one soul.

"He talked with me also," continued the doctor, with a readiness to dwell upon the theme which his daughter's silence and tears rather encouraged than checked, "about his desire to have established in Hanthrop an academy

where young men and women, who are ambitious, worthy, and destitute of means, can be prepared for useful vocations without encumbering themselves with debt; where music, arts, sciences, and languages shall be taught, and the student's choice of, and adaptation to, specific branches shall be consulted, without obliging him to spend months and years on those sciences for which he has no natural aptitude. He proposes to give the old Bosworth House and grounds, which, perhaps you know, have recently been bequeathed to him, for the use of the academy, if the state will grant an appropriation, and if individuals will assist in endowing professorships. I have for several years desired to see an institution established on a similar basis. Excellent as are our public schools, they do not meet a certain want. Take, for example, Bessie and Mary Jenks. Both these girls are quick and intelligent, and might readily be fitted for something that would pay better than housework or sewing; but they've not the time to take a regular course in our free schools, while, in such an academy as Metcalf proposes to establish, they might be taught book-keeping, music, drawing, or some science for which they had an especial taste, and by which they might earn a livelihood. In fact, my profession has brought me in contact with hundreds who are sighing for just such instruction as we hope this liberal academy will afford."

"'Tis a grand and noble charity," said Diantha, with a light in her clear, brown eyes, and an earnest gladness in her voice, that Horace Metcalf would have regarded as ample payment for the Bosworth House, if he had made a bequest of it simply to gain her approval.

"A noble conception, if it can be executed," answered the doctor; "and young Metcalf means to forward it with all the enthusiasm of a soul just kindled into new life. He

will have the sympathy and coöperation of several old families of large wealth and influence, who are his connections; and he is so popular in society, that I think his benevolent scheme will be received with favor. I shall assist him with all the means, time, and influence I can command. If we succeed in establishing this academy, perhaps Captain Ashmead may accept a professorship in it. He told me once he was prepared to teach navigation, mathematics, and civil engineering."

Diantha's only answer shone in her face, and was expressed in the impulsive grasping of her father's hand.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A T S E A.

“No more! a harp-string’s deep and breaking tone,
 A last, low summer breeze, a far-off swell,
 A dying echo of rich music gone,
 Breathe through those words, those murmurs of farewell.”

MRS. HEMANS.

THE winter waned, and Stephen did not return. The *Aurora* was detained in the Italian ports longer than her commander had anticipated, because of the difficulty of obtaining a profitable cargo; and when this was secured, it was for Liverpool, where an exchange was to be made for such merchandise as the owners of the *Aurora* desired for the New York market. Stephen’s letters were colored with his natural exuberance, somewhat modified by an experience which had matured his intellect far more than a year of college discipline. The detention of the *Aurora* had given him an opportunity for becoming acquainted with several Italian cities, and for excursions into the country, where his quick eye noted the dress and customs of the peasantry, and his ear caught every inflection of the musical language, as it fell from the tongues of the natives, who live almost entirely in the open air. In Florence he had, through the kindness of an American gentleman who was a friend of Dr. Howell, been introduced to Mrs. Browning; he had looked into those eyes, which seemed deep, living wells of thought, and had touched that hand which controlled a pen of such marvelous power — a

favor that, to one of Stephen's enthusiastic temperament, would be a life-long memory of gladness. He had visited the houses where Dante and Michael Angelo lived, and had wrought, and left so much to mould future generations, which the waves of time and changing dynasties had failed to efface. Rome, with its ruins, its St. Peter's, its pictures, statuary, and sacred associations, exhausted Stephen's vocabulary, and, as he wrote Diantha, "he needed a new language in which to describe Naples, with its picturesque bay, its palaces, churches, and public institutions, the awe-inspiring Vesuvius, and ruins of lava-drowned cities."

And when the *Aurora* was ready for her return voyage, Stephen cast many a loving, lingering glance back upon the turrets and domes of Naples, the clear waters of the bay, which mirrored the vermeil-dyed evening clouds, and the smoke-wreathed summit of Vesuvius, to his young eyes draped in a veil of poetic thought.

Even Captain Ashmead, who was familiar with the scenery of the Mediterranean, stood upon the deck of the *Aurora* until the sunset paled, and the spires of Naples were lost in haze, apparently so filled with the soft, graceful beauty and harmony of the hour as to be unmindful of the canvas wings and favoring wind which were wafting his ship over her billowy path.

And yet, though to a casual observer Captain Ashmead's thoughts seemed far away from the helm near which he stood, not a movement of it, nor a flutter of the sails, was lost upon his keenly observant and practised eye, as was evident from the instructions which were quietly but clearly given to his subordinates. Leaving his mate in command of the forward deck, Captain Ashmead went aft, and joined Stephen.

"This is a rarely beautiful night, even for this southern latitude," he said. "Could anything be more favorable for

the birth of poetic fancies than the shimmer of the moonlight upon these waves, the orange-scented land breezes, the cloudy crest of the volcano, and the numberless white-winged ships that glide, phantom-like, across the bay? I could almost write a poem on such a night. Of what are you thinking, Stephen?"

"Not so much of the beauty and richness of the old city we are leaving, nor of the grace and harmony of this moonlight evening, as of my home in Hanthrop, and the life that stretches out before me. I'm wondering if I shall disappoint father and Di."

"In what way?"

"Well, they think there is the making of a man in me, and I'm afraid I shall never have the perseverance and the strength of will to accomplish what they have a right to expect. I'm unstable, captain, and constantly crave novelty and excitement. Can I hope to excel in anything?"

"Your very want of confidence is a prophecy in your favor. To know that you lack steadiness of purpose and strength is but the dawn of better days for one of your age and temperament. Those traits of character which you are conscious of lacking can be cultivated and developed by study; but when a young man is satisfied with his growth, self-assured, and 'wiser in his own conceit than ten men who can render a reason,' I would almost as soon attempt to turn the Gulf Stream into a new channel as to change his course. You have energy, enthusiasm, and intellectual ability; and these traits, tempered and directed by charity and that wisdom 'which cometh from above,' must achieve success in almost any vocation. I predict that your father and sister will rejoice in the strength and harvest of your manhood, as they do now in the promise of your youth."

"There hasn't been much rejoicing over me, captain, for the last year. I've given Di a world of anxiety with my foggy philosophy and transcendentalism, my thirst for something new, and my lack of purpose. But thanks to father, and Di, and yourself, I can see a rift in the clouds."

"A man's soul must have the anchor of a living, glowing, tangible faith, Stephen, else he is like a ship without helm, rudder, or chart; he may carry canvas enough, but without this anchor he will drift as aimlessly as a balloon."

"Ashmead, may I ask how long you've known this anchor of which you speak so confidently?"

"'Tis just one year ago to-day since a tenderly persuasive woman's voice sung in my hearing, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.' I had been for weeks blindly seeking that rest; but the peculiar rendering of that passage was a beacon, a revelation, to me; it made the way as clear as the path our ship leaves in her wake. And this evening, above the vesper-chimes, above the foreign jargon, and the confusion of clearing port, I heard that 'Come unto Me;' and the pleading pathos of the voice held the pulses of my being in as sweet a thrall as when it drew me into the light one year ago."

The friends sat for many minutes in that silence which is golden, when the soul is freighted with sweetly sacred memories, and thought is too rich and tender for speech; and Stephen wondered why Captain Ashmead, always so frank and communicative, had never referred to the singing of that passage before. "It must have been Di's voice," he thought; and then many of the captain's moods which had puzzled Stephen were suddenly unveiled; the tenderness and reverence with which Diantha's name had been uttered, and the eager interest he had manifested in Stephen's letters from Hanthrop, were no longer a mystery.

Stephen spoke at last, much as if he were thinking aloud.

“There’s a wonderful power in Daisy’s singing; one particular manifestation of it comes very clearly before me now. When we were at Carrhaven last summer, Metcalf urged her, one Sabbath evening, to sing a passage from his favorite opera, and he was at once warmly seconded by his mother, who is a professing Christian, and a woman whom Daisy also loves and honors. I watched the contest in her heart between her desire to please her friends, her fear of a pharisaical assumption of superior piety, and her unwillingness to desecrate the Sabbath by singing what would have brought before us, by the laws of association, all the paraphernalia of the opera-house. Without saying a word, she went to the piano, and sang that sweetest of all passages from the Oratorio of the Messiah, —

‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’

The purity, power, and tenderness of her voice were so enhanced by her earnestness and her manifest faith in this living Redeemer, that we were lifted above the summer evening, and could almost see the angel rolling the stone from the door of the sepulchre; and if moist eyes are more eloquent thanks than words, then Daisy received her reward. We were at Carrhaven nearly a week after this, and Metcalf never regained his confident, easy, self-conscious air of superiority. I believe if his fine intellect and large, sunny nature are roused from his indolent enjoyment of wealth to worthy action, Daisy’s voice will be the awakening power.”

Captain Ashmead made no reply, though his face had shown a deep interest in the narration; but when he spoke again, his thoughts seemed far removed from the singing at Carrhaven.

"I'm not superstitious, Stephen, but I'm haunted with the fear to-night that I shall never take the Aurora into an American port again. I've no fears for the ship; she's new and seaworthy; but a prophetic voice seems constantly whispering that my life-voyage is nearly over."

"Why, captain, this moonlight is too intense and overpowering with its loveliness, just as the odor of some blossoming trees oppresses us with too much sweetness; and then, perhaps, the stagnant life and the decay of these old Italian cities have affected your spirits. You are one of the last men I should ever suspect of indulging in foolish fancies. You are as strong and hearty as a clear conscience and good digestion can make a person, and nearly as practical and sensible as father and Daisy are."

"It may be a foolish whim, Stephen, but there can be no harm in my telling you that a nervous fancy, for which I can give no substantial reason, has taken almost complete possession of my thoughts; in fact, ever since the night when I searched the streets of Naples for poor McDonald, a slow poison has seemed to be lurking in my veins. Now, I want you to show a brave courage worthy of your father and sister, should the Aurora be left without a commander.

"McDonald, as you know, is a thorough sailor, a strong, reliable man when liquor can be kept from him; and as you have become familiar with the management of the ship, I shall trust her to you and to the mate, and shall record my wishes in the log-book before I sleep. You've won the love of the sailors with your stories and your songs, and by showing an interest in their work; and there's not a man on board but will obey your orders, especially if you show confidence in your own knowledge of navigation, and work harmoniously with McDonald. You see now why I advised you to make your way to

Paris, spend a few days with your mother and sister, and then join the Aurora in Liverpool, or return to New York in a steamer. Perhaps I should have given you more definite reasons for my advice; but I had such confidence in your ability to take the ship back to her owners with McDonald's aid, and such a strong desire to have you near me, that I did not oppose your wish to return in the Aurora as emphatically as I might have."

Captain Ashmead spoke with evident reluctance, and with an intensity of feeling not in keeping with his plain, practical, unadorned speech, and Stephen's ready flow of words was checked by reverence for his friend's emotion.

They parted for the night without further mention of the theme that so agitated the captain, but with a fervent clasp of hands, which was Stephen's pledge of such assistance and support as grateful love and courage could render. Captain Ashmead was on deck with the first blush of day, cheerful and hearty. He examined critically every part of the ship's rigging and machinery, and looked after the comfort of his men with as much apparent forgetfulness of self as if no heavier shadows rested on his heart than the Aurora cast upon the sea. The wind was favorable, and under a full press of canvas the good ship swept out of the Mediterranean, and turned her prow towards England; and meanwhile her brave commander made no sign, and let fall no word, which could remind Stephen of the fears he had expressed on the first evening of their homeward passage. But on the fifth morning every voice on board the Aurora was hushed to a whisper; every face was clouded with anxiety, and it seemed as if each sail drooped under the consciousness of an impending sorrow.

Captain Ashmead was alarmingly ill. He had been suddenly seized with congestive chills during the night, followed with a malignant type of fever; and Stephen

Howell, the only one on shipboard who knew anything about the treatment of disease, remained by the captain's couch during the three days and nights of his suffering, only leaving him long enough to refresh himself with food, and to consult with McDonald about the management of the ship. In his delirium Captain Ashmead's thoughts floated back to the Stella's wreck, the Bonsecour Home, and the gentle ministrations of Diantha. Her name was often coupled with his mother's, as he pleaded for a cooling draught, or the singing of some old tune, or the touch of her hand upon his throbbing temples. In his occasional lucid intervals his attention was turned towards the interests of the Aurora and the welfare of his men. On the third day after his attack the fever appeared to have conquered the captain's powers of resistance. He had, probably, never recovered from the storm that wrecked the Stella, and was therefore less able to contend with disease. He lay prostrate and exhausted, perfectly conscious of his condition; and though speaking with great difficulty, he gave Stephen and McDonald minute instructions regarding the ship's cargo, and requested each sailor to be brought to his couch for a farewell message and blessing, and to receive from his own hands a token of regard.

When left alone with Stephen, he asked, —

“How far from Liverpool does McDonald make the ship?”

“Not more than thirty-six hours, if the wind continues favorable.”

“I shall not see the land again. My life is ebbing with this tide.”

Stephen could make no reply. He had more than once seen the approach of the last messenger to some poor soul, when visiting with his father the Bonsecour Home, and he

recognized the shadow that was rapidly creeping over his friend's face. He held a stimulant to the parched lips, and as he bathed the calm forehead, and lifted from it the damp masses of hair, tears fell from the young man's eyes upon the nerveless hands of the sufferer. They roused him for a few minutes from the lethargy and faintness which benumbed his senses.

"This is a hard trial for you, my friend; but remember your presence is a solace to me in this struggle. Can you read the burial-service over my poor body?"

"If a clergyman from Liverpool—" Stephen could not finish the sentence.

"When the sea gives up her dead, it will not matter where my body has rested. Tell your sister I fall asleep with the blessed assurance that I shall awake satisfied in Christ's presence, and that her hand and her voice have led me to this sweet peace and rest. Ask her to wear the pearl ring and cross which you will find in my sea-chest, in remembrance of one who, for the last year, has craved the privilege of protecting her with his great love. Tell her not to allow any grief or regret for me to sadden her, or to come between her and the crowning blessing of a woman's life."

These sentences fell slowly and at intervals from the captain's lips, and several times during their utterance his tongue seemed no longer able to obey the behest of his spirit.

After a few minutes of silence, while Stephen held the cold hand and watched the failing breath, an exultant smile transfigured the wan face, and in a clear voice he exclaimed, "Come unto Me;" and Captain Ashmead's earthly mission was accomplished.

Stephen Howell, intelligent and susceptible, could not witness that victory over death without seeking earnestly

the Infinite Love which had sustained his friend. And while the Aurora was quarantined at the mouth of the Mersey, waiting permission to discharge her cargo, Stephen gained that knowledge which has been promised to all who seek.

CHAPTER XXX.

STEPHEN'S RETURN.

"I hold it true, whate'er befall —
I feel it when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

TENNYSON.

STEPHEN wrote from Naples, just as the *Aurora* was clearing port, that she might be expected in New York the first of March. Was there a softer light in Diantha's eyes, a sweeter cadence in her voice, and more graceful buoyancy in her movements when the maples first began to blush under the capricious glances of the March sun? Dr. Howell thought so; and though the thought was accompanied with a sigh, it did not bring such regret as when he first learned that his daughter was not as completely his own as his parental love would have kept her.

Stephen's hearty eulogiums of Captain Ashmead had gone far towards reconciling the doctor to what he feared was inevitable. The scientific academy, which Horace Metcalf's influence had pushed rapidly forward, promised permanent and congenial employment for the captain before the close of the year; and if his flower must bloom beside another man's hearth, the doctor trusted she would still be so near him that he could have her coöperation and sympathy in his work, and the perfume of her love to sweeten his toil. And Dr. Howell, never inclined to borrow trouble, comforted himself with the assurance that,

however confidently man might propose, God was the disposer of human affairs.

Diantha, scarcely knowing why the March skies wore a brighter hue, why the winds were laden with aromatic odors, — forgetting, in her glad expectancy, that

“Nature wears the color of the spirit,” —

came down to the breakfast-parlor one morning to find her father standing with a grave face, and his eyes so riveted on the letter he was reading, as to appear unconscious of her presence until her hand was laid upon his arm.

“Daisy, why didn't you give me more time?” he exclaimed, remembering only that he had not yet thought how best to reveal the contents of that letter.

“More time, dear father? We are ten minutes later than usual this morning, because I wanted to finish a letter for the early mail. You can read your letters while I pour the coffee. Is your news so very important?” she asked; and then, observing the emotion in her father's face, and that rarest of all sights, tears in his eyes, she added quickly, —

“What has happened? Has the Aurora been heard from?”

“My dear child, here's a letter from Stephen, filled with such sad news for us both, and yet containing so much that should lift our hearts above sorrow, that I hardly know whether to rejoice or weep.”

Dr. Howell looked at Diantha's fading color and eagerly questioning eyes, and paused.

“Go on, father; the Aurora is lost!” came with a wailing moan from Diantha's lips.

“No, Daisy, the Aurora was safely anchored at Liverpool when Stephen wrote; but Captain Ashmead died at sea, scarcely a day's sail from port.”

That was all — only a sudden eclipse of her life's sun; her heart was too unquestioning in its love and faith to cry out or rebel; she might bend beneath the storm for an hour, but God had sent it.

"Shall I read you Stephen's letter?" asked the doctor, when he had placed Diantha on a sofa, had held a stimulant to her pale lips, had chafed her cold hands, and lifted the curls from her forehead with his tenderest caresses, conveying by look, and touch, and word, the most delicate sympathy.

"If you please. Edna has come in. Can she listen to the reading?"

"She may as well learn it in this way as in any other;" and Dr. Howell drew the little maiden to his side, and clasped her with one arm while he read: —

"Yesterday I closed the eyes of the truest, bravest man I have ever known; and I pray God so sad a service may never fall to my hands again. Captain Ashmead died at sea after an illness of three days — if that may be called death which triumphs over the flesh, and ushers the spirit into eternal peace, and rest, and joy; and to-day, dear father, I read above his remains the burial-service for the dead, and saw the waves part to receive in their embrace the body that had clothed one of the noblest spirits ever given to man." Edna, with a low cry and sob, slipped from the doctor's embrace and fled from the room; but when Diantha made a languid movement to follow her pupil, the doctor laid a restraining hand upon her arm, saying, —

"Wait, Daisy, until you've heard what occasion we have for rejoicing, and Stephen's own words best portray it."

"Now I know the truth and the power of the assertion, that 'when this mortal shall have put on immortality, then

death shall be swallowed up in victory.' In the presence of the death angel, my own soul stood before me unmasked — my useless, selfish, sinful life looked hateful; the fog in which I have been floating for months, without chart or compass, was scattered by rays from the divine source of truth. I felt that 'if only in this life we have hope, we are of all men most miserable;' but I have dared lay my burden at the feet of the pitying, loving Christ; have dared hope for pardon, remembering the infinitude of His love and mercy; have dared permit my soul to reach forward into the eternal and invisible world for strength to elevate and dignify the pursuits of this. I cannot write to-day; my heart is full of the inexpressible solemnity and majesty of my friend's death and burial: the waves seem constantly chanting a requiem. Our ship is in sight of harbor, but she will probably be obliged to lie in quarantine for ten or twelve days; and during that time I shall write to Captain Ashmead's mother and sister."

"You see, Daisy, our griefs and mercies are so tempered and mingled that while we must weep for a lost friend, we rejoice in the remembrance that for him 'to die was gain;' and for Stephen's victory let us thank God;" and Dr. Howell knelt by his daughter's side, lifting up his voice in such grateful thanksgiving as we may dare think angels chant over one soul that repenteth.

Diantha wept in her father's arms until she could look steadfastly into his eyes, and promise him that her sorrow and disappointment should be laid where they could not embitter her life; and when he left her, she remembered Edna's passionate grief, and the necessity for her to soothe it. In comforting the child she found her own heart accepting the assurance that the peace and joy which are born of grief are purer and sweeter for their baptism of tears; that the light which still shone behind the heavy

cloud would gain a new lustre from this temporary eclipse. She did not leave Edna's chamber until she could say, "My soul trusteth in Thee; in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast."

How many tears, heartaches, and withered hopes can be bound up in one short sentence! Thousands may glance carelessly at those three words, "died at sea;" but only for a few fond hearts are they freighted with woe.

That pulseless form, resting beneath the waves until "the sea shall give up its dead," was the staff and solace of a silver-haired mother, whose dim eyes will no longer need to watch wistfully the shipping news. The Aurora will never again bear into port that strong, honest heart; and so the mother folds, with trembling hands and falling tears, the garments her love has fashioned in readiness for that son's return, and presses her pale lips upon each trifle hallowed by his touch. The shadow is heavy and dark that hangs over the parsonage, whose fireside will never again be enlivened by Captain Ashmead's genial laugh and racy speech; but 'tis lifted by that strong faith which looks beyond the deep waters and the mystery of death, to the Rock of Ages and the "continuing city."

And in another home a young heart drinks to the dregs its first bitter cup of grief, and buries a sweet hope, and then walks the earth a ministering spirit, with serene face, and a perfume as of crushed flowers clinging to the mantle of charity that inwraps her; and an orphan girl cries out, "He was my mamma's friend and Nathan's! and I have so few to love!" Her sorrow, like a summer cloud, is dissolved in tears, which Diantha's gentle hand wipes away, while her soft voice reminds the sobbing girl of Christ's pitying love and her manifold blessings.

Diantha's nature was too healthful, active, and buoyant to brood over and magnify her loss by sentimentally nour-

ishing it. Fortunately for her at this crisis, Mrs. Howell's absence brought upon her all the domestic cares of the household; and being too conscientious, and too watchful of her father's comfort, to neglect one of the petty details which added to the attractions of his home, they were a wholesome diversion to her thoughts. Then her natural inclinations, her love of study, and her desire to give her father the companionship, sympathy, and encouragement in his literary labors which she knew he craved and found in her, proved not only an efficacious stimulant to her mind, but a healing and solace to her heart.

The poor families who looked to Diantha for counsel and material aid, the inmates of the Orphan Asylum, and the sufferers at the Bonsecour, did not dream they were helping their "angel of mercy" through deep waters, where her trembling feet might have stumbled and faltered, and her bruised heart might have paused dismayed, but for the encouragement to push bravely forward which their necessities held out. Edna Shreve's dependence, her clinging love, and her quick perceptions were not without their sweet and inspiring uses to Diantha.

So self-forgetful, single-minded, and cheerful did she seem, so noble were the ministrations of her hands during this spring, that even her intimate friend, Mrs. Metcalf, did not suspect she was concealing any deep grief. Notwithstanding the twenty-five years which separated the elder lady from her young friend, they had many pursuits, tastes, and sympathies in common, while strong and tender love for each other drew them almost daily together. They were interested in the same charities, read and discussed the same authors, and in their walks, drives, and readings Horace Metcalf found abundant opportunities to share their labors and pleasures. Diantha had learned to think his friendship an essential beautifier of her daily life, before she

turned to it as a solace for the loss of that love which she had dared hope was hers.

For ten days the *Aurora* lay at quarantine in the harbor of Liverpool, and another week was consumed in the consignment of her cargo and the reloading of the ship according to the instructions of the owners, who had forwarded letters for Captain Ashmead to their Liverpool agents.

Stephen acted as supercargo of the ship, because his deceased friend had invested him with authority so to act; but in every important step he consulted with the Liverpool house, which had extensive dealings with the owners of the *Aurora*. He would have returned by steamer to New York, but for his desire to execute, as far as possible, Captain Ashmead's wishes.

He was unwilling to assume with the mate, McDonald, the responsibility of commanding the *Aurora*; not that he lacked confidence in the mate's seamanship, but in his integrity. Rumors of civil war in the United States and the closing of southern ports had reached them before they left Italy, and he had accidentally overheard the mate affirm, that to command a blockade-runner would give him just the exciting, daring kind of life he thirsted for; that handsome fortunes would be made by running merchandise into southern cities; and that the *Aurora* would be a capital ship for such purposes. Therefore, with the advice and assistance of the Liverpool agents, an efficient English captain was secured to command the *Aurora*, and as McDonald showed his colors by refusing to sail under a captain, he was discharged by the agents of Prime & Dillingham, and Stephen served as mate. A warm friendship was cemented between this reticent, middle-aged English Captain Baker and the impulsive young man who was so intimately associated with him, which proved of inestimable service to both.

The Aurora made good time on her homeward passage, and Stephen, with eager delight, hailed the American shore in season to see the rejuvenating of the old earth. As soon after delivering up the ship's records to her owners as steam could convey him, he stood under his father's roof, rejoicing in such measure as only an unusual exposure to the perils of sea and land, together with a peculiar expansion and enriching of the heart and soul, could induce.

"You should see what I have seen, and feel what I have felt, during the last six months, to know the rapture and thankfulness that thrills me now," Stephen said, when his joy had so spent itself in tears that it could find expression in words.

"Your experience has been ours, so far as the tenderest love and sympathy could make it, my boy; we have seen with your eyes and heard with your ears ever since the sailing of the Aurora, and most emphatically your grieving and your rejoicing have been ours," answered the doctor; and then, in a lighter tone, with the intent of turning the current of emotion into a channel broad and shallow enough to permit the ripples of ordinary speech, he added, —

"But you are so changed that to call you 'my boy' seems wanting in deference to your added inches, as well as to the manliness your experience has developed. You are wonderfully improved, Stephen;" and the father might have been forgiven if he looked somewhat proudly, not alone upon the "added inches," but upon the finely sensitive face, on which was stamped a dignity, a high-toned purpose, and an earnest decision which were wanting six months before.

"I wish I could honestly say the same for you and Di; but you look care-worn, and Di has lost color and flesh; and Edna, too, has been growing out of all remembrance of me."

For answer, the young girl came forward with extended hands and radiant face, saying, "You know I couldn't forget you, and I shall like you better than ever, because you were Captain Ashmead's friend."

"We have all been very anxious since we heard the Aurora was quarantined in Liverpool, fearful lest you might be stricken with the fever, and feeling with you much of the care and responsibility which the death of your friend threw upon you; and without doubt Daisy and I look a little worn," said the doctor.

"But your coming will brighten us all, Stephen; we couldn't have a better tonic," Diantha affirmed.

"I shall make it my especial mission for a few weeks to keep your spirits and your color at high tide, even if I have to carry your soups, bundles, and baskets into all the lanes and alleys of Hanthrop, besides assisting father in his most disagreeable jobs. I reckon there would be a beauty, and dignity, and zest about such service that I've never known before." There was a light in Stephen's eyes as he spoke, revealing the true greatness to which his soul had climbed.

The evening was spent by Stephen in narrating the many incidents of travel which could not be written, and in a description of Captain Ashmead's last days. The weeks that had passed since Diantha and Edna heard of their friend's decease had brought to them both a self-command and submission which enabled them to listen to Stephen's narration with composure. Grief, when accepted as God's discipline, hallows the heart and matures the intellect.

"Come to my chamber a minute, Daisy," Stephen said, as they were separating for the night; and when they were alone he drew from his portmanteau the ring and cross intrusted to him by Captain Ashmead, saying, —

“I couldn't sleep until I had delivered his messages and his gifts to you.”

It was meet that her lost friend's gift should receive the chrism of tears that fell from Diantha's eyes when she placed it on as pure and unselfish a hand as ever wore pearls ; and it was not strange that a gift bequeathed in so solemn and tender a manner should have been worn as a symbol of the higher and more sacred consecration of her heart to One in whose pure sight “a meek and quiet spirit” is woman's fairest adorning.

CHAPTER XXXI.

H A R V E S T I N G .

“ For pain, death, sorrow, sent
Unto our chastisement;
For all loss of seeming good,
Quicken our gratitude.”

DURING the summer that followed Captain Ashmead's death, while our country paused to pay toll in human blood over the smooth turnpike of our sins, and while the strongest faith could hardly recognize “ the pillar of fire and cloud ” as an angel of God's providence, when the terrible reality of a nation's grief and humiliation caused many hearts to rise above private sorrows, Diantha did not sit with folded hands, brooding over her own loss. She accepted the work which the nation's necessities brought to her as an instrument of mercy ; and this work ingrafted upon her life more richly and deeply the graces of that “ charity which suffereth long, and is kind.” She went to Hollyville, with Stephen and Edna, to spend a few days with Captain Ashmead's mother and sister, and found that while “ sorrow builds a bridge between mourning hearts,” sympathy, patience, and hope may overspread it with verdure and blossoms.

It was not easy for one of Stephen Howell's ardent and susceptible nature to remain quiet when his country had need of strong limbs and brave hearts ; he would have rushed impetuously to the rescue of our dishonored flag

when the first call for troops quickened the great pulse of the nation's heart but for his father's restraining counsel. Dr. Howell was not a politician, and his liberal culture, his deep and broad Christian charity, enabled him to look at the disturbing causes dispassionately, and with unprejudiced vision. He saw a strength and unity of purpose in the South for which few gave them credit, which he felt would make the contest a long and serious one, and would imperatively demand all the courage, earnestness, and muscle of the North. When Horace Metcalf and Stephen yearned to answer the first call for troops, he showed them how much more advantageously they might serve their country in her hour of peril by first securing an armor; and that armor must be the ability to use their intellectual, moral, and physical strength to some purpose. Young Metcalf required only a few weeks of practical service in a hospital to be ready for the duties of a surgeon; and Stephen, with some little difficulty, was persuaded to prepare himself to save lives, instead of throwing himself into the ranks, where, without discipline, his hands and head would be of comparatively little avail to his country.

In the dark hour that followed the first great disastrous battle, when consternation and dismay hung like a heavy pall over the land, then Dr. Howell, accompanied by his two pupils, went to the front; and wherever skilful treatment, patience, and tenderness could alleviate the sufferings of the wounded and fever-stricken soldiers, these three men were to be found.

And at home Mrs. Metcalf and Diantha watched, and prayed, and stitched upon the coarse blue shirts, and visited the soldiers' families, showing in their homely work and patient waiting a heroism as true and lofty as throbbed beneath the epaulets of the bravest officer, and perhaps rendering their country as efficient service.

It was a rare bit of gossip for the "Metropolitan" — the journal that so delicately and judiciously served up polite literature for the "best society," sifting and winnowing it of such honest grain as might have given some hungry soul a nourishing crumb of thought — to record the marriage of Hortense, only daughter of Ralph Goodenow, Esq., to Sir Sydney Dearbon; married in Paris to an English baronet, with a brilliant company, including all the *attachés* of the American embassy, to witness the ceremony! and the Metropolitan described the gilding of the affair with as much apparent relish as if it were a union that would help cement the pacific relations of England and America, while sentimental young ladies read the elaborate paragraph, and floated away into dream-land on visions of baronial halls, hereditary jewels, brocades, and laces. Could they have known how empty and worthless Sir Sydney's title was, they would have thanked God for democratic institutions, which crowned labor with dignity, and stamped honest endeavor with a patent of nobility.

The young baronet in question, having lost his fortune at the gaming-tables of Baden, and having impoverished and benumbed his brain and heart with riotous living, offered his empty title to the pretty Miss Goodenow, who was reputed an heiress in Baden and Paris, hoping thereby to secure not only immunity to his handsome person from awkward arrests, but the means to propitiate his tailor, who had in several instances proved selfishly persistent in claiming an equivalent for the fashionable attire in which the baronet made his conquests.

Ralph Goodenow's shrewdness had been matched by Sir Sydney's, and lulled by the representations of his wife and daughter, who insisted that the title would be a better card in polite society than wealth. The baronet did not lay claim to large possessions, but spoke vaguely of a suit in

Chancery, which must eventually be decided in his favor, giving him an estate in the north of England. He intimated that a large tract of land in a coal-mining district in Wales belonged to him, and would yield a handsome income, if he had the business tact to organize a company, and open a mine. He did not think it essential to tell his future father-in-law that heavy mortgages covered the land in Wales, or that the estate in Chancery would be swallowed up by the costs of litigation — disagreeable facts always announce themselves; and Ralph Goodenow, seeing a large field for successful stock speculations in this undeveloped land in Wales, did not ask to look at title-deeds, but gave his consent to the marriage.

Both father and lover were desirous of consummating the union as speedily as possible, as both were afraid of developments which might throw impediments in the way of the matrimonial negotiations. In the first place, the brilliant and accomplished young secretary of legation had been advised by his superior in office to resign his honors, because his passion for wine and cards seriously interfered with his official duties. He had received intimations from the Cabinet at Washington that he was to be "relieved" from the cares of state, and the Goodenows wished the marriage solemnized before their connection with the American embassy was severed, as such a rupture might make a difference in the bestowal of Sir Sydney's title. Then Ralph Goodenow had been so successful at the gaming-tables of Paris and Baden as to secure for himself the distinguished regards of the police and civil authorities; their critical observation and marked attentions must be concealed from the baronet; and moreover, to avoid a more intimate acquaintance with these dignitaries, both father and son were making private arrangements for a speedy return to New York. And as Sir Sydney did not think

it prudent for certain idiosyncrasies of his own — such, for instance, as his aristocratic indifference to the ways and means by which his bills were paid — to be known to his future relatives, he showed quite as much impatience in hastening the wedding festivities as policy would permit. They were married the first of October, after an acquaintance of two months, and went directly to Rome for the winter, where, so long as they spent money freely, few questions would be asked about their antecedents.

The civil war in the United States held out many inducements for Ralph Goodenow and his son to return.

They were not drawn by their country's necessities to offer the service of hand, or purse, or brain; patriotism was an emotion of which they had no conception, and their native land was valued only as an arena for stock-jobbing and money-making operations. In this crisis the shrewd eyes of the elder man saw rare possibilities for amassing riches: a position in the army, a government contract, something which would wear the outward semblance of serving his country, and at the same time afford him ample opportunities for securing money, was the magnet which drew Ralph Goodenow home; and Arthur, with no higher or more loyal motives, followed in his father's steps.

Mrs. Ralph's ambition was not unequally yoked with her husband's; to astonish New York friends with the variety and magnificence of her Parisian wardrobe, to decorate her house with foreign ornaments, and to spice her limping grammar with French phrases and allusions to Sir Sydney, were motives sufficiently high to satisfy this fine lady's heart.

Mrs. Arthur Goodenow saw abundant novelty and diversion in the political intriguing which she knew would be necessary to secure her husband an office. Arthur would at once repair to Washington, an aspirant for political or

military honors; and life in the capital, where the officers of the grand army of the Potomac had no more serious occupation than to ornament ladies' drawing-rooms with their uniforms, promised to Louise just the excitement for which she thirsted.

Mrs. Howell, of course, accompanied her dear Lou back to America. Indeed, she would have been obliged to return, if, as she told her friends, "the unhappy strife between the North and South had not precipitated the return of her daughter," inasmuch as "the remnant of her first husband's bequest" would not have permitted a longer residence in Paris; and Dr. Howell adhered to his first resolve, not to increase this remnant while she remained abroad with people who were so repugnant to him.

The Goodenows arrived in New York late in October, and Dr. Howell, having been apprised of their coming, went to the city to meet his wife. He was not surprised to find her looking worn and thin, for her letters had informed him of her constant succession of exciting and wearing pleasures. She had flitted from city to city with the Goodenows, who, with their craft and self-assurance, had obtained such letters of introduction to American officials in foreign cities as had secured for them invitations to balls, receptions, and dinners, and had made their foreign tour little more than a brilliant panoramic exhibition of dressing and eating.

But if Dr. Howell was prepared to find his wife worn with her fashionable masquerading, he did not expect to see the harassed, restless look that marred the well-preserved beauty of her face. She was evidently dissatisfied with her relatives and her surroundings, but such fascination and magnetism did the chains possess that she had not the moral courage to cast them off.

Dr. Howell had to attend to some business with his

publishers and the Sanitary Commission, and was obliged to spend a couple of days with his wife's friends at the St. Nicholas Hotel, — the elegant home of the Goodenows, on Montague Square, not being ready for the occupation of its owners; and while thus associated with them, his quick eye and ear detected some of the causes for his wife's tired and disturbed appearance; and with that delicacy and tender consideration for her which had always colored the doctor's domestic relations, and for which her haughty spirit had yearned in her self-condemned exile, he sought to win her confidence, divert her thoughts, and soothe her nervous irritation.

“The rough passage, and my sea-sickness, and the hurry and confusion of our last week in Paris, give me a tired look; but really I have better health, doctor, than I've had before for ten years,” Mrs. Howell affirmed, when the doctor expressed anxiety about her appearance, and endeavored to draw from her the reason of her depression and disquietude. “And now that I have time to look at you, I see the signs of hard work on your face, Stephen. I think you are looking more worn and harassed than I am,” the lady added, in a more wifely tone than she was wont to use.

“I've not taken as much time for rest and recreation as I ought, since the war brought so much work to all, and such anxious forebodings to every thinking heart. Since the great disaster at Bull Run, I've made several visits to Washington, using all my strength and influence in establishing systematic hospital arrangements.”

“'Tis so like you to take upon yourself all the disagreeable drudgery, that wins neither honor nor money! If you must have anything to do with the war, why not manage to secure a position that will command a high salary, and give your science and skill fair play?”

“There will be no lack of men who will seek only the spoils and honors of war. My mission will be to save as many brave soldiers to the country as possible, by nourishing the sick and wounded, and comforting the homesick and disheartened; and in my work Horace Metcalf and Stephen are most faithful and efficient allies.”

“I can't believe Stephen has stability enough to be of any real service in the hospitals, and if I had been at home, I should never have consented to his leaving college, and exposing himself to such debasing influences as the war must carry in its train. To think of such a sunny-tempered boy helping to dress wounds and amputate limbs; breathing the pestilential odors of hospitals, and associating with ignorance and vice! 'Tis enough to break a mother's heart!”

“You musn't think of Stephen as he was when you left home. Since then he has buckled on an armor that will protect him from all contaminating influences. His experience while abroad with Captain Ashmead developed the strength and manliness of his character; and the perils and necessities of our country have awakened his enthusiasm and generosity to such a degree, that nothing less than devoting himself to the nation's welfare would satisfy him in a crisis like this. We have great reason to rejoice for the change in our son.”

“A mother can't rejoice when an only son is exposed to all sorts of danger; but I'll try not to anticipate the worst results. It seems almost incredible, too, that Horace Metcalf, with all his fondness for elegant ease, and with the most abundant means to gratify his tastes, should choose a profession, and then plunge into hospital work. Isn't he trying to bury his disappointment because of Lou's marriage in this way?”

“I've never suspected any such cause. His activity and

his noble self-forgetfulness seem to me the fruit of very different seed."

"If Horace and Stephen are in Washington this winter, Louise will probably see a great deal of them. She'll be very popular there, as she's always been, I've no doubt. She often had two or three engagements for an evening in Paris, and as many beaux as if she had never been married."

"Does it please Arthur to have her so much in society, and such a favorite with gentlemen?"

"O, he doesn't mind. He's so absorbed in his own pursuits and pleasures that he's no time nor inclination to interfere with hers. I'm troubled about Arthur. He's extravagant and reckless, and 'tis a mystery where all the money comes from which they spend so lavishly. I'm afraid Arthur is unstable, too. Louise was vexed with him for giving up his connection with the embassy."

"Didn't she know he was obliged to resign, to avoid the disgrace of a public dismissal?"

"Indeed, no! How could you get a knowledge of Arthur which has been concealed from us? Perhaps 'tis only a surmise of yours. You have always been ready to believe the worst of the Goodenows."

Dr. Howell made no reply to his wife's unjust remark, but with a calm voice said, —

"Mary, my efforts for the soldiers have brought me into friendly relations with several members of the Cabinet, and I have learned from them that Arthur Goodenow was recalled because of neglect of his official duties. His dissipation has become notorious."

"Louise thinks Arthur returned because he had been promised a more lucrative office at home. It will be a heavy blow to her. She covets political distinction for him, and will be miserable if she cannot spend her winters in Washington."

“Arthur is still so young, he may reform; and the strong, pure influence of a Christian wife might be his salvation.”

Mrs. Howell was silent. She knew Arthur's wife had no longer a restraining influence upon him; and she knew also that eighteen months in Paris had developed, with marvellous rapidity, his inherent vices. A hothouse pressure had been brought to bear upon the weeds of his nature, and they had apparently choked out the grain, if any had taken root in the soil of his heart. It was no consolation to Mrs. Howell, as she sat silent and humiliated, to remember that her own daughter had never tried to draw Arthur into a purer atmosphere; that her indifference to him and her devotion to self might have been one of the provoking stimulants of this poisonous growth.

But when Dr. Howell, sorrowing because his wife had cause for sorrow, suggested that Louise should be invited to accompany them to Hanthrop, Mrs. Howell, with a deep-drawn sigh, regretted that their plain home could offer so few attractions to eyes that had been dazed with Paris. However, she thought it possible, if they remained in New York until after Mrs. Ralph Goodenow's grand opening of their residence on Montague Square, Louise might go to Hanthrop for a short visit.

The ladies remained a week for the party, and Dr. Howell returned alone to his work in Hanthrop.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MRS. ARTHUR'S POLICY.

"If she loves at last,
 Her love's a readjustment of self-love —
 No more ; a need felt of another's use
 To her one advantage, — as the mill wants grain,
 The fire wants fuel, the very wolf wants prey ;
 And none of these is more unscrupulous
 Than such a charming woman when she loves."

MRS. BROWNING.

EVEN Mrs. Howell had the grace to apologize for remaining away from her home a fortnight after reaching American soil.

"If Lou had been in her usual health and spirits, I could have left her in New York," she said to the doctor, who sat by the sofa on which his wife reclined for the first time after a year's absence. "But you could not ask me to leave my dear, fatherless child, when anxiety and the uncertainty of Arthur's prospects were preying upon her nerves and spirits."

Dr. Howell did not oppose the assertion, and his wife continued : —

"You, and Di, and Edna are so comfortable with each other, and so contented with your work, that you don't need me ; in fact, I'm rather a hinderance than a help to you ; while to Lou I'm almost a necessity. Then I must confess I did have the greatest curiosity to see how Ralph's family would be received by the clique amongst whom they

were so popular before his failure; and I shall always be glad that I witnessed their triumph with my own eyes."

"The reception was satisfactory?" queried the doctor, quite as much because he wished to give his wife the pleasure of living over in narration her short-lived joys, as because he desired to know how the "best society" forgot and ignored the peccadilloes of one who could still keep an open house on Montague Square; who could import a span of thorough-bred horses, and drive a stylish equipage up Broadway; who could refer pompously to our "residence in Paris," and quote "my son-in-law, Sir Sydney Dearbon."

"Satisfactory!" The word was repeated by Mrs. Howell as if it were incapable of portraying the most impalpable shadow of the reality. "It was a brilliant triumph over such envious and jealous persons as looked suspiciously on Ralph's connection with the Eureka and Feather River stocks! You know the Metropolitan had announced the marriage of Hortense to an English baronet, had hinted at Ralph's success in retrieving his fortunes in Paris, and had described some of the choice pictures and statuary which he brought home. Then Hon. Mrs. Carlos Hapgood called on every family in their set who was supposed to remember anything disagreeable about the unfortunate stock operations, and made proper explanations; in fine, the Metropolitan (its reporter received an equivalent in gold for the uplifting flow of his ink) and Mrs. Hapgood together made everybody half crazy to see the grand opening and renew their acquaintance with the Goode-nows. You ought to have remained to the reception, doctor; it would have been an entirely new phase of life to you — a revelation of the breadth and liberality of sentiment which prevails amongst cultivated people. I doubt if a more elaborate, elegant, and *recherché* entertainment

was ever given in New York. The house was refurnished with carpets and draperies, manufactured to order in England and France, and the new furniture, pictures, and statuary, the choice ornaments, flowers, and colored lights, made it look like an enchanted palace. The tables were covered with heavy white rep silk, embroidered with red and blue, with a monogram in each corner, wrought in gold. The union of the red, white, and blue in the table covers, and the draping of the dining-room windows and doors with the English, French, and American flags, were in honor of the military and naval guests who represented the three nations. The table service of glass and china was of the most exquisite quality and unique pattern, made in Holland for Ralph, and engraved with the Goodenow and Dearbon coat of arms and monogram. The refreshments were as delicate and delicious as Delmonico could furnish; the Symphonic Band, concealed behind draperies, played national and patriotic airs; the choicest exotics filled the house with perfume, and the uniforms of the officers and the beautiful dresses and jewels of the ladies almost dazzled the eyes. Indeed, all the senses were intoxicated with the beauty, perfume, and harmony of the occasion; and the only eulogium I need bestow upon it is to say, it was a reproduction of Parisian splendors."

"What of Arthur's prospects?" asked the doctor, who had heard as much during the past year about foreign styles and gayeties as he could well digest. Such themes sounded strangely incongruous when the groans of a nation and the crash of contending hosts swept through the cities and echoed among the hills.

"O, he's almost sure of a colonel's commission in a New York regiment of volunteers; and Lou will spend the winter in Washington. The Hapgoods will be there; and

so many regiments are quartered in and around the city, that the season promises to be a very brilliant one; and my dear child has quite recovered her spirits, anticipating the winter's enjoyments. Ralph says this crisis will pave the way to some magnificent fortunes."

"Did he tell you by what means money is to be coined out of a nation's peril?" asked the doctor.

"I heard a great deal about contracts for army supplies, which I did not comprehend. I only know both Ralph and Arthur are throwing all their energies into the war, but in different channels, I infer, from what you, and Metcalf, and Stephen choose to work. How soon shall I see my dear boy?"

"He will come home for Thanksgiving."

"It was very unnatural in him to spend ten days in Liverpool without running over to Paris to see his mother and sister."

"I told you, Mary, how closely he was confined with the affairs of the Aurora."

"Well, it doesn't signify now, I shall see him so soon; and as you go to Washington so frequently on your hospital business, I suppose I may look forward to spending a few weeks there with my children this winter."

"We hope you'll find the quiet of your home so agreeable that nothing will tempt you away from it. We shall all try to make it as attractive to you as possible. When the feverish excitement of travelling and sight-seeing has worn off, you'll feel the need of rest; and when you've been at home long enough to realize the terrible calamities of civil war, an indulgence in expensive pleasures will seem almost criminal to you."

"I can't see why the war should interfere any further with my tastes and pleasures, when I've already made the greatest sacrifice a mother can make, in permitting

an only son to give his time and energies to hospital work."

"When you know what Mrs. Metcalf, and Daisy, and thousands of the most intelligent and refined women in our country are doing for the soldiers and their poor families, your sympathies will be enlisted in the work, and you'll not count the loss of personal pleasures a sacrifice;" and then the doctor adroitly turned the conversation to such themes as would interest his wife without rousing her spirit of opposition; and while he is describing to her the design and success of Horace Metcalf's scientific academy, we'll turn to the daughter, to catch a glimpse of her growth and development.

"And so you've plodded on in the old grooves for eighteen months, Di, with nothing but broth-making, and hospital-visiting, and housekeeping for diversion," remarked Mrs. Arthur Goodenow, daintily arranging the folds of her handsome silk. Diantha had been summoned to her half-sister's chamber, to assist her in the elaborate process of making a becoming dinner toilet.

"You forget the pleasant care of instructing Edna, the writing for papa, and the work that has to be done for soldiers. The grooves of my life are not so strait and narrow as to exclude novelty and divergence," answered Diantha; and the rich glow of health upon her face, with its expression of trustful content, and the clear lustre of her eyes, told of no stagnant, morbid, or narrow life within.

"You know as much about novelty as the horses in a tread-mill! The monotony and barrenness of your life would paralyze me! But I suppose 'tis fortunate you haven't my tastes and ambitions, as neither your father's means nor prejudices would allow you to indulge in the pleasures of cultivated society. If you could only dress

stylishly, I'd take you to Washington with me this winter, where you'd stand some chance of marrying, so as to raise you in the social scale — unless you are already engaged to some poor country minister or doctor."

Diantha dared not trust her tongue with a reply; but her sudden flush of color was interpreted by the worldly-wise Mrs. Arthur as a revelation of some unworthy entanglement; and she added, —

"Don't disgrace mamma and me by bringing a clodhopper into the family, Di. If you've no self-pride, remember the honor of your connections."

Diantha, recovering the control of her temper and her tongue, laughingly replied, —

"You needn't fear anything more contaminating than my present round of homely duties. If such an Eden as marriage is in reserve for me, 'tis very far in the future."

"Eden! indeed! you're as antiquated in your notions as a mummy, Di. If by Eden you mean the love you once imagined belonged to the married state, you may as well break that string of your harp at once. Nine tenths of all the women marry for position; and if they manage to retain respect for the man whose name they bear, 'tis a sentiment quite strong enough for the needs of polite society. If a woman is absorbed in tender thoughts, cares, and anxieties for her husband, she naturally neglects her own accomplishments, and grows stale and vapid. It has always been my theory, that a wife should have as much latitude in her pleasures and pursuits as a man; that she should have every advantage of society and every facility for cultivation. Arthur and I have lived quite independently of each other in Paris. It pleased him to make the acquaintance of fast young Englishmen, and to spend his evenings in gambling and drinking; and I didn't sit alone, waiting, and weeping, and sighing for his society. No;

I went my own way with becoming pride and spirit. I made such capital of my beauty and accomplishments at the receptions of the embassy, that I soon had engagements enough to prevent me from bestowing one anxious thought on Arthur's profligate waste of opportunity, talent, and money."

The young wife's haughty and indifferent tones and words fell like a dirge on Diantha's ears; they proclaimed the burial of any sentiment akin to love.

"Lou, if you had only tried to make yourself as pleasing to Arthur as you did to society, might you not have lured him away from temptation, and secured, through him, more permanent happiness, and more true pleasure, than general admiration gives?"

"I never asked myself that question, because I was so satisfied with the admiration of society, and so sure of my ability to win it, as long as my accomplishments are kept bright, and my face and style are pleasing. I don't mind telling you that I've had a private tutor in French, German, and music, ever since I went abroad; that I've taken a vast deal of care to inform myself in matters of art, history, and politics, and to learn the Parisian secrets of dress, and of preserving beauty. The instinct of self-preservation and the love of admiration and conquest are so strong in me that I shall never mope and fret because one man loves cards and wine better than his wife. By the way, what could have induced Horace Metcalf to choose the profession of medicine?"

"Probably the hope of being more useful in that vocation than in any other."

"Dear me! Has Horace plunged into the great gulf of utilitarianism? 'Tis a shame and a pity for him to waste his fine talents and large property in a profession where there's so small a chance of distinguishing himself.

With a little more ambition, had he turned his attention to the law, or politics, or polite literature, he might have won honor and fame. There was a time when the beauties and pleasures of life had a charm for him; and I shall always believe, Di, he lost all courage and spirit when I married, and is just drowning his vexation and disappointment in this commonplace drudgery. There were no signs of the philanthropist about him when I went away."

"His nature has been quickened and purified by divine love; and he only desires now to make his talents and his wealth of use to his fellow-men. You can hardly imagine a greater change than has been wrought in him. He is so energetic, and so efficient, and so liberal, that you'll scarcely recognize a characteristic of the fastidious, self-indulgent young man of one year ago. Father says he works as zealously for the moral and physical welfare of the soldiers as if daily bread depended upon his efforts."

"Mark my words, Di; his zeal is only a cloak, cleverly worn, to hide his chagrin. He would have proposed to me months before I met Arthur, had it not been for that easy, self-assured spirit of dalliance which has been such a prominent characteristic of his. Before the Washington winter wanes, I'll make him repent his procrastination more bitterly than he has yet."

"Lou, it seems to me a true woman and a wife would pity a man who had loved her, and, if she was sure he had cause for regret, would help him bury it, rather than seek to kindle a new fire from the ashes."

"That's a natural inference for you, who have so slight a knowledge of the world; but you should know me better. Metcalf shall acknowledge my power and his weakness before the season is over. I hope my return and my victory won't rob you of any coveted treasure."

The last sentence was bitterly spoken, and revealed to

Diantha an unseemly, blotted page of her half-sister's heart. She crimsoned when she thought that a woman could cultivate the graces of intellect and manner for selfish and ignoble uses; and she would gladly have shielded Horace Metcalf from the pain and humiliation which the fascinations of Louise might subject him to: possibly her friendship assumed new shape and color when seen through the medium of fear and pity.

So sensitive and true was Diantha's soul, and so marvelously did her color and her features mirror every delicate emotion, that Louise noticed her confusion, and maliciously sought to unravel it with a few poisoned words.

"I remember now mamma told me Horace was very polite to you for a few months after I went abroad; but she thought his attentions were only a *ruse* to conceal his love for me: you know, if his calls at the house had ceased with my marriage, the reason would have been too obvious; but if he's flirted with you just in pique, and to protect his own fair reputation, I shall take double pleasure and pride in punishing him and revenging you."

"He is my very kind friend, but he has never flirted with me, and I need no champion to defend my rights."

"Then you admit you have rights? Are you engaged to Metcalf?"

"No, Lou; I have claims only on his friendship."

"And you had best, for your own sake and the reputation of our family, say nothing about such claims. When Horace marries, it will be for beauty and accomplishments, or wealth, and you have neither. He will not stoop from his high social position to marry a tolerably good-looking little nun, who neglects all self-culture, and spends her time on such miserable people as the state has made abundant provision for. You have a lovely pearl on your finger, and 'tis very uniquely set. Did Horace give it to you?"

“No, it was the gift of a friend who died last winter;” and Di fled from the presence of her sister, not alone to conceal her tears, but to escape further questioning, and to recover her ebbing self-control.

With the return of Mrs. Howell and Lou, the smooth flow of domestic enjoyments in the doctor's home was broken. Morning calls, evening receptions, operas, and the novelties of dress, engrossed the thoughts and the largest part of the time of the ladies, and were the themes for conversation at his table and fireside, only when, with rare and gentle tact, Di could introduce reading and music, and the doctor could manage to bring forward some subject of national interest. But, happily for all, Lou's visit was only for a month. She was summoned to join her husband in Washington for politic reasons; he had failed to secure a colonel's commission, and had entered upon a campaign of office-seeking, where his wife's influence could be made available. For the promotion of her own ambitious desires, and because intrigue was congenial to her nature, she used all her arts and accomplishments to obtain a position for Arthur; and, assisted by Ralph Goodenow's money, and the efforts of the Hapgoods, and the young man's pleasing address and apparent abandonment of those vices which had conquered him in Paris, he was again restored to public favor, and Lou gained what she most coveted — popular admiration and the *entrée* to fashionable circles.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HIDDEN SPRINGS.

“O, Hero! what a hero hadst thou been,
If half thine outward graces had been placed
About thy thoughts, and counsels of thy heart!”

“Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love.”

SHAKESPEARE.

It is not pleasant to know that the waves of life are often crested with muddy impurity; that a vigorous and beautiful blossoming hedge sometimes encloses a barren waste or a noxious growth of weeds; and that a fair exterior and polished behavior often conceal treachery, vanity, envy, and crime.

While Louise Goodenow was making her extraordinary beauty of person, grace of manner, and accomplishments available for political purposes and for self-aggrandizement, she did not forget Horace Metcalf's punishment. She had as nearly loved him as a supremely selfish and coldly calculating nature could love, and had most certainly coveted his wealth, and a connection with his honorable family. Baffled and piqued by his indifference to the charms she had lavishly displayed for his benefit, disappointed and wounded by the man she had married, the germs of good in her heart, which, fostered by the tender dews and soft sunshine of love, might have yielded fruit worthy of womanhood, had been choked and warped by

untoward influences, until base and ignoble passions had become the mainspring of her life. Horace Metcalf, now a regimental surgeon, quartered at the capital, known to be a man of wealth, culture, and good birth, was a welcome guest in the few families where he sometimes sought relaxation from his wearing duties; and Louise, with her artful intriguing and the *éclat* of Ralph Goodenow's wealth, was floating high on the tide of fashionable favor, and could not fail to meet her former Hanthrop friend. Stephen's intimate association with him favored a renewal of their old friendship, and Louise had suddenly conceived a remarkable fondness for her half-brother, and such an interest in his pursuits, that her elegantly attired figure was sometimes seen walking through the hospital wards by his side. She always dropped in quite accidentally, to learn if her brother or Horace had received letters from home, or to solicit the attendance of one or the other to some concert or reception. "Not that I need to beg for an escort," she would say, with a timidly conscious and winning smile, "but I want to know that you have an hour's wholesome recreation." She could refer, with a wonderful imitation of pathos and emotion, to the good old days when she was satisfied with the simple pleasures of Hanthrop, and, with a tender little sigh, regret that Paris had created such a feverish thirst for novelties, and that Arthur had so many engagements, and permitted her to rely so entirely on her own resources and her new friends for amusement.

And Horace Metcalf listened and sympathized because she was Diantha's sister; and for the same reason, whenever his conscience would permit him to steal an hour from the sober realities of his profession, he was at the charmer's side; and she, blinded by vanity, conceit, and an exaggerated estimate of her own powers of pleasing, imagined the young man's chains were securely riveted.

“I shall accept your presence at this reception as a personal compliment,” said Mrs. Arthur, one April evening, when the popular wife of a senator received company. “Stephen came to bid me good by this morning, and he told me it was decided that you would move to the front to-morrow, and I was trying to persuade myself that I should not be disappointed if I failed to see you before the triumphant return of our troops.”

“My time is very precious, but I couldn’t leave Washington without seeing you again. There’ll be heavy work for our men before our brave young general enters Richmond; and we all need to carry with us the remembrance of some one’s ‘God bless you,’ and I’ve come for yours, Mrs. Goodenow. You are the only one in the city who can take back to my mother and my home such farewells as cannot be written.”

What sweetness was there in that word home which caused the young man’s lips to tremble and linger fondly upon it, while the expression of his face told his artful listener that his thoughts were far away from his brilliant surroundings! Her faultless toilet, soft tones, and gracious manner, she for the first time felt, had no especial attractions for Horace Metcalf. His keen and delicate perceptions and fastidious tastes had experienced a certain kind of pleasure and gratification in the presence of her beauty and while under the spell of her accomplishments. He had admired her much as he would a beautiful painting, a symmetrical work of art, but with no desire to possess the expensive ornament. Before Lou’s marriage, the principal attraction for young Metcalf in Dr. Howell’s family had been the quiet Diantha, as unconscious of her power to please as the fragrant, soft-hued geraniums which so often lay against her white throat; and months before her pure life and sweet voice drew him towards the Redeemer, whom

she served with such confident trust and singleness of heart, he had coveted the right to call her his own; but gaining no assurance from Diantha's guileless and manifest pleasure in his society that she could accept him as the guide and protector of her future, and fearing if he spoke of love it might draw a veil between him and the friendship which was so pure and rich, he had allowed the months to pass, and said nothing which could disturb the placid current of the young girl's life. And then the clouds of civil strife gathered and broke, overwhelming the nation with new cares and responsibilities; and Horace Metcalf heroically plucked from his heart all thoughts of self, and went forth upon his noble mission with no sweeter inspiration than love for his country and pity for his fellow-men.

His mother's letters were filled with praises of Diantha, and told him of her devotion to the soldiers' families, her gentle ministrations in the Orphans' Asylum; and dearer than all other communications were Mrs. Metcalf's repeated allusions to the friendly relations and associated work of Diantha and herself.

"You speak of farewells in a tone that implies grave apprehensions; in fact, as if you were a common soldier, exposed to the sharpest fire of the enemy," said Louise, after a minute's careful consideration of the most effective way to appeal to her companion's sensibilities.

"We are not starting on a holiday excursion, Mrs. Goodenow, and I shall be wherever my sick and wounded men are. But while I'm conscious of the dangers and vicissitudes which are piled mountain-high before us, I remember who has promised us strength according to our needs, and my courage and faith are equal to the demands made upon them."

"I've often wondered why you should choose to per-

form such menial services, as thousands would gladly relieve you of for the sake of the pay, which, of course, is an unconsidered trifle to you. I have been seeking all winter for the incentive, the inspiration, but have failed to discover it." There was a question in the handsome eyes upraised to Horace Metcalf's, and as much appealing tenderness in her tones as a false, worldly heart could feel.

"If you have failed to find sufficient in the needs and perils of our country to inspire a man, and cause forgetfulness of private interests, it will be useless for you to seek a hidden spring of action."

"I have never questioned your patriotism, Mr. Metcalf, but your way of showing it has seemed to me injudicious, and not in harmony with your character. Before I went abroad your tastes were æsthetic, and you certainly appeared to revel in the luxuries which wealth laid at your feet; now you are working as if for dollars and cents, when the same work could be done as well without your culture and refined tastes as with them — by hands, too, that need the paltry government pay for such labor. Are you not unmindful of such honors as are due to your family name? and have you thought of the desolation and grief your death would bring to your mother, and perhaps to others?"

"My mother rejoices that she has a son capable of rendering service in this crisis; one who would

'Go proudly on his way with death
Upon the errand of Almighty God.'

And as for the æsthetic tastes of which you speak, I believe all work is rendered effectual in proportion to the intelligence and culture which are brought to bear upon it. If there are those who could perform the work mechanically for pay which I do for love, my conscience

would not permit me to sit in contented ease while others were toiling, neither could I enjoy the harvest if my hands had not assisted in the gleanings."

"You have accepted such trite and sentimental ideas of philanthropy as to make me think you must have been a pupil of Dr. Howell. Perhaps you have studied with my pretty Quaker sister?"

The question, the look, the voice revealed to Horace Metcalf what his faith in woman's purity and single-mindedness would long have prevented him from seeing—the jealousy of Louise, her supreme selfishness, and her love of conquest, as well as her desire to disparage Diantha. There suddenly rose a cloud of witnesses in the shape of artfully-clothed hints, carelessly-dropped words, and playfully sarcastic descriptions of her sister's employments, which, at the time they were uttered, failed to convey their intended meaning, because of his pleasure in the brilliant conversational powers of Louise, and his reverent love for Diantha. Many things which his own integrity and the preoccupation of his thoughts had prevented him from interpreting were now unmasked before him, and pity and sorrow for the beautiful woman, mingled with his disappointment in finding beneath so fair a surface such muddy, bitter springs, caused him to stand silent and confused in her presence.

"You must pardon me, Mr. Metcalf, if I have spoken with seeming irreverence of your mission, and of my stepfather's narrow ideas, and Diantha's obedient and mechanical imitation of them. My nature is impulsive and tropical, and reaches out spontaneously for the beautiful and luxurious pleasures of this world, and yearns for intelligent sympathy and companionship, while my sister is practical and self-reliant. Her heart never craves any sweeter or nearer ties than bind her to the Bonsecour

Home or the Orphans' Asylum. She asks for no more cultivated companionship than she can find in the Jenks family, no higher intellectual enjoyment than Mr. Dinsmore's threadbare sermons, and no more elevating pursuits than house-keeping and needle-work."

"Let me assist you in recalling some of Miss Howell's accomplishments. She has a sweet voice, clear and musical both in singing and reading. She converses on many scientific and historical subjects with a readiness that surprises me; and I have seen a few crayon and water-color sketches which were executed by her hand with rare delicacy."

"O, yes; Di has some talent. She sings church music very well, and makes herself familiar with such literary themes as interest the doctor, and she uses her brush as a copyist with mediocre skill; but she has no ambition, and her nature is sadly deficient in the emotional element. Stephen tells me she has had a platonic or religious interest in a poor, crippled, uneducated sea-captain, whom she helped nurse at the Bonsecour two years ago. Most mercifully and fortunately, however, for the credit of our family, the captain died at sea. She wears a pearl ring which he gave her, and most likely would have married him, if she had been told that her arm would save him the use of a crutch. No tenderer sentiment will ever warm poor Di's cold heart."

An artistically modulated sigh followed these false innuendoes, and then the tender, lambent light of her eyes rested on Horace Metcalf's face, while she sought to learn if the leaven were working, if the thorn had pierced.

He had heard from Stephen of Captain Ashmead's death, and the friendly relations that existed between him and the doctor and Diantha; and though for a minute he might be pained by Mrs. Arthur's version of the story,

his sober second thought was, that a woman like Diantha Howell could rise above the discipline of sorrow, and again open her heart to such gracious and revivifying influences as Heaven might send.

“Excuse me, Mrs. Goodenow, if I cannot join in a longer discussion of Miss Howell’s character in such a crowd; but, in justice to my friend, I must say, she seems as far removed from the picture you have drawn as an intelligent, helpful, large-hearted Christian woman is from a soulless lump of clay.”

“I shall not take this time to undeceive you; it would be cruel to rob you of an ideal, when you have wilfully thrust from you so much that is tangible. My residence in Paris has probably colored and liberalized my ideas of society; and yet I have always preferred a woman with human frailties to an automaton, whose acts were performed with a chilling exactness. I used to think there was much harmony in our opinions, but I have returned from the Old World to find change written on everything in my native land — even on you.”

“I am changed, Mrs. Goodenow; for whereas I once walked blindly ‘the primrose path of dalliance,’ now I tread firmly, and with the clear vision of faith, the straight road to a glorious goal. Two years ago I thought only of making the delights of this world minister to my selfish wants; now I desire to be the instrument of hope and healing to others. I have another engagement with the officers of our regiment this evening, and must say good by. For the sake of old memories, if at any time you need a friend, please command my services.”

“Thank you! There are so many who claim the prerogatives of friendship, so many who esteem it an honor to serve me, I shall be most unlikely to require any sacrifice of you.” And with a courteous but formal farewell, Horace

Metcalf passed out from the artificial glitter, out into the soft air of the April night, with a great pity in his heart, and a wonder how two women nursed at the same fountain and reared at the same fireside could be so unlike; while Louise Goodenow, with a haughty curl of her lip and a dangerous light in her eye, answered the rallying questions of Colonel James, who approached her side as soon as Metcalf left.

“Why so *triste*—do you ask? Because I find only sentimental philanthropy where I looked for strength, vigor, and manly courage. I have over-estimated a friend, and the awakening from my delusion is not pleasant.”

Perhaps for the first time Louise was conscious that her beauty and blandishments had failed to win; that Horace Metcalf had seen the falsehood and artifice beneath her gilded armor. She was foiled, and for the hour humiliated, but not repentant.

“Surely no one can afford such a disappointment better than you, the number of whose admirers is legion,” answered Colonel James, with that suavity and flattery in his tones and eyes which are so deceptive and alluring to vain, weak souls. “I have come to ask for my friend, Major Rushton, an English officer, an introduction to your ladyship, whom he is pleased to call the handsomest woman he has seen in America.”

The smile of triumph returned to Louise Goodenow's lips and eyes, the winning graciousness to her words and manners; and before the budding spring had blossomed into summer, she was playing a game with such absorbing interest as to exclude from her thoughts all regret for Horace Metcalf.

Mrs. Howell managed to spend the winter in Hanthrop with tolerable comfort, looking forward, as she wrote Louise, “to a month in Washington, which, after much

careful managing on my part, the doctor has promised me. I have shown him the necessity for a change, and that anxiety to see you and Stephen is wearing on my health and spirits. Working for the Sanitary Commission has become a perfect mania in our city this winter, and as Mrs. Metcalf and some of our most stylish and wealthy ladies have spent nearly all their time in getting up fairs, one may say they are the fashion, and of course I've thrown my influence on the popular side. Gentlemen have been present at our evening gatherings, and some one has read aloud, and there has been ample opportunity for showing off tasteful dress; so that, on the whole, I've not suffered as much from *ennui* as I feared I might, though I've been obliged to make such sacrifices as can only be appreciated by sensitive and refined natures."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

LEAVE-TAKING.

“Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.”

“I ne'er heard yet
That any of these bolder vices wanted
Less impudence to gainsay what they did,
Than to perform it first.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THREE times the pitying heart of Nature strove to cover with verdure and bloom the hideous stains left by war upon the bosom of the old earth, and the snows of three winters were sifted tenderly upon the graves of fallen heroes, while the members of Dr. Howell's family and those intimately associated with them were assisting to color with their own individuality the tide of life that ebbed and flowed around them. During these years, Dr. Howell threw into the broad channels of the Christian and Sanitary Commissions all the time, skill, and energy which could be spared from his duties in Hanthrop. Multitudes of soldiers still live who are indebted to his ripe judgment, clear perceptions, and untiring zeal for the treatment which enabled them to come through the fever ward, or from under the surgeon's knife, with sufficient hope and courage to gather up again the broken threads of life.

Mrs. Metcalf and Diantha wrought and prayed with

that sweetness and patience which are the fruits of Christian charity and the corner-stone of woman's strength.

Mrs. Howell made herself conspicuous at fairs, and at all public gatherings for the benefit of soldiers, exhibiting on every occasion some becoming relic of her foreign tour. She had such an abundant stock of interjections and adjectives for every startling event, that no one could doubt the depth of her sympathy, or the genuineness of her patriotism. With her characteristic tact she managed to break up the monotony of home life by winter visits to Washington and New York; and in summer the plea of illness, and the imperative need of the air and waters of Saratoga, generally prevailed over the doctor's objections, and secured for her a few weeks of such recreations as were the substance of her life.

Ralph Goodenow's own words will best describe the part he was acting in the great drama.

"Yes, doctor, the war has proved a golden fleece to me. I am netting from this contract a clean five hundred dollars per day, and am furnishing the government with as good cloth as any other contractor supplies."

The subject was distasteful to Dr. Howell, and he gave the man no encouragement to proceed. But Ralph Goodenow's boasting and self-conceit were not easily checked by his auditor's cool indifference.

"You see, when I first got an idea of the magnitude of our warlike preparations, I hired several men to canvass the wool-growing districts and purchase for me. Why, bless you! within a month after my return from Paris, I had men in Vermont, Canada, Michigan, and Wisconsin, pulling the wool over the eyes of the producers, figuratively speaking, and filling my pockets with that precious metal which cements society, propels the great car of progress, and marks the dividing line between the upper and lower strata of civilization."

Ralph Goodenow paused, glancing uneasily at the doctor, whose clear eyes appeared to be reading the hidden secrets of the speaker's soul; but not until a direct question obliged the doctor to answer did he gain a response.

"I take it for granted, doctor, that you've been harvesting in a small way during the war; that you have, at least, secured a competency."

"I humbly trust 'the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich, is mine,' and that many a poor soldier has gone on his way rejoicing because of my instrumentality; but I'm proud to acknowledge that of such tangible wealth as is recognized in your world I have less than I had three years ago. Every dollar of my income that could be spared has been spent on the soldiers and their families." Dr. Howell spoke in a tone that forbade any further development of the way Ralph Goodenow served his country and his own interests. The meeting between the two men was accidental, and was made as short and formal by the doctor as civility would permit. The speculator had two or three private sources of income that he did not speak of so freely as he did of his army contracts; but notwithstanding the shrewdness and secrecy with which he furnished blockade-runners with supplies, there came a time when he was conscious of being suspected and watched by Federal detectives. He managed to evade the officers and escape by steamer to England, where, with his accomplished son-in-law, he continued to deal in fancy stocks; but his peculiar vocation made a change of name so frequent and imperative that to follow his uncertain fortunes further would be almost as tedious and disgusting as the records of a police court. Apparently retribution sometimes fails to overtake a man in this life; but Ralph Goodenow and his son found that "he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death." For

nearly three years, Arthur's tact and polished exterior concealed his dissipation, his neglect of official duties, and his embezzlement of public funds; but one fatal day, when his intellect was so stupefied with whiskey that he could not frame plausible excuses, his dishonesty was suspected, his true character unmasked. He was arrested; but for want of sufficient evidence against him, his crimes did not receive their just recompense. He was removed from office, and his intimate connection with the gambling fraternity, coupled with fears that more positive proofs of his defalcations might descend upon him, made a sudden exit from Washington necessary. He left a brief note upon the dressing-table of his handsome wife, explaining the reasons for his abrupt departure, and telling her that "his profligacy, his infidelity to his marriage vows, and his wilful abandonment of her, would be sufficient causes to procure her a divorce from him. Neither judge nor jury would require further testimony than his own written and voluntary confession."

Mrs. Howell was in Washington at the time of the arrest; and so speedily did Arthur's absconding follow this event, that its disclosure had not startled the gay world when Louise, returning with her mother from a brilliant reception, read the contents of the note.

For a single minute, surprise, pain, and chagrin palsied her tongue and blanched her cheeks.

"What is it, Lou?" asked Mrs. Howell, approaching her daughter, and holding out both hands, as if to prevent the trembling woman from falling. "I never saw you so agitated before. What has happened?"

"Read that;" and Louise tossed towards her mother the perfumed, crested sheet of note paper abstracted from her own desk by the heartless writer of the withering words.

"How absurd! 'Tis a cruel joke — no sane man would

criminate himself. Arthur is only punishing you for being so agreeable to other gentlemen — as if you could help being admired!” and Mrs. Howell, with all her knowledge of Arthur’s weakness and wickedness, really believed him incapable of deserting her fascinating daughter.

“No! there is at least truth in this note. I have long suspected him as guilty of almost every crime forbidden in the decalogue. The most generous act he has ever committed is the leaving me now, without another attempt to drag me down to his miserable level.”

“O, Lou, we are ruined! I can never show myself after your disgrace is made common talk.”

“Please remember I’m not disgraced. No one will dare neglect or punish me for the sins of a man who has been my husband only in name. I have maintained my position in the best circles here without any aid from him, and, thank fortune, I’m still able to do so. It seems nothing has been proved against him; and the defalcation and absconding will scarcely be a nine days’ wonder at this crisis, when every week some new and thrilling event startles us.”

“But what shall we do? We can’t possibly go to Madam Devins’s ball to-morrow night, and I’ve had my pearl-colored satin altered and retrimmed on purpose to wear.”

“We’ll go to the ball with the Hapgoods as if nothing had occurred; and after I’ve shown the world that a man’s desertion, cowardice, and crimes cannot rob me of my spirit nor my charms, then I’ll go into a convent, while lawyers are taking necessary steps for my divorce.”

“You are half crazed, dear child, with the suddenness of the shock, and don’t know what you are talking about; but for goodness’ sake don’t mention the word convent again in my hearing. You are shivering with cold. Let me help you undress, and then I’ll ring for a hot whiskey or brandy punch. Which shall it be?”

“I’ve no choice; order what you like. I’m not cold, but I’ve lost control of my nerves and my temper; and I realize for the first time how dangerous I can be when thwarted and angered. This revelation of Arthur’s crimes is not unexpected, but I didn’t mean he should have the satisfaction of leaving me. It has been my intention for six months to procure a divorce from him, because I have become thoroughly convinced that no amount of influence or money could keep him for any length of time in an honorable position. Don’t speak of this disagreeable subject again to-night, mamma. I want time to think my plans over calmly before discussing them.”

And the mother, imperious and dictatorial as she was to all others, bent in silence before the defiant beauty, and assisted her trembling fingers to unclasp the jewels and delicate laces, to doff the paraphernalia of an exquisite evening toilet, mixed with her own hand the spiced whiskey punch, and when she saw its benumbing effects stealthily creeping into Lou’s passionate eyes, she sought her own couch, more earnestly wishing for the soothing presence of Diantha, and the wise counsel of her husband, than ever before. Sleep was a stranger to her eyelids; not because she was dismayed at Arthur’s ejection from office, or shocked with the multitude and heinousness of his crimes, — neither did she recognize, as a sensitive and conscientious soul would, her daughter’s part in the tragedy, — but because she was doubtful what verdict the fashionable clique in which she moved would render in this case; how far she and Lou could again participate in its pleasures. The loss of caste was to her a greater calamity than the blight of sin. The morning’s light found both ladies astir much earlier than their wont. Louise made a particularly careful and dainty toilet; and excepting a slight pallor in her face, and an added brilliancy to her

eyes, there was nothing in her quiet, determined manner to indicate the betrayal of her confidence, or the wreck of her domestic happiness. Perhaps neither confidence nor happiness had been adjuncts of the marriage so summarily broken.

Mrs. Howell looked worn, and at least ten years older than on the previous evening. The seed she had sown was bearing bitter fruit, but there was no escaping from its touch and taste.

"I have already written and sent a note to Major Rush-ton, mamma. He will come as soon as he has breakfasted, and I must see him alone." Lou's words and manner did not encourage a discussion of her affairs even with her mother.

"I really wish the doctor was here, Lou. We might send a telegram to him this morning. He would be sure to start as soon as he heard we were in trouble."

"Yes, and advise me to go back to Hanthrop, and 'turn over a new leaf,' and take Diantha for a pattern! I shall not return to my old home, a deserted wife, to see com-miseration for my supposed grief and disgrace in the faces of those who have always envied me; nor to witness Di's triumph and connection with the Metcalf's family."

"Di isn't engaged to Horace; and she solemnly assured me, not a month since, that he had never asked her to be-come his wife."

"Why does Mrs. Metcalf guard her so zealously, then, if there's no understanding between them? And why has Di refused two eligible offers that have come to your knowledge, if she doesn't aspire to the honor of scattering the Metcalf property amongst her poor people? What Horace can see in such a milk-and-water character to admire is beyond my comprehension; but I suppose reli-gious enthusiasm makes a common bond between them. I

saw enough of their friendship during my last visit in Hanthrop to assure me they would marry as soon as Horace has satisfied his conscience with hospital labors. But why am I spending a thought or a breath on them when my own plans for the future need revising? I have been thinking what is the wisest course for you, mamma. You had better send for the doctor, and go home with him, and settle down to a quiet domestic and religious life, as I mean to do if I live to be as old as you are."

"Lou, I never expected to hear such words from you! I've always been sure of your sympathy."

"And you'll always have it; but I really think you'll be obliged to find more of your happiness in the doctor's home and pursuits hereafter. I can see a great falling off in your health and your looks since you went abroad; and as a matter of taste and policy, 'tis my opinion that charitable and domestic occupations are more becoming to ladies of your age than late hours, full dress, and an anxious toiling to keep pace with the world of fashion. But as for me, I'm only twenty-seven, and I don't mean to allow any mishap to come between me and my enjoyments before I am forty; after that I'll become a Sister of Mercy, and rival Di in good works. Now let us waive all discussion until after we have breakfasted, and I have had counsel of Major Rushton."

It was evident to Louise that Arthur's disgrace was known to the boarders at Willard's when she entered the dining-hall, and that the exclusives had not determined how she was to be received. Her radiant beauty did not command the usual involuntary homage of admiring eyes. A formal nod of recognition from some, a glance of commiseration from others, and a curious, critical look from many more, did not abash Louise. She talked and laughed with her accustomed ease of manner, while her slightest

tone and movement plainly indicated that she was ready to brave criticism and censure, and that with her own personal accomplishments and rare powers of pleasing, she would maintain her position.

Such portions of Lou's conference with Major Rushton as she thought best for her mother to know, we will give in her own words:—

“I've taken the responsibility, mamma, of sending a telegram to Dr. Howell, asking him to meet you in New York. My friend will provide us an escort to that city, and as he thinks it won't be politic or becoming to brave public opinion just now, I've decided to leave here to-morrow.”

“What! with only a half day to pack, and so much time to be spent in dressing for Madam Devins's ball. We can't possibly be ready to start before Thursday.”

“We shall not go to the ball, and Phillis will help us pack.” Louise spoke in a tone that left Mrs. Howell in no doubt as to the unchangeableness of her decision; and the weak woman, with a regretful sigh, saw the coveted pleasure vanish beyond her grasp.

“You will go with me to Hanthrop?” she asked, in a voice tremulous with fear and anxiety.

“No; I have decided to go into a convent in Montreal for six months or a year. Don't look so troubled, mamma; I'm not going to take the veil, but I want entire seclusion, and the opportunity to rest, after five years of constant excitement; and what is more, there is a sister Theresa in the convent, who has been called the most elegant and scholarly woman in Paris. I go to reap the benefit of her instructions; and meantime, Major Rushton knows a lawyer who'll manage my divorce case without any disagreeable publicity; in fact, Arthur's crimes virtually release me.”

“Lou, come back to Hanthrop. The doctor has said, a hundred times, you should be as welcome there as if you were his own child. He’s just and generous, and will never reproach you, nor mention the names of Ralph and Arthur, who’ve turned out even worse than he prophesied they would. You don’t need the instructions of sister Theresa. You are the most accomplished woman now I ever met, and you shall have all the rest and seclusion in our house that you could find in a convent. Have you thought how barren life will be to me without you, and without those pleasures we’ve enjoyed together?”

“You’ll miss me, of course; but you have other children, and Edna is an entertaining girl. You must take an interest in Diantha’s pursuits, and give up a few months to the doctor’s medical treatment; your health is really needing attention. Then I fancy Di will be married within a year, and the preparations for the wedding will divert you.”

“If you should return with me, and let it be understood you had sought a divorce from Arthur because of his dishonesty, and should attend church, and visit the charity schools, and work for the soldiers, there’s no doubt Horace would soon be as deeply in love with you as ever. You are more beautiful than you were five years ago, and no man would marry Diantha if he could have his choice between you.”

“Thank fortune, the choice between us is no longer left to Horace; that time has long since passed. I shall never marry a religious enthusiast. But now to business, mamma. We must leave on the first train to-morrow morning without good bys. When I appear in Washington again, no one will dare remember I was ever a deserted wife. You see I am in excellent spirits, and you’ll be more than reconciled to the change in my fortunes before the close of the year.”

Mrs. Howell was not comforted by Lou's apparent cheerfulness, and endeavored, with tears and entreaties, to dissuade her from the execution of her plans. But no — they had received Major Rushton's sanction, and no arguments could prevail against them — to a convent she must go; and the mother returned to her home, broken in spirit, lamenting her losses, and, as she repeatedly affirmed, "with nothing but the dull routine of home to look forward to."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DOCTOR'S WARD.

"Like the swell of some sweet tune
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June."

LONGFELLOW.

WHAT of Edna Shreve? Can three years come and go without bringing to the young girl an event worthy of record? Was she merely a passive member of the doctor's household while the summers budded, and blossomed, and left their fragrance in her heart and their sunshine in her eyes and on her golden hair? Though her presence was as unobtrusive as the odor of pansies, and as soft as their velvet petals, yet it was as gracious and refreshing as the noiseless, unseen dropping of the dew.

She has been kept so long in the shadowy background of the family history that she is entitled to a separate page, for the proper preservation of her identity. We find her at eighteen a dainty maiden, with a winning grace of manner, a nature sensitive and delicate, responding impulsively to every kind, genial influence, and shrinking from the slightest breath of harshness. Her guilelessness and her delicate beauty throw around her the charm of the first spring blossoms; children cling trustingly to her, while the protective love of stronger souls is spontaneously offered her.

Generous, confiding, and affectionate is Edna Shreve.

and helpful, too, in her pretty way; one to whom you would turn for amusement in an idle hour, but never seek for solace and counsel when Diantha is near. Her singing charms you while her clear, bird-like notes fall on your ear; but you do not carry its echo in your heart, and link with it the sacred associations of your past: it lacks the depth, the richness, the soul of Diantha's music. One is like the rippling of a capricious brook; the other like the grand harmony of ocean waves. In character, Edna is like the clinging, graceful, white-blossomed clematis; Diantha like the combination of summer's rarest flowers. One is like a spring morning; the other, lacking none of the freshness, perfume, and sunshine of the spring, adds to it the richer beauty, the deeper melody, of summer. One is satisfied with romance, poetry, music, and whatever appeals to the sensibilities; the other, even more appreciative of the graces of literature, delves patiently beneath the flowering fields for the precious metals.

It must not be supposed Edna's sweet life was permitted to glide on through the years that witnessed such mighty throes of a nation with nothing to disturb its current. Her blue eyes kindled and overflowed when hope and fear alternately swept their thrilling messages up and down the telegraphic wires; her color was brighter, and her smiles more capricious and tender, when Stephen's short furloughs brought a health-giving aroma to the doctor's quiet fireside; and it was a fact that did not escape the keen eyes of his lady. Mrs. Howell would have been untrue to almost every instinct of her nature had she not opposed the doctor's plans for the protection and education of Edna. Scarcely a month passed that she did not make the girl's residence in their family a sort of hostage for the procuring of her own selfish pleasures. If Edna had not been ornamental and unobtrusive, and in a multitude of ways useful, her

presence would have been a bone of contention in the family that not even the doctor's grace and forbearance could have withstood; and his ward, knowing intuitively that her presence was barely tolerated by Mrs. Howell, wisely continued to make her sunny chamber a "city of refuge," as it was when Diantha's love first ornamented its walls with pictures, filled its windows with flowering plants, and its shelves with the books of her favorite authors.

"'Tis quite time Edna should be earning her own living, doctor," Mrs. Howell remarked one morning, when every other source of domestic difference had been paraded. "She is eighteen now, and prepared to teach French, music, and the common English branches. Mrs. Carlos Hapgood is wanting just such a young lady as a governess for her only daughter, and she'll do well by an amiable, competent person. I answered her letter of inquiry yesterday, and recommended your orphan ward. 'Tis a situation Edna should be very thankful to obtain in these hard times."

"O, mamma, she's still so child-like, so timid and dependent, and so dear to us all! don't think of sending her to strangers," exclaimed Diantha, with an appealing look towards her father.

"One of the principal reasons why she should leave us is, because she is so dear to one member of the family," Mrs. Howell answered. "You must have observed Stephen's infatuation during his last furlough; and I determined, before the impressible boy had another holiday, to remove the loadstone that draws him from the camp and hospital."

"Mary, I saw in Stephen's manner only brotherly regard. He teases Edna and frolics with her as if she were still a child. His work is much too serious and absorbing to allow his fancy or his affections to take deep root." The doctor's

voice and manner were calm and dignified, and in marked contrast to his lady's.

"You judge Stephen by yourself; work and books have always been sufficient for your nature, but my boy has inherited enough of my disposition to want to gild the reality of life with a little romance and sentiment. Love will be as necessary to him as to me."

This, to the doctor, was rather a novel presentation of Stephen's inherited traits; but he withheld comment, and Diantha ventured to make another appeal for her pupil.

"Edna is so much at home with us, mamma, and appreciates your tastes so well, and reads and sings so sweetly, and I feel so easy and happy to leave her with you when I am writing for father, that really I don't know how we can manage without her."

"Just as well as we did before her advent into the family, though I'm willing to admit she's an amiable, obliging girl, and accomplished, too. She has made good use of the advantages we have given her, and I shall miss her reading and singing; but I am ready to make a sacrifice of my comforts for the sake of her future happiness."

"But if you could be convinced that Stephen has only a brother's interest in her, you would let her remain here until he is discharged from army service?"

"No; because it would injure Edna to remain longer in idleness. She must have a profession, and something to depend on. She's a sensible girl, and old enough to know that her position is a false one — treated as if she were a daughter in the family, when she's an orphan whom nobody knows anything about. I have been honest in my dealings with her, and have shown her that I regarded her only as a dependent and an incumbrance. Then, in right school-girl fashion, Edna already thinks she's in love with Ste-

phen; and unless she's sent off immediately where she cannot see him, and will not hear his acts discussed daily, this fancy will become a reality, and may sadly blight the poor girl's life." A stranger to Mrs. Howell would naturally have inferred from her tones that she had a compassionate interest in Edna's welfare.

"Mary, have you thought that if Stephen has more than a brother's regard for Edna, this sending her forth alone into the world will strengthen it? Thinking of her as lonely and unprotected will rouse the tenderness and love of his manly character, which might slumber if he remembered her only as Daisy's sister and pupil. But if the young people are, as you suppose, inclined to fall in love, why throw any hinderances in their way? Edna is accomplished, amiable, and true; and Stephen is energetic, intelligent, and brave. I cannot imagine a more desirable union of mental characteristics."

"You are as unpractical and impolitic, doctor, as if you were just beginning life. You need to be reminded that Stephen will have only the income of a profession, and that Edna is a penniless waif. What folly it would be for our son to marry your ward, when he can select a wife from the most wealthy and accomplished young ladies in our city, and enlarge his sphere of usefulness by a connection with some influential family! Edna's pretty face and graceful manners may possibly attract some one who won't mind her lack of money. I look upon Mrs. Hapgood's application to me as a providential opening for Edna, and you may as well prepare her for the change at once. I'm resolved not to be thwarted in my purposes this time, doctor."

Mrs. Howell paused and looked around with an air that expressed willingness to brave any amount of opposition. But the doctor saw she must not be contradicted; that

every soothing remedy must be used to allay her nervous irritation; and he said, quietly to Diantha, —

“You may leave arrangements for Edna’s future with me; and if your mother feels strong enough to ride, you had better go out with her. Mrs. Metcalf will expect to see you before the day is over. She reached home with Horace by the late train last evening.”

“Have you seen them?” Diantha asked, with an eager questioning in her eyes and a quick flushing of her face.

“I was telegraphed to meet them at the depot. Horace endured the journey wonderfully, and, considering the nature of his wound and his great loss of blood, he is doing well. I saw him again at seven this morning, and have no doubt home comforts, rest, and nursing will bring him up in a few weeks.”

“Don’t speak of wounds before me, doctor! If you could know how my sensitive nerves feel the jar of such disagreeable subjects, you would keep them from me. You needn’t make any arrangements for me to ride; as I’m not in the mood for going out, neither you nor Di will be obliged to sacrifice any of your precious time on an invalid. I am going to economize my strength for Mrs. Blossom’s party this evening.”

“Mary, let me entreat you again to abandon your preparations for this party. You are not strong enough to endure the fatigue and excitement of dressing and meeting friends.”

Dr. Howell spoke earnestly, and there was gentle persuasion in the hand which he laid caressingly on her hair.

“The excitement is just what I’m needing to rouse me. I haven’t been to a party for six months, — not since my dear Lou went with me in Washington, — and I’m really pining for something outside of home. As for strength, no one knows better than I do how much can be endured

when the mind is diverted and interested. You know Mrs. Blossom is very select in her invitations: we shall meet there only the cream of society; and it would be foolish to neglect such an opportunity for showing our style. The preparations won't fatigue me, as my peach-colored satin is all ready to wear. Don't say another word, doctor, unless you want to see me as ill as I was last week, when you first opposed my going to this party."

The doctor certainly did not crave another hysterical scene, and he knew it was useless to reason with her; therefore, without more words, he left her to try the effect of laces, flowers, ribbons, and jewels against the peach-colored satin, which had remained in ignoble seclusion since Lou's abrupt retirement from the gay world.

"Dear father, what can we do for Edna?" asked Diantha, following the doctor from the room. "She must not go to the Hapgoods. I've heard mamma and Lou tell about their style and their fast living till I have sickened with disgust. Mrs. Hapgood goes to the races, and bets, and plays cards, and lives in a constant whirl of excitement."

"One plan only has occurred to me: Edna must be sent to her friends in Hollyville for the present; and then, if Mr. Osborne accepts the professorship which has been offered him in our scientific academy, she can have a home with them, and be near us. Let me give you a text, Daisy, which must be our solace until the way is made clear before us — 'Because Thou hast been our help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.'"

And a few hours later the doctor and his daughter stood face to face with a sorrow which but for their unquestioning trust in His love and mercy whose "right hand upholdeth us," must have fallen with a crushing weight upon their hearts.

Diantha, returning from Mrs. Metcalf's in the waning light of the October day, with a rare contentment, and a new, strange happiness thrilling the pulses of her being, went directly to her mother's chamber.

"Am I late, mamma?" she called, seeing her mother arrayed in the peach-colored satin, but sitting motionless before a table covered with ornaments and the accessories to a full-dress toilet; and, coming forward, she bent to press her accustomed salutation on her mother's face — alas! no longer the handsome, haughty, self-assured face which glowed with determined will when last turned towards her daughter, but purple, distorted, with glaring eyes and open mouth. The crimped and puffed hair, the flashing jewels, fresh flowers, and delicate laces looked strangely defiant of the unexpected guest whose heavy hand had arrested the preparations for display. It was not sleep, and it was not death that had crept so stealthily into the lady's *boudoir*, as Diantha almost instantly perceived. She neither fainted nor called for help, but knelt by the silent, motionless figure, and assured herself that the heart still beat in muffled throbs; then, flying to Edna's room, she sent her for Dr. Howell, and, returning, with tender hands she unloosed the satin robe and the jewels, unbound the artificial plaits, puffs, and crimps of hair, and sought such stimulants and appliances as she knew her father would require, controlling her grief and her tears because of the necessity to act.

"O, Daisy, it has come!" exclaimed the doctor, lifting the stricken woman to a couch; and, kneeling by her side, he laid his ear against her heart.

"What has come?" asked Daisy.

"What I have feared for many months, and with all my skill have tried to avert, God knows! 'Tis paralysis; and doubtless this letter contains the last provoking blow to the poor, over-excited brain."

“O, father, she must speak to us again! She parted from us almost in anger this morning, and I came to her room with such happy thoughts to-night, because at last I had something to tell that would please her.”

“We will work, and pray, and trust to God for help, Daisy; but we mustn't permit grief to overpower us for a single minute.”

And not until the long hours of that night had witnessed the doctor's most untiring efforts to revive that cold and insensible form, did he steal a minute to discover, if possible, the nature of the blow which fell with such benumbing power.

It was a letter from Louise; and as the doctor read it with a heart full of sorrowing love for his wife, he exclaimed aloud, “'Tis just such a harvest of tares as must naturally spring from the seeds sown.”

The daughter's own words will best portray her supreme love of self and the color of her moral code.

“DEAR MAMMA: You won't be surprised to know that I'm married to Major Gilbert Rushton, because you've long been aware of his love and admiration; but you will be disappointed because you were not summoned to the ceremony. It was strictly private, and, in truth, not such a ceremony as our church would sanction, for reasons which you had better hear from me. Gilbert has a wife, hopelessly insane, as a certificate from his family physician assures me. She is in an asylum, where he provides her with every luxury and comfort. Insanity is not a sufficient cause for divorce in England; therefore, as we could not be lawfully married, we met in the convent chapel, and, in the presence of sister Theresa and Colonel Mildmay, a friend of Gilbert, we knelt before the shrine of the virgin

Mary, and promised eternal fidelity to each other. Gilbert put a ring on my finger, calling me wife in the presence of two witnesses. The scene was very solemn and impressive; and I am as entirely satisfied as if the chief justice had sanctioned the ceremony, the pope had read the marriage service, and the bishop had pronounced a benediction. Major Rushton has retired from service, and is very wealthy, owns a large estate in Devonshire, and has settled upon me fifty thousand dollars. We shall spend the larger part of our time in the south of Europe; and when we are at home in England, our wealth, our accomplishments, and our style will secure to us the society of such liberal souls as are lifted above mere forms. Please don't worry about me, mamma; I'm in excellent health and spirits. You shall hear from me sometimes; but it is not likely we shall meet again, unless you cross the ocean to see me; and you know I have advised you to cultivate the domestic graces for the future. When you receive this, I shall be in a steamer bound for Liverpool, twenty-four hours' sail from New York. My travelling suit of pearl-gray poplin is wonderfully becoming; and Gilbert is both proud and fond of me, and I really believe I love him. The doctor and Di will be terribly shocked when they hear how I am united to Gilbert; but never mind: I was born to create a sensation.

Affectionately, your daughter,

LOUISE G. RUSHTON."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE ANGELS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

“ Whom first we love, you know, we seldom wed;
 Time rules us all. And life, indeed, is not
 The thing we planned it out ere hope was dead.”

“ Much must be borne which it is hard to bear;
 Much given away which it were sweet to keep.”

SIR BULWER LYTTON.

WHAT was the “something to tell” which Diantha sorrowed because her mother’s benumbed senses could not rejoice in? Will the knowledge that a new joy was springing from the ashes of a buried hope stain one thread of the white web woven by her pure hands?

Would you rather our Daisy should walk singly the path through life because in the first blush of its morning God had thrown around her the sanctity of a great sorrow? had removed the strong arm and wise heart on which she had timidly dared hope she might one day lean? If any of our readers think a quiet, trusting, self-reliant nature, like our heroine’s, would be more true to the higher and purer instincts of womanhood if she closed her heart to the gently persuasive voice of love at its second coming, and rested content with the echo of that far-away dream, they may leave this page of her history unread.

Many months, even years, drifted back into the eternal past after Captain Ashmead’s pearl ornamented Diantha’s fair hand, while she performed with cheerful earnestness and might whatever Providence gave her to do, thinking

the blessings of God's poor would compensate for the loss of those sweet joys and duties which sanctify and crown a woman's life.

Had not the fragment of a shell spent its last fury on Horace Metcalf as he attended an ambulance filled with the wounded from the battle-field, and sent him home pale, and haggard, and suffering, Diantha might possibly have lived many years, believing that only friendship for the brave man quickened and thrilled the current of her life at the mention of his noble deeds; that only friendship lent a charm to his conversation and attentions which all others lacked. But the first sight of his worn face told her questioning heart that had the shell proved the message of death to her friend, the light of her life would have been wrapped in heavier clouds than she had yet known.

Perhaps the hungry, long-waiting soul of Horace Metcalf saw help, and peace, and life in the blushing, conscious face of Diantha, whose hand his mother held as she approached his couch. Be that as it may, the prostrate man found confidence in the extremity of his need to say what, in the pride and glory of his strength, had often trembled on his tongue, and as often had been choked back, in fear lest his love should fail to awaken an answering note in the heart he coveted.

"Daisy! now, indeed, I am at home, and I thank God for the sight of your dear face," were his first words after Mrs. Metcalf made an excuse to leave the room; and both his hands were stretched out in eager welcome, and in his eyes a tenderer language shone than could be written. Her father's pet name sprang spontaneously to his lips with the tide of love that could no longer be repressed, and his simple utterance of the word "Daisy" was freighted with a meaning which made further revelations unnecessary to the maiden. In the supreme joy and gladness

of knowing she was loved by one who had shown himself so true, and noble, and worthy a woman's trust, she made no effort to conceal what she knew would be to him not alone rest, and solace, and healing, but inspiration and courage. So, with a stammering tongue and dyed cheeks, she simply said, —

“Horace, I know now if you had not lived to come back to us, my days must have been very dark, and my work heavy and wearisome.”

“Shall I give that meaning to your words which my selfishness yearns to? Shall I dare hope that after five years of waiting, and trusting, and loving, God has given me the desire of my soul?” asked Horace, with an intensity that showed how much hung upon the answer.

“You may;” and Diantha's bowed head and dropping tears finished the sentence more eloquently than words could have.

“My Daisy, my precious flower!” What pride of ownership, what protective tenderness, were concentrated in that one possessive pronoun! “I am richly rewarded for years of waiting;” and the trembling hand that touched with a caress and a blessing the beautiful golden brown hair, the broken voice that so humbly thanked her for the gracious hope, brought to Diantha sweet compensation for the silence and dearth that succeeded the burial of her first girlish love. Accepting that sorrow as a heavenly discipline, it had deepened, and purified, and developed her character, so that her second love was correspondingly stronger, more intense, complete, and self-forgetful than the first, as the ingrafted fruit is sweeter, richer, and larger than the natural growth of the tree.

Walking home in the mellow light of the autumn day with a more conscious blush upon her cheeks than the maples wore, a purer radiance in her brown eyes than

gleamed on the golden and amethyst clouds of the sunset, a richer perfume in her heart than the breath of the ripening grain and purple grapes, Diantha thought only of that "something" which would at last satisfy her mother, and met on the very threshold of her new happiness the shadow of the death-angel's wings.

There are many families whose unwritten history would reveal depths of pathos, tragedy, and heroism; homes where a patient, long-suffering mother watches over an infirm child, or conceals the imbecility of one who is "bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh;" where the idol of the hearth-stone goes astray, and though his name is a forbidden sound, yet tender yearnings and agonized prayers follow him, and in the darkness and silence of night there are tears enough shed to wash the black stains of guilt from his soul, had a mother's tears vicarious power.

Many wives, with an heroic sacrifice of self, conceal with tender artifice and watchful love the short-comings of men whom they have promised to honor—await in fear the uncertain step, the possible blow, and the cruel word, while no ear but God's hears the wail of the disappointed heart, and none but the Eternal Eye sees the unloosed fountain of tears. Many women live whose names are worthy of record on history's most honored page, but their acts of tenderness, courage, and devotion are so unobtrusive, so carefully shielded by the intensity and delicacy of their love, that the perfume of their heroic lives is confined to their humble homes.

Very few of those who partook of Dr. Howell's hospitalities, and found strength in his counsels and inspiration, in the genial flow of his conversation,— who saw the serenity of Diantha's face, and listened to the indescribable pathos and sweetness of her voice, and felt the blessing of her gentle presence,— imagined that a home where wisdom,

beauty, and harmony joined hands could contain a skeleton, a thorn that sometimes pierced beneath the panoply of grace and charity worn by the doctor and his daughter. A few might suspect the deep rivers of peace within their souls were sometimes stirred, and that it was not an angel who had troubled the waters; but none could know what a turbid tide had to be met beneath that roof, nor with what patience and tender love it was held in check.

Diantha had need, during the winter that so darkly closed in upon that golden October day, of all the inspiration, sweetness, and strength which the knowledge of Horace Metcalf's love added to her life; dreary months of patient watching by an invalid's couch were relieved and brightened by the sympathy and devotion of her friend. The terrible blow which so suddenly revealed to Mrs. Howell the perishable nature of this world's fashions did not immediately open the gates of the Eternal and Invisible to her clouded vision.

When partial consciousness returned to her benumbed senses, most mercifully the memory of Lou's letter was buried beneath the wreck. The larger part of her past life was as completely blotted from her mind as were ever the feeblest footprints in the sand washed out by the inflowing tide.

Deprived of the power to move from her couch, her intellect weakened, and her temper rendered more fitful and captious than before the shock, she tested most thoroughly the forbearance and love of her husband and daughter.

It was no longer asked under Dr. Howell's roof, "What shall be done with Edna?" but scarcely a day passed that some one did not exclaim, "How could we live without her?"

If she had been a reed swayed by the gentlest breath while the sweet May of her life was bright with blossoms

ald sunshine, now that sorrow and care brooded in the hearts of those who had shielded and loved her, there were found beneath her delicate beauty, and her rippling, bird-like joyousness, endurance, devotion, and self-reliance.

There seemed no end to her winsome little devices for amusing the invalid, maintaining the cheerful aspect of the home, and securing to the doctor and Diantha leisure for their accustomed pursuits.

As the winter wore away, it was evident to her friends that Mrs. Howell's strength was declining, that "the silver cord" was losing its hold. Her temper was less capricious, her spirit was softened, and there were occasional hours when the clouds seemed lifting from her intellect, when she appeared grateful for the love that anticipated her wants.

These slight manifestations of a better spirit were hailed by the doctor and Diantha with inexpressible thankfulness, and abundantly rewarded them for their days and nights of watchful devotion.

Dr. Howell, coming one evening to his wife's room, and finding Edna amusing her with scraps of poetry, snatches from the opera, and favorite old ballads, and observing on the invalid's face unwonted attention and appreciation, took her hand, saying, —

"Mary, what a blessing this little girl has grown to be!"

"Yes, she is a help and a blessing," answered Mrs. Howell, slowly, but with a clearer light in her eyes than had shone in them for many months.

"Am I really a help?" Edna asked, timidly.

"You are a great help, and have been very forgiving in your attentions to me."

The invalid's speech was broken and stammering, but it evinced more tender emotion for the orphan than she had shown in health.

"You are better this evening, Mary?" asked the doctor, sitting down by her couch, and drawing her head tenderly against his shoulder; but the question had hardly escaped his lips when he saw the heavy shadows of the last great change creeping slowly over her features.

"I am better. It seemed as though a heavy weight rolled off my brain when Edna was singing. My dear Lou used to sing that air. Have I been long sick?"

"You were prostrated in October; 'tis now the last of March." Mrs. Howell had never mentioned Lou's name during her illness; and no wonder the doctor was startled, and Diantha came forward and knelt by the couch, while Edna crept softly behind the window draperies to conceal her tears. "Lou has not been heard from since October?" she asked again, after a minute's silence.

"Yes; but you were so ill we thought it better not to disturb you with the letter. It came last December. Lou was well, and was spending the winter in Paris."

"Ah! It has all come back! That miserable Paris has been the cause of all my sorrow. My false pride has ruined my child."

"My dear wife, try and leave your sorrows and burdens with One who knows well how to measure your temptations and your weakness. Think only of the tender mercies with which God has crowned your days."

"I believe I should not be so unmindful of my duties, nor so neglectful of your wishes and of our children, if I could take my place in the world again. Let me see Lou's letter."

Dr. Howell, holding the cold hand of his wife, noting the ebbing pulse and the purple shadows, knew the unveiling of her intellect was but the prelude to a sleep from which there would be no awakening on this side the dark valley, and that news from her daughter could not harm her now.

“Bring the letter, Daisy,” he said to the patient daughter, who still knelt silent and tearful by her mother’s side. But when the letter was brought to the dying woman, she only touched it with her lips, and placed it beneath her pillow.

“Tell Lou I forgave her; that my whole life was a mistake; that I died praying God to forgive me, and to turn her heart from the follies I taught her to love. O, Stephen, you once loved me; and you’ve always been patient and generous. Write to my poor child and save her, if it is not too late!”

“I will do all for her that human strength and love can do;” and the doctor sealed his promise with a kiss upon those lips which had so rarely opened with tenderness for any but Louise, and which would soon be insensible to love’s pressure.

“Come nearer, Daisy. ’Tis too late now for me to tell you that I’ve always been aware of your goodness and your patience, and have been secretly glad because you were like your father, though I was too proud to acknowledge it. You will be his help and comfort. It is too late for me — too late!”

“Mary, dear wife, it is never too late for Christ’s love to reach us, for His blood to cleanse us! Trust Him now.”

“I have sinned against great light, and I’m afraid ’tis too late.”

“Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart,” the doctor quoted, with a trembling voice; and then for a few minutes only the breath of silent prayer was wafted from the sorrowing souls who watched the ebbing life-flood.

“Tell Stephen I loved him, but my pride and my worldly ambition came between me and all that might have sweetened my life and softened my heart. I shall never see him again. Am I dying, doctor?”

Only a closer pressure of the cold hand and a more lingering kiss upon her cheek could the doctor give in answer.

“Do you forgive me, husband?”

“As freely as I hope God, for Christ's sake, will forgive us both.”

“For Christ's sake! There are comfort and rest in that sound. Pray that my repentance may not be too late.”

Is it ever too late for an appeal to reach that Infinite Love, which, forgetful of the height, depth, and breadth of agony that overwhelmed His soul, could breathe words which come down through eighteen centuries of change, bearing the same hope and healing as when they touched the crucified malefactor with the glad news, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise”? which sees the repentant sinner while yet he is a great way off, and enfolds him in arms of mercy?

Dr. Howell and Diantha believed in God's omnipotent readiness to save, and that belief upheld and comforted them during the silent watches of the night; and when the dying woman exclaimed, “Tell Lou it was not too late; God has heard your prayers for Christ's sake!” there was a note of grateful joy mingled with the wail of grief, as both became conscious that death had forever sealed the lips of that erring wife and mother.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCLUSION.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy
 As in a soul remembering my good friends
 And as my fortune ripens with thy love,
 It still shall be thy true love's recompense."

SHAKESPEARE.

SIMPLY writing to Louise did not satisfy Dr. Howell ; though a letter, couched in the tenderest terms, containing her mother's last message and the most carefully expressed counsel, with assurances that his house and protection should still be her refuge, was despatched as soon as sorrow permitted him to use his pen. But the spirit of his promise to his dying wife required something more — an effort that could not be so easily thrust aside as could written words.

To see this wayward woman, whose soft, infantile beauty appealed almost as strongly, twenty-five years before, to the doctor's large heart, as did the graces of her young, widowed mother, was now an absorbing thought with him. The memory of those discordant notes that had jarred the harmony of his domestic life, of the cold selfishness that had clouded his home, was softened by the sanctifying touch of death, and buried in the grave of the woman whose charms had first opened his heart to the supreme joy and blessedness of forgetting self in love for another — only the sacredness and beauty of his ideal remained: the doctor could not take up contentedly his

beneficent mission of healing until his own heart had partaken of that sacrament which the fulfilment of love's last solemn trust brings. But not until the rejoicing soul of the nation poured out its glad, triumphal song of welcome to the returning dove, not until above the troubled waves of war an Ararat appeared on which our hopes could rest, did Dr. Howell dare take the time to redeem his pledge.

"Daisy, what should hinder us now from sailing in the Hibernia, the last of this month?" asked the doctor, one June day, when the old earth's gladness rippled in waves of bloom, and a soft mantle of green shrouded Mrs. Howell's grave, and peace, and hope, and faith were the guests of those hearts that had watched and sorrowed with such patient love.

"Nothing should keep you from enjoying a holiday now, father; and surely nothing would please me better than to go abroad with you, if it were not for the work that would be left undone. I suppose we may look for Horace and Stephen almost any day; and I want to make their return as joyous as possible, to compensate them for some of the self-denials and hardships of the last four years. Since you first spoke to me about making this tour, I have looked at the plan on all sides, and have decided that the claims of Horace, Stephen, and Edna are paramount to everything else."

"You have made just that decision which I might have known your constant thought for others would lead you to; but new claims have arisen since I last talked with you. I received letters this morning from Horace and Stephen; their regiments have been discharged, and we may expect them home in a few days. Horace wishes to spend the summer and autumn in Europe, because his health has suffered from exposure and his wounds."

"Why didn't he tell me?" asked Diantha, breaking in

upon her father's narration with an eagerness and anxiety in her tones that betrayed glimmerings of her love.

"Because, Daisy, he cannot leave you to go in search of rest and recreation, and his delicate thoughtfulness will not permit him to ask you to accompany him as his wife so soon after your affliction, fearing you may make too great a sacrifice of personal feeling for his sake. But he bade me ascertain, as carefully as possible, your wishes; and if I think you can reward his constancy now, I am to give him such a hint as will make the pleading of his own cause easy. I have already consulted Mrs. Metcalf, since the reception of Horace's letter, and she thinks you are needing the entire change and the recreation of foreign travel nearly as much as her son does. She says you will not be obliged to give any thought to the usual bridal outfit and ceremonies, and you will have nearly three weeks for preparation. Daisy, what answer shall I make Horace?"

"'Tis so soon after poor mamma's death," sobbed Diantha, hiding her face against her father's breast.

"But, my dear child, the most critical and fault-finding cannot charge you with forgetfulness; and, moreover, we long ago decided to let our hearts and our consciences govern our acts, and not the customs of society. Undue mourning for those who have passed beyond us cannot benefit them, and may interfere with duties we owe the living. I need not remind you of Horace Metcalf's long waiting, his devotion and constancy, and his need of your love, and care, and cheerful society, now; but I will venture to add weight to his prayers by telling you I have counted on your direct personal power over Louise; a sister's pleading tenderness may win her when a step-father's entreaties prove unavailing. Stephen will go with us to pursue his medical studies in Paris, and Edna can remain

with the Osbornes, where she is so useful and so much beloved. Look up, Daisy, and tell me if I shall summon Horace to plead his own cause."

"It shall be as you wish, father."

"No, Daisy; in such an important crisis of your life, 'tis your wish that must decide the question. Unless the strongest tide of your heart, the purest instincts of your nature, flow out spontaneously towards Horace, send him to Europe alone. Don't mistake friendship for the love that can make such a union pure and blessed, and don't let pity for him, nor duty, nor regard for my wishes, color your decision."

Daisy's head was raised now; and if her hesitation had caused the doctor momentary anxiety regarding the nature of her feeling for Horace, all doubt vanished when he glanced at the clear lines of her face and heard her low confession:—

"I love him, father; I am honored by his choice; and it will be my joy to be his wife. I am ready to sail for Europe in three weeks, if he wishes it."

"Spoken like my own honest, single-minded Daisy, and Horace will best know how to thank you."

But the doctor proved a false prophet so far as the young man's words could be taken as an expression of his gratitude; for when he received Daisy's verbal answer, with her face veiled in blushes, the poverty of his language granted little more than repeated exclamations of,—

"I can never thank you, my Daisy."

And then, three weeks later, the doctor's daughter stood upon the deck of the *Hibernia*, leaning on Horace Metcalf's arm with such trustful love and faith in her calm eyes, such serene joy in her upraised face, as left neither her husband nor father in doubt as to the fervor and purity of a second love.

“Daisy, I have dared dream of this day, when I could call you wife, when your purity would draw me up to your heights,” Horace Metcalf said to the woman whose hand he held, and whom any man might be proud to call by the sweetest of all names.

“Say, rather, when our united love, and work, and prayers would draw us both into a purer air.”

“If that manner of stating the case pleases you, I am content, so long as I feel the clasp of your hand and know your voice will be my daily music, my solace when weary, and my inspiration at all times. You can never know how deeply I am indebted to you for all that is true and worthy in my life.”

“You over-estimate the little I have done, Horace; but it pleases me to know the indebtedness is not all on my side.”

“Pray tell me what I have done for you.”

“Years ago your conversations encouraged me to read more extensively and accurately, that I might meet you half way in an interchange of thought; and your appreciation of my music stimulated me in attaining a higher culture than my own ambition would have sought. As long ago as that summer in Carrhaven your friendship seemed an inestimable blessing to me, and during this last year your love has helped me through the severest discipline of my life.”

Diantha was not wont to speak much of herself; but though a wife scarcely two hours, her new relations had given her confidence.

“And your words of hope and love have risen above the din and tumult of war — above the groans of my suffering men — have sustained me through many a struggle — and have drawn my stumbling feet into clearer paths.”

With one more picture of our heroine, whom sorrow has chastened, love purified, and faith ennobled, we must leave the canvas to be filled in with colors from the reader's fancy.

In one of the charming villas that ornament the shores of Lake Lucerne, Diantha met her half-sister. Major Rushton's name was known to the English consuls and bankers in the principal cities of Europe, so that Dr. Howell had no difficulty in finding his summer retreat. Diantha was overcome with emotion; and the history of their mother's last hours fell from her lips in broken sentences and with a gush of tears, while Louise, with elegant composure, listened politely, sighed, and once or twice raised a dainty bit of lace and cambric to her eyes.

"It was so like poor mamma to think of me till the very end," she said, when her sister's narration was concluded; "but she might have used her last breath more happily than in sending me such dismal messages. However, her intent was good; and I'm really sorry that her life looked so dwarfed to her at its close, and that she seemed conscious only of its mistakes."

"Dear Lou, if you could have seen the anxiety in her eyes, and have heard the pleading eagerness of her tones, her words would have rung in your memory for life, and I'm sure they must have shown you the danger of living only for this world."

"Then it was in keeping with my accustomed good fortune that distance prevented me from seeing and hearing, for I have an instinctive dread of disagreeable scenes. It is my pleasure to remember only what was bright in mamma's life; and I shall place no weight on the incoherent sentences that escaped from a soul jangled out of tune by disease. When mamma was in health, she was a sensible, ambitious woman, and had very just and politic views

of life. I have profited by her precepts and example ; and as fortune has given me a broader field, I intend to reap a richer harvest."

"Your talents might be of such inestimable value, dear Lou, if they were consecrated to the Master's service, and might win for you pleasures more noble and enduring than you have ever dreamed of."

"You cannot judge me from your stand-point, Di; you are wrapped in a mantle of forms and prejudices, and your soul is filled to repletion with husks that would starve mine. I must have beauty and pleasure, while you are content with duty."

"Don't send me away hopeless for your future, dear sister."

"Poor, simple-hearted Daisy! you are only a field-flower, without color or fragrance — of a type as common as meadow-grass; while I am like a passion-flower, rich and tropical in my nature. You may have hopes or misgivings for my future, as you please; but don't trouble me with any more sermons. I told Dr. Howell this morning that I couldn't receive him again, unless he assured me that disagreeable themes should be avoided."

All the fervor and tenderness that love and pity could command the doctor and Diantha used in pleading with this cold, selfish woman; but they were obliged to leave her, wrapped in the sheen of a false beacon, that was luring her into depths of darkness from which human hands could never lift her.

We would gladly follow our friends through Europe, and behold with them the wealth of scenery, the glories of art, and the grand ruins of buried centuries, and listen with them to the majestic hymn of Nature, sung by vine-clad hills, lofty mountains, and musical rivers, garnering with them a harvest of melody, beauty, and knowledge;

but the limits of one small volume will not permit. We would gladly show you with what content and joy Diantha sits by the fireside of her husband's heart, feeding its flame; how he grows nobler and purer through the sweet influences of her love; with what womanly grace and dignity she presides in a home made beautiful by the union of wealth, taste, and affection; how good deeds flow like still, deep, and abundant waters from her hands, and the incense rising from her bounty falls in blessing on her heart; but we can only say, her noble endeavors, pure faith, and Christian charity fill her home with gladness and peace, and make her life a beacon of hope to many struggling, fainting souls.

Edna Shreve is equally at home with the Metcalfs and Osbornes; and her face is like an April sunbeam, her voice like the carol of birds, her presence as welcome and grateful as the breath of spring. More than one heart thanks God that this rare and delicate flower was thrown by the wreck of the *Stella* into Dr. Howell's keeping; and if around Stephen's life its beauty and perfume should hereafter cling, the harmony and fitness of such a combination would be recognized by all.

The scientific academy in Hanthrop owes much of its prosperity to the wealth, talents, and æsthetic culture of Horace Metcalf, Professor of *Belles Lettres*; it is the first fruit of that new growth whose seeds were sown by Diantha's pure hands and persuasive voice, and is doubtless regarded by its founder with much the same pride and tenderness one would bestow upon a first-born child. The academy is greatly indebted also to the energy, faithfulness, and brains of Rev. William Osborne, who finds here a wider and more congenial mission than in his Vermont pastorate.

Stephen, after two years of study in Germany and

France, returned to Hanthrop, taking upon his strong hands and courageous spirit the burdens of that profession which, for more than a quarter of a century, his father's enthusiastic devotion, scientific skill, and genial spirit had honored; while Dr. Howell, with a white frost upon his hair, and deeper furrows in his face than when he first appeared in these pages, still engages with unabated ardor in whatever work can bless and ennoble humanity. But if the sorrows and cares of life have frosted and thinned his hair, and left their footprints on his face, the seal of unclouded faith, liberal study, generous impulses, and thoughtful zeal for the welfare of others, more than compensates for the ravages of time. His eye has lost none of its radiance, his heart none of its charity, his voice none of its kindness, and his hand none of its readiness to perform the behests of a spirit which looks for no other reward than the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant."

If, in the unartistic and unpretending, but truthful sketches of real life, culled from the history of those who have rejoiced, and sorrowed, and labored with us, the writer has failed to portray the loveliness of that wisdom "which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits," — if she has failed to make an aimless, selfish existence, and a vain struggling for the world's applause, seem ignoble, and its fruits bitter, — then, indeed, her mission has failed of that fruition which makes all labor blessed.





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