



ROMANCE OF THE NEW BETHESDA



By
MRS. JANE L. PATTERSON

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ROMANCE

NEW BETHESSA

JAMES MITCHELL

Author of "The Heart of the Matter"

BOSTON

THE CENTRAL BOOK CONCERN

1888

THE
ROMANCE
OF THE
NEW BETHESDA

BY

JANE LIPPITT PATTERSON

AUTHOR OF "VICTORY" AND "OUT OF SIGHT"



BOSTON
UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE
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TO

The Memory of the Hostess,

WHO ENTERED UPON THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE JUST AS
HOPE'S EARTHLY VISIONS WERE TAKING ON
THE VESTMENTS OF REALITY,
YET WHOSE SERENE AND PERVASIVE SPIRIT STILL LIVES IN
THE IDEAL SUMMER HOME
CROWNING THE HEIGHTS ABOVE KINGDOM STATION,

This Volume

WHICH RECORDS HOW LOVERS WERE SAVED TO EACH OTHER
TO BECOME AN EXAMPLE OF THE IDEAL FAMILY
LIFE, BY THE MIRACLE HELP OF
THE NEW BETHESDA,

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED.

J. L. P.

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THE ROMANCE
OF
THE NEW BETHESDA.

CHAPTER I.

TOWARD THE NORTH STAR.

“**K**INGDOM STATION! This is the place, and I am tired enough to be glad to leave these dusty cars.”

“Charles, it cannot be! Who expected to land in a wilderness? Maine is an old State, and I thought the New Bethesda would be in some lovely and cultivated portion.”

“We have not reached the New Bethesda. There are four or five miles of mountain road. I wonder where the stage is?”

Charles and Catharine Raynor look about the dingy station. There is no life in sight except the ticket agent. They make inquiries.

“Stage to the New Bethesda! Guess not. You’ll never see a stage runnin’ over them roads, never!”

“But how do the sick people reach the Spring?”

“Don’t many sick people go. Rossville’s one-hoss wagon is enough to tote all the folks that’s fools enough to come here, just to drink nothin’ but water.”

“We did not announce our arrival, and expected a coach.”

“You’ll see one of the boys trottin’ in. They come to the train, mostly. They’ve sort o’ got in the way of expectin’ somebody.”

Charles and Kate, wondering how anybody could come “trottin’” over such rough roads, looked away toward the hills which lift their wooded heights about Kingdom Station, and sure enough there was “Rossville’s one-hoss wagon” coming with a speed to startle Jehu himself.

Hugh Rossville, the Jehu driver, leaves his tired steed and looks about the station for packages destined to the Old Stage Tavern, and such letters and papers as make up the mail. Mr. Raynor arranges for his own transport, and sits down to await the convenience of the young man.

With lawyer-like perception he takes in the bright parts of this embryo Yankee, a type with which he is but just becoming acquainted. In the land of Friends whence he has journeyed there is more repose, a kind of leisurely waiting for something to turn up, while the genuine Yankee impresses him with his determination to make the world move somewhat after his own energetic wish. This visit to New England had not been undertaken for pleasure. Esquire Raynor had not been one of those who take life restfully, after the fashion of the typical Friend. Of a nervous temperament, he had driven his work like a two-in-hand team on a race-course, until he had suddenly come to a precipice. With one startled glance he confronted the danger, seeing no possible way of escape, until some-

body who had emigrated from that vicinity told him about the miracles wrought by the New Bethesda. All that a man hath will he give for his life; and Charles Raynor grasped at the straw held out to him.

He was just forty years old, in the very prime of his strength and usefulness. He could not afford to die. He had four sons and a daughter to educate, a large and growing practice to carry on, the prospect of a seat in the Capitol should he allow the use of his name; and besides, he knew it would absolutely kill his wife to lose him. Esquire Raynor's was a happy marriage. A good deal of romance had gathered about it, and the light, and summer weather of youth were deepened and glorified by the passage of the years. He was a very considerate and kind husband and father. "Put yourself in his place," was the motto of his life, and he tried in all family and social relations to do as he would be done by. In the law, if he could not defend the righteous cause he would leave the case to a less sensitive conscience. Kate was a plain, sensible girl, and she matured roundly and righteously. She appreciated and almost adored her husband.

As they left the train at Kingdom Station, she helped him carefully down the steps, and he took her arm in walking. He looked ill. There was a deathly pallor about his ears and neck, and the impress of pain on his lips and forehead. The journey had been undertaken by Mrs. Raynor with scarcely a ray of hope; and when her husband compared the motion of the cars to little sharp saws severing nerves as sensi-

tive as pain could make them, her heart sank within her, —

“As in wells the water sinks before an earthquake’s shock.”

Hugh is ready to start, and Kate helps her invalid husband climb into the wagon; the trunk and handbags have already been placed in position, and the jolting process begins. If the motion of the cars had cut like little knives or sharp-toothed saws, where could comparison be found for the movement of this uncomfortable vehicle over a stony and gullied mountain road? They try to forget in conversation the stinging pangs. I say *they* advisedly, for every pain which Charles Raynor felt, was like a stab in the live heart of his wife.

“How many does your hotel accommodate?”

“Thirty, mebber, by crowdin’. We’ve been puttin’ on more rooms. It’s the Old Stage Tavern.”

“How did you come to know that the Spring was medicinal?”

“As long ago as the farm was cleared the men found out they felt better when they filled their jugs out of this Spring, and some of ’em that was ailin’ got well.”

“But how long since people began to come here for the benefit of the water?”

“Only a little while. Ten years would more than cover it. First one came, and then more. You see it cures every time, and they tell of it and send their friends. I reckon you’ve come quite a piece?”

“A journey of seven hundred miles, my young friend; and if the journey does not kill me there may be some chance for the Spring to cure me.”

They were now reaching the steepest portions of the road, and the roughness did not diminish with the ascent. Mr. Raynor held himself in semi-suspension by grasping the wagon-seat with his hands. Mrs. Raynor tried to help him sustain the shocks of the stony way, while her face wore a look of anguish pitiful to behold.

There needed to be a large infusion of faith in the New Bethesda to bridge the passage from Kingdom Station to its crystal depths; and really this mundane shaking was removing the tired pair farther and farther from the spiritual realm. But all things earthly have an end. It is so with a rough mountain road. It is so with the seas of difficulty and distress through which at times we must needs wade, — the dark waters to our very lips. The wooded way is overpast, and on the border of a green meadow the tired horse halts. At the right is a small enclosure, and under its roof the New Bethesda. Hugh alights, and brings the travellers a refreshing draught in a tin cup. It holds a pint, and Mr. Raynor is told that he must drink it all. He sips gingerly.

“It is just like any water. It does not taste a bit better than our well. Try it, Kate.” Kate tries it, and being thirsty drains the last drop. It is good pure water and she likes it.

“Take another cupful, Mister?”

“No more, thank you. I could not drink another drop;” and Hugh leaps into the wagon and drives up the green meadow path until the summit of the hill is at length reached, and then over a slightly inclined way to the Old Stage Tavern.

The travellers go to their room, — a small corner bedroom with two windows, one of them looking toward the sunset. It will be an hour to supper-time, and Mr. Raynor, utterly tired out, falls asleep. Kate moves noiselessly about, bathing in the bright water, and putting on fresh garments. Then she takes in the sunset view. It is magnificent. Already a degree of rest is stealing into heart and brain. She takes up a Bible from the little table and reads again the grand old promises which have girded her so many times: "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

"Charles is sleeping so restfully, it is a pity that resounding bell should strike just now," she says to herself. But he is a light sleeper, and its first crash wakens him.

"It means supper, I suppose," he says, starting up; "and I am positively hungry." Kate smooths his hair, and they go down the one short flight to a large, plain dining-room. The table is amply supplied with nutritious and well-cooked food. This, Kate is glad to find, for she herself is an adept in the culinary art, and therefore Charles a connoisseur. They are refreshed, and she leads him to the piazza and points out the sunset hills. He looks in a half-hearted manner and turns away, saying, —

"Some other time; some other time. I am too sleepy to see, and too tired to know a sunset cloud from a farthing candle."

Mr. Raynor again sips faithlessly from the water supplied to every room, and is soon asleep. Kate watches awhile to see if he is breathing regularly,

and then she confides in the watch of Him who never slumbers, for she needs rest.

The twenty guests who had sat before them like misty shadows at the supper-table were individually defined in the morning light. Some introductions were passed. They were people from the near cities, Boston the most distant representative. Kate was an eager reader of human faces, and a dark-eyed Boston youth who sat near interested her. He had an intelligent face and manner. They called him Nickerson. She had heard of the characteristics of representative "Hub" people, and was glad to see the type correspond with the heraldry of song and story. The at-home atmosphere was pleasing. Ladies wore calico wrappers and looked comfortable. They had evidently come for rest, and not for dress parade. The bright little daughter of the house who served the tables, her smiling face unclouded by the most unreasonable demands, was in herself a study. She saw the hostess, a tall, strong woman, with a serene face, as though no sorrow ever stirred her heart. She went about her cares, herself a harder toiler than her servants, and to her supervision the appetizing table was largely indebted. She was a woman of few words. She talked well when called out on any question of interest; but she revealed her womanly worth in deeds, not words, guiding her house with discretion, and making of each guest a family member.

After breakfast Charles felt well enough to sit awhile on the piazza and get the bearings of the place. He looked away from the rickety barns, which after New England fashion were almost a part of the house

itself, so near was their location, to the hills across an adjacent valley.

“Something like the Alleghanies, Kate, about Vinetown.”

Kate was glad to have him observe a home-likeness in the scenery. This would help him to the content which is in itself a part of convalescence.

“Any boats on the lake?” to Hugh passing toward the barn.

“Nobody cares for boats here.”

“How shall we pass our time? Getting well is tiresome business.”

“They mostly ride over to the Shakers, and have hammocks in the woods, — that, and going to the Spring. Go to the Spring three times a day, regular. I tell ye there’s enough to do.”

“The woods! Why, yes, there’s a pine forest just back of the house. Kate, did we bring our hammock?”

Being assured that the hammock was safe in the bottom of the trunk, Mr. Raynor leaned back in his easy-chair and feasted his eyes upon the hills. He had a native love for high land. Mountains and great elevations were his delight. He felt at home on the highest spots of earth. He was born on the dividing ridge between the Atlantic and the Ohio, and doubtless this love of the tops of things was inherited. Then as the dew dried off the grass they went to the pines and swung their hammock. While Charles rested in the most listless way, Kate read to him from George Eliot’s latest novel, or humored his mood by silence. He declined riding to the Spring, wishing to

get healed of yesterday's hurts before trying the one-horse wagon again.

While walking down the soft pine-carpeted path at the call of the dinner-bell, they met for the first time the proprietor of the Old Stage Tavern, Mr. Rossville himself, who hailed them right heartily.

"I suppose you are the new arrivals. I had to go to the county seat yesterday on business, and was pretty late getting home, and slow in turning out this morning. My Hugh says you've come all the way from Pennsylvania?"

"Yes, we have heard of your Spring even there."

"The fame of this Spring will go all over this country. It will go all over Europe too. I've had a vision, and seen people coming here from all parts of the world, — coming to be healed; and they were healed every time. I suppose you're sick, or you never would come so far. Pains about your back?"

Being assured that the back was the one weak spot in the Raynor constitution, and that the pains had continued until the lawyer's proverbial backbone seemed only a memory, Mr. Rossville continued:—

"The New Bethesda will make you as strong as Samson. You'll forget in a month's time that you ever had backache, or any other ache. There was Judge Hallet came here last year so weak we had to bring him up on a bed. He stayed three weeks, and when he left, walked all the way to Kingdom Station. Worse off than you are! All you have to do, is to drink the water and it will cure you."

The enthusiasm of Mr. Rossville was reassuring, and Esquire Raynor actually drank a tumblerful before

dinner,—a feat which one hour ago he would have deemed impossible. He did full justice to the ample table, and remarked, on returning to the pines, that he believed his appetite was improving.

Kate had used her eyes at the table and descried a new face.

“Did you notice, Charles, a young lady with that elegant Bostonian?”

“No, Kate; I was so intent on the one subject before us, I hardly saw the people; I don’t believe I spoke to Nickerson.”

“Why, Charles! He is altogether the most interesting guest here. You ought to cultivate his acquaintance. He is a brother lawyer, too.”

“How did you learn all that so soon?”

“Susie, the little waiter, told me. The girl was right pretty, a beautiful contrast, with her blue eyes and yellow curls, to his dark complexion. I don’t think she can be his sister, though Susie says he is here for his health, and perhaps his sister might have come to keep him company. Sometimes you see those contrasts in the same family. It will be ever so much more interesting if she is his sweetheart.”

“Oh, Katy, you will never get over being interested in lovers!”

“Why should I, Charles? Love is the most interesting thing in the world—”

“You forget the New Bethesda, that is going to be famous in all parts of the civilized globe.”

“The New Bethesda is interesting because it saves lovers to each other. If it cures you, Charley, it will be love’s friend and helper. I make no doubt Judge

Hallet, too, had a wife and children. Life is fearfully short, anyway. Nobody wants to die at forty,—nobody who has a lover.”

Just then young Nickerson with the blond lady drew near. He bore on his arm a fine manila hammock. She helped him adjust it to the slender pines, and then they both sat in it, a book between them.

Charles saw the arrangement, and lifted himself from his reclining posture, inviting Kate to share the hammock with him.

“No, Charles; he is not nearly so sick as you are, and he has not journeyed seven hundred miles. You must keep lying down until you are rested; then it will be time enough to pattern after the Boston lawyer and his sweetheart.”

“You are sure she is a sweetheart, Kate?”

“Just seeing them together proves that. Girls that are not sweethearts do not look at men in such confiding ways. If they do, we say they are not good girls.”

“But sisters might.”

“Not just like that, Charles, you know!”

Charles was convinced of the relations between Mr. Nickerson and the blond lady, and the reading went on; Kate measuring the involved sentences of the story until her husband was lulled to sleep. Then she leaned back in her easy-chair, and indulged in a dream of home. She had never journeyed so far from the children, and a mother's anxiety obtruded at times amid her hopeful thoughts. She thrust it resolutely aside. They were well protected. Grandmother would guard them, and faithful Dinah supply

their daily needs, and above all was the Watcher of even little sparrows! How drowsy the voice of the light wind among the pines! The flies buzzed in monotone; a distant haymaker stopped to whet his scythe; the noises about the barn grew indistinct, and a light shadow fell across the face of the sun.

“Catharine! what does this mean? It is six o’clock. I never slept so soundly in my life, — or not since I was a child. I fear it will hurt me. You should have wakened me, Catharine.”

“Catharine,” fully herself now, and all of a tremor because of the measured intonations of her name and the implied rebuke, — Charles always called her Kate or Katy, unless in a rebukeful mood, — started to her feet and tried to think where she was, and what strange oblivion had come over her.

“Why, Charley! we came here right after dinner, did n’t we? and I read, and we talked about the lovers. I must have been asleep too, Charles, and how could I waken you? Yes, my neck is lame from tip-tilting against the chair-back. I am very sorry, dear. But I don’t think it will hurt you. At any rate, the water, Charles, — the water will make amends for the mischief of the long nap.”

While untying the hammock they heard the inviting supper-bell. Charles, seeing his wife’s real anxiety, conceded that perhaps he had been unduly alarmed, and the nap might not hurt him, after all.

“But I don’t understand it, Katy. It must be the effect of the open air; you know when I went down to Virginia, I told you I slept better in camp with the soldiers than ever before. Yes, it is the open

air, and this silence too. It is the most quiet place possible."

Mr. Rossville was on the piazza when the pair came up, and they told him about the afternoon sleep; Esquire Raynor adding that it was doubtless the effect of the open air.

"Yes, the open air did something towards it. The air here is very soothing. It rests nervous people right off. But the main thing, 'Squire, is the water. A girl came here year afore last, and she had n't slept all night for ten months, and the very first night she slept so heavy her mother had to shake her right smart to wake her at all, and it was ten o'clock in the morning."

"It can hardly be the water, with me. I have drunk too little to have any marked effect as yet."

"What did you come here for, — to just see the New Bethesda, and not let the angel put you in? The water, I tell ye, will cure, if you drink enough of it; but it won't do any good if you leave it inside the Spring. How much do you drink? A goblet full! You go in and get your supper, and then I'll show ye how to drink!" And the old man stalked away half angry at 'Squire Raynor's delicate sipping.

"How happy they look!" Kate whispered to Charles, meaning the Boston lawyer and the blond lady. "He ought to introduce her. Maybe he will if we give him a chance. Let us go to the piazza. I notice they sit there awhile after leaving the table."

"Yes, if you like;" and they moved to the coveted

spot where everybody could see the lights and shadows about the sunset hills.

He did introduce her, — “Miss Ingalls,” of Cambridge. Afterward they learned that her given name was Gertrude. He called her Gerty. She was a graceful creature in form and manners, and Kate was quite in love with her before the short watch suddenly came to an end by the appearance of Mr. Rossville bearing a three-pint water-pitcher.

“Now, look here, young man from Pennsylvania, you are tired yet, and need a good deal of sleep. I’m the Doctor of this hotel, and you just go upstairs while I prescribe for ye.”

’Squire Raynor made ready to obey, and Kate, too, rose as if to accompany him. Doctor Rossville turned to her with an imperative gesture.

“You can stay here fifteen or twenty minutes. It won’t take me longer than that to diagnose your husband; he needs somebody to make him do what he ought to.”

Kate had a little longer time to call the interest of the lovers outside of themselves, and then she, too, went to her chamber. On the way she met the Doctor. In passing, he said, “You just make him do as I tell him, or he’ll die within three months.”

With such a heavy issue to face, Mrs. Raynor hurried on. Charles was in bed, holding the water-pitcher to his lips.

“He says I must drink this pitcherful before I go to sleep, Kate. It seems impossible.”

But Charles Raynor, who had not admitted the impossible into his manner of life heretofore, summoned

some of the energy of his days of health, and determined to obey. Before eight o'clock the empty pitcher slipped from his sleepy hands with a faint jingle, and he forgot in sweet oblivion the imperative order of the Doctor.

He was surprised, as he began to move about next day, to find himself much improved. When the one-horse-wagon was harnessed to transport invalids to the Spring, he took a seat with the rest. His faith had received wonderful stimulus, and he followed the Doctor's orders as to the quantity needed to cure. Three times a day he jolted down to the Spring and emptied the rusty pint. In a few days Kate was delighted to find him ready for a walk through the long path, where they revelled in the beauty of the sylvan solitude, stooping to gather many known and new growths that made the ground like a tufted carpet. How glorious it was to be able to climb from rock to rock, to run a little in this out-of-sight place, and remember, and in a measure feel, the invigorating pulse of youth!

The croquet-ground charmed him. He had not played much since childhood. Even the posture necessary here did not bring back the menacing pain, and when one evening, as the guests watched the lights about the near and distant hills, some one proposed an excursion the next day with the ox-team and hay-rick, 'Squire Raynor entered into the project with the glad abandon of a school-boy.

CHAPTER II.

THE HAYRICK RIDE.

IT brought back the scenes of long ago when Charles and Kate made holiday among the haymakers, to see the ox-cart waiting before the hotel for its merry passengers. A comfortable bed of hay was placed in the bottom of the cart, — which, by the way, was a four-wheeled farm-wagon, and not a cart at all, — and some of the ladies reclined on the hay, while others preferred hassocks or low chairs. Kate and Gerty Ingalls, near together, caressed the scented hay as though it were a long-lost friend. Mr. Nickerson had not yet appeared, and while they talked of possible room for him next to 'Squire Raynor, he came out equipped for the excursion. A pair of high-topped boots, with red morocco facings, kid gloves, and a panama hat were the distinguishing articles of his attire. He took the ox-goad and began to speak that almost forgotten tongue which none but oxen understand: "Gee! Haw!" The oxen started. Those who remembered a youth on the farm laughed for very joy, and the others made merry over the singular vehicle, the slow team, and the exquisite driver. Hugh Rossville followed after, not daring to trust the team with its valuable load to the wisdom of only a Boston lawyer; but before they had proceeded far he said to himself, "That stuck-up chap has driv' oxen afore, with wuss clothes

on too;" which was really the fact. Mr. Nickerson took occasion to tell the company of his farm-life in Vermont, and how like the charm of a vision such phases as this came back to him.

The objective point of the excursion was the Shaker Village, some three or four miles away. Interest always attaches to singular people and phenomenal habits of life. The average Yankee will go a long way to see a man with his uncut locks reaching his shoulders, even though the man would be several degrees handsomer trimmed after ordinary models. If the minister advertises to slide down the pulpit balustrade, all the city will be agog. The hunger for sensation makes the world of to-day first cousin to the Bereans, who spent their time in hunting for some new thing.

Charles and Kate had never seen a Shaker, and with their wholesome ideas of love and marriage, something uncanny was associated with the very name.

"Only think! Homes without the presence of little children; without the free domestic affections; never a kiss, never a loving word! It must be a horrible life, Charles."

"They live it in the name of religion. It is one of the extremes which piety has taken on. But they do have little children. Sometimes whole families come to them. Sometimes they adopt children."

"A child would grow into a mummy brought up in such a place."

"Oh, no; it would not kill him outright, but he would have to be swathed somewhat curiously for our time."

After passing one of the long hills Mr. Nickerson grows weary, climbs into the hayrick, and Hugh takes the goad. There is perfect harmony now between team and driver. Hugh is apparelled as a young man should be; he is dressed according to his work.

“You seem out of breath, Robert; you have walked too far,” says Gertrude, with the anxious, caressing tone of a loving woman.

“Yes, Gerty; the fun of it carried me beyond my strength, but this easy jog will rest me again. It is ten years since I touched an ox-goad, and it was positively refreshing to lay my hand on a little implement that is so thoroughly alive with the memories of childhood. You don’t know the pictures which have passed in review while we have climbed and descended this tame old hill.”

They climb another hill, and the Shaker Village is in sight. It is simply a collection of buildings representing the home life and industries of a small Community. The distinguishing trait of the Shaker is industry. He works from morning until evening without giving Satan a loophole of approach. He has heard, and believes in the adage, that his Majesty “finds some mischief for idle hands to do.” Whether thought ceases its daring flights, and the tempting world is no longer visited on invisible wings, not being a clairvoyant, we cannot state. As the ox-team approaches the entrance to this latter-day Eden, Kate is sparkling with curiosity. A solemn Elder comes out to welcome them. She pinches Charley’s arm and whispers, “Look at his hair,—down to

his shoulders behind, and in front cut 'punkin fashion.' ”

“ ‘Punkin fashion’ ? ”

“ Yes; that is what mother used to call that square cut across the forehead. She hated it, and said it made a child look like an idiot. I never saw it on grown folks before.”

The party alight and follow their guide to the female house of industry. Here they see women, young, middle-aged, and old, with pale faces, and smooth hair covered with muslin caps. Their print dresses are scant and straight, their white kerchiefs are crossed over hearts which seem dull to life's ordinary interests. They are meekness personified, and Kate invests them with all the beatitudes. They exhibit some of their work-rooms, but soon bring to view articles of their own manufacture. They are deft with the needle, and skilful in weaving straw and splints, and in wood-carving. They expect the chance visitor to purchase their wares; and as one and another of the company select some article, it is apparent that the Shaker can look out for the highest price as readily as his less pious neighbor. For each souvenir, almost its weight in gold is counted out. The women talk easily and well; they seem refined in spirit, and with much of the knowledge that goes to make up correct English speech.

“ They are smarter than the men, Charley,” says Mrs. Raynor, as they walk across the green to the stone house.

“ There is one thing that all women will like about the Shakers, — their leader was a woman, and they

bring their women to the front; and if they do not quite worship them as superior beings, they listen to them with deference in the Sunday meetings, and follow their lead in many ways."

"Those 'punkin-cut' men look as though they needed to be led. Why will men submit to a fashion that makes them look like idiots?"

"Religion, Kate. They wear the 'punkin-cut,' as you call it, in the name of religion. It is as sacred to them as the monk's shave is to him."

"Do you believe the Lord likes to have people do silly things in the name of religion?"

"I suppose He winks at it, Katy. He knows we are all a set of weak babies at the best."

"We have no right to be babies in ignorance. He has done everything to make us grow in knowledge and righteousness, which is right living and acting; even a comely appearance is part of our duty."

"The women are comely; you don't object to the way they apparel themselves?"

"Yes, I do. No woman has a right to cover her beautiful hair, which is God's direct gift to her, with a scrap of cotton, no matter how fine it is. No fabric woven and constructed by human hands can equal the hair. The glory of a woman is her hair."

"But, Katy, they are all ahead of us. We must overtake them, or perhaps the door will be shut."

They hurry on, and enter the stone house. Signs of industry everywhere, — cheeses, apple-sauce, dried fruit, herbs in aromatic bundles.

"Everything of any sort of use seems to be done by the women, Charley. They preach on Sunday, and

turn all the wheels of the little productive mills during the week."

"The men carry on the farm. They don't allow the women to rake hay or bind bundles."

"Women raked and bound all those bundles of herbs, I'll warrant you, 'Squire Raynor. Maybe they didn't make the cheese-hoops, but they bound the cheese."

"Yes, Katy, very likely. I told you women are first in Shaker communities."

"What sort of men and women can they be to content themselves with this life? Fancy Nickerson and Miss Ingalls in Shaker garb, or you and me, Charley!"

"If Nickerson should forsake the blond lady, she might find solace for her disappointment in such a community as this."

"She would n't. She'd mourn awhile, and then set her cap for another man."

"Disappointed men and women are most easily attracted by extremes in life. I don't mean love disappointments wholly. There are disappointments in the line of ambition and business, — they may come from various causes; but if you could read the secret history of the people here, you would find that they got out of sorts with the world for some reason before becoming absorbed with this religious craze."

"Have n't we looked long enough, Charley? It makes me feel unhappy to see people who have nobody to love; and it is really painful to see all these dried things, and know that they were gathered without the inspiration of love."

"They love each other in a high religious way."

“Would it satisfy you to love me and the children in a ‘high religious way’? The family, Charley, is the citadel of true love. I don’t believe there can be real religious love without this germinal root. You love me and the children, and thus learn to pity the widow Briggs and her brood. Sympathy and pity are synonyms for Christian love. Even when people revile and persecute you, you pity them for their ignorant wickedness. If they knew the good fellow you are they would not do it. And so when Orlando Yates tries to undermine your prospects for the legislature, your love for your enemy is sorrow that he is such a blind fool.”

“I don’t know, Katy, whether I shall turn round and bless him who persecutes me by working for his nomination, even though my religious love has its germinal root in the family. I’m afraid I shall conclude that ‘Squire Raynor, the successful lawyer, can represent the district better than the white-handed idler, Yates.”

“But, Charley, let us stay with the Shakers until we climb into the hayrick. I wish we had not thought of Orlando Yates; it brings up home and the children. Mr. Nickerson is really coming toward us. How bright Gertrude looks as she trips along leaning on his arm!” Thus resolutely did Mrs. Raynor put away the thought which had filled her eyes with tears.

They are taking sweetmeats from the same dainty package, — real Shaker candy. They divide the delectable morsels with the Raynors, and Kate, whose candy-tooth suffered fearful denials in youth, trips back to the glass-covered receptacle and provides

herself with a satisfying bundle. The company assembling from different parts of field and house of industry approach the team. Mr. Nickerson is quite willing that Hugh should monopolize the goad on the homeward journey. He reclines on the hay, and Gertrude pities his weariness. Mr. Raynor feels like seeking an easy posture, but sits bolt upright in a low chair, thinking he shall sleep all the better for getting real tired.

“Why, I’ve just thought! we’ve been to see the Shakers without seeing them shake,” said Kate, setting all the company in a roar of laughter.

“They do their shakin’ Sundays, Miss Raynor. Gee! Haw! Be lively, now! These curious folks have kept ye standin’ plenty long. Should n’t wonder if ye’d like a little Shaker apple-sass, or cheese, or arbs, or somethin’.”

“Yes, we should, Hugh,” said Mrs. Raynor. “Oh, you meant the oxen, did you? Don’t drive so fast down this hill, Hugh. You’ll shake us all out.”

“Can’t get out between them hayrick posts. Had ’em set close a-purpose;” and the boy pressed his chafing oxen to their utmost speed down the perilous hill. It seemed useless to fear; and so the party jolted, and cringed at the sharp tossings when the wheels struck the larger stones.

“We did not see them shake. Let us give them another name,” exclaimed Mrs. Raynor. She was evidently putting on a happy mood to crush back thoughts that tugged at her heart-strings. Charles knew she had not yet subdued her longings for the children.

“What shall it be, Mrs. Raynor, — the community of ‘the punkin cut’?”

“No, Charles. It shall not be named after the men. We want something expressive of the real life, the best side of it. Women are ahead on that hill. They are so by common consent, inside and out.”

“Then let us call them ‘the Club of the Women Ahead.’”

“I don’t like ‘Club;’ it suggests close halls, tobacco, and junketing. Call it ‘House,’ and I’m agreed.”

“‘House’ suggests family life; and there is no such thing among the Shakers.”

“Use it in Hebrew fashion, to represent the descendants and line of a certain leader. Call that head or leader Ann Lee, and you have a name that means something.”

“Hurrah for the ‘House of the Women Ahead’!” shouted Mr. Nickerson; and all took up the shout, even Hugh.

“Women are ahead in most houses,” said Lawyer Raynor; “and if they are sensible women, we all like it.”

A smile lighted the face of Miss Ingalls, from this little tribute to woman. The shadows were chasing each other over the hills projected by the half-clouded westering sun, and there was a soft halo about the heads of the happy company. Even the sharp spiky protection of the hayrick looked gray and golden in the changing light, and as the hungry team pressed through the valley, the windows of the white Stage Tavern were aflame with their warmth of welcome. Waiting by the piazza steps for the passen-

gers to alight, Dr. Rossville came out to welcome his guests.

“How did ye like the Shakers? I expect the young man from Pennsylvania never saw such folks before.”

“We never did, Doctor, and we have given them a new name. We did not see them dance, or shake, and it seemed a half cheat that we did not; so to avenge ourselves we talked about the solemn old Elders, calling them the men of the ‘punkin cut;’ and the whole community is to be named henceforth and forever ‘the House of the Women Ahead;’” and Mrs. Raynor, gay as the gayest, went in to supper.

The air grew suddenly chilly, and a bright wood-fire was lighted on the hearth of the little sitting-room. Most of the women gathered here, and the men who preferred wife or sweetheart to the tobacco-smoke and jokes of the office. An evening entertainment was improvised. Miss Ingalls played the piano, and there were very creditable readings by Mr. Nickerson and Mrs. Raynor. Mr. Raynor declined to read, but favored the company with a story. The door of the office was left open, and the hum of voices ceased, and all listened to the reading. Longfellow’s “Building of the Ship” and a side-splitting chapter from the “Biglow Papers” held the close attention of even little Susie and baby Helen. Kate was delighted to see, just behind the hall door, listening in a hungry way, Mrs. Rossville, who never loitered among her guests unless she could in some way serve them. The music of the reader’s voice had lured her to drop her cares for a few min-

utes, and drink from these unusual fountains. In the days past the guests at the Old Stage Tavern had been many of them rough men who drank and used profane language. The New Bethesda was purifying even the air of the house. Refined people were gathering here, and the repressed life of the hostess felt the widening charm, even though she was silent and made no sign. As the entertainment drew to a close, Kate hurried to the hall that she might speak with Mrs. Rossville.

“Could you lend Susie the book of verses? She is fond of poetry. I mean to educate my daughters, and my sons too if I can prevail on them to stop work long enough to go to school. You have not seen my two older boys, Ellison and Albert. They are away learning book-keeping and other things needed in the business. My children are my pride and joy. Have you children, Mrs. Raynor?” And then Kate, whose tension had been too long sustained, broke down, and wept before she could answer: “Yes, I have five, and they are seven hundred miles away! I never left them before. But oh, Mr. Raynor was so sick, and nothing seemed to do him any good! Do you think the water will cure him?”

“It has cured a great many. He is getting better, I see.”

“Yes; and he seems happy here. The hills remind him of the steeps on the Alleghany, about the little town where he found me. And men don’t worry about leaving children, as women do.”

“Are your children small?”

“Fred, the youngest, is only three, — a mere baby.

Alex, our eldest, is seventeen. He is in college And Maud is fourteen, and will be ready to enter in a year more. She is very forward, — quite ahead of her brothers in ability to learn; or perhaps I should say in application and industry. She is a thorough student. Then, Richmond is nine, and Willie is seven.”

“You must miss them. I don’t know how I could live separated from my home and children. I have always lived here or hereabouts, and everything is familiar.”

“I hope my husband will get well fast. I could not be so contented anywhere else as I am here. It is a beautiful place. I like good breathing-room, and we have it here. The wide outlook is very delightful. But there is Charley beckoning. He is tired. This has been a red-letter day, thanks to your Hugh and the ox-team. None of us will ever forget the Hayrick Ride to the House of the Women Ahead.”

CHAPTER III.

SOWING TO THE WIND.

“CHARLES, somebody came yesterday while we were gypsying; see!” and Mrs. Raynor’s whisper and pantomime indicated a rosy-faced, plump young lady busily engaged at the breakfast-table.

“Yes; somebody ought to come every day, a wagonful of somebodies, until all the sick are healed by the waters of the New Bethesda.”

“That young lady did not come for the help of the pool, Charley. She is the very picture of health.”

“The rosiest apple may have a worm at the root.”

“Very likely the place is interesting to a great many people. It is a picturesque place, and a good resort for the weary as well as the sick. I am growing as calm as if nerves were unknown, though the dropping of a pin would startle me when we came. Let us go to the piazza.”

“Were you so very tired, Katy?”

“Yes, Charles; tired not so much with care and work as with anxiety. Your condition troubled me. I can speak of it now that you are getting well. But what ails the blond lady? She looks as though she had wept her eyes out.”

“Some lovers’ quarrel, I presume. She’ll be radiant with smiles before noon. They will confess everything and ask pardon, and kiss and make up.”

“I hope they will ; but some people never do.”

“Never do, Katy! Why, sinners like most of us could n't live if we did not confess. Suppose I hurt your feelings in some way, and did not own up and ask your pardon, I should consider myself a brute unworthy to be the husband of a true and conscientious woman. All decent men and women confess their faults one to the other.”

“Rosie says her husband never confesses. There, I ought not to have told ; but you will keep it, won't you? Poor thing! she has been obliged to come and tell me and cry in my arms to keep her heart from breaking. Mr. Denton will get angry with her just because he does not understand her, and rave and scold, and not give her the least chance to explain ; and when he has these spells of rage he will never own that he was in fault, but just argue and overawe, and throw all the blame on her.”

“Is that what has changed Rosie so? She used to be one of the most confiding and happy girls in our set, — just as open as the day. I shall despise Denton.”

“No, don't despise him, Charles. But if you could get his confidence and tell him how we live, perhaps you might reform him.”

“A man that will grind the heart of a woman, and that woman his wife, is beyond or below the reach of influence either from example or precept.”

“See, she is going off to the woods, and I know it is damp yet. Nickerson is talking with those Swans as happy and bright as ever. It cannot be a lovers' quarrel. She must have heard bad news. I am going to follow her, Charley, I do pity her so ;” and before Mr.

Raynor could remonstrate, his wife had turned away and was hurrying toward the pines. Just then the rosy-faced new arrival came to Mr. Raynor, saying, —

“I beg pardon, Sir, I am Miss Vinton. But it is too damp for those ladies to walk in the woods. I am in the habit of coming here, and know the conditions. They look delicate. I would carry them rubbers if I were you.”

Mr. Raynor thought the suggestion wise, and tripped upstairs for his wife’s rubbers. He could step rapidly now without short-breath or pain. He had no means of providing for Miss Ingalls, and did not believe Nickerson had the key to her room; nevertheless, he spoke to him in passing.

“Miss Vinton says it is too damp for our ladies in the pines, and I shall be glad to carry overshoes to Miss Ingalls also.”

“I presume she has them. She is careful of herself;” and Mr. Nickerson kept on talking with the Swans. There was a whole family of them, father, mother, and four children, the eldest a daughter of seventeen perhaps. They were from Boston, and evidently on intimate terms with the young lawyer.

Charles called after Kate, who had slackened her pace somewhat as she saw how impossible it was to overtake Miss Ingalls. She turned, and was glad of his tender oversight, for the pine carpet was water-soaked, and the low bushes dripping with dew.

“I would not follow her, Katy. She wants to be alone, or she would not have sought the woods.”

“I pity her, Charley. Oh, I wish there was n’t any trouble in the world!”

“We should be limp creatures if there was not. Trouble is like the tempest to the oak, — it toughens our fibre and makes us strong.”

“I ’m afraid it makes us callous if it comes too thick and heavy. Gerty seems so sweet and true. There should never be a lovers’ quarrel with her.”

“Nickerson seems very intimate with the Swans, and the young lady is somewhat forward and bold, is she not? I saw her lay her hand on his shoulder in a very familiar way, and look into his face as you say no girl should do who is not engaged to the man whom she favors with such confiding glances. If she will do such things in the green tree, what will she do in the dry? She looks so young, with her short dresses and pigtail.”

“You were wise to come back, Mrs. Raynor. You see I know about you. I am Miss Vinton. Susie has been telling me of your long journey and your husband’s health. You have come to the dearest spot in the world. It is a lovely spot. I am glad I ever found it. I come here every summer; not that I need the water, but I come for rest. I am a teacher, and after a year with my pupils I flee to this place as a bird to its nest. Such nice people, too, the Rossvilles. Mrs. Rossville is just lovely; and the dear little girls seem like angels. Have you met Mr. Ellison and Mr. Albert?”

“You mean the absent sons? No, we have not met them.”

“They are at home. They came in the same carriage with me. They are very smart young men; perfect business talents.”

“Where have they kept themselves all the morning?”

“They are very diffident, particularly Mr. Ellison, and never mingle with the guests. I see them, or rather they see me, for old acquaintance’ sake. Is n’t the Doctor an original character? There he comes now. I have not spoken with him;” and Miss Vinton rushed to meet Dr. Rossville.

“Well, Sicily, you’ve come again. Glad to see you. Not sick?”

“Only tired, dear Mr. Rossville; and just longing to be in this charming home once more.”

“Boys got back last night, too; I suppose you’ve seen ’em. Ellison is nearly old enough to be thinking of getting married, and I just wish you’d put it into his head this summer.”

“Oh, Mr. Rossville, he’ll think of that soon enough, with so many lovely girls here! What a charming picture Miss Ingalls is! And that little dark girl, Minnie Swan, is very attractive. She has gentlemen swarming about her all the time. See her now paying such marked attention to Mr. Nickerson.”

“She’d better let Nickerson alone; he is engaged to Miss Ingalls. She’s pretty free. She comes around me and pats me on the shoulder. She seems to like married men and engaged ones the best.”

“We all like the Doctor; that is perfectly natural. The Spring and the Doctor are the chief attractions.”

“The Spring is the chief attraction; never mind about me. You’ll see this whole hill swarming with people who come to let the angel put them into the New Bethesda. This young man from Pennsylvania

looks like a different being, and he's only been here the better part of a month. How long you going to stay, 'Squire?"

"If all is well at home, a month more. We have come so far, that we must make the most of our opportunity."

"You want to take the water home with you and drink nothing else. Tea and coffee are worse poison than whiskey. Let tea and coffee alone and drink the New Bethesda, and you'll live to be a hundred years old."

"What made Miss Ingalls risk her health in the woods before the dew is dry; do you know, Mrs Raynor?" asked Miss Vinton.

"I do not. She looks as though she had been weeping. Mr. Nickerson has been so attentive to her, and now he lets her go off alone. It troubles me."

"But Minnie Swan is holding him, don't you see?"

"What kind of a man is he to be held by some other girl when he is engaged?"

"Mr. Nickerson was here last summer, and he was very circumspect. Miss Ingalls was not here, nor were the Swans. No one could criticise his conduct then."

"I suppose his ill health weakens his judgment. He ought to see that it is the duty of a true and loyal man to shake off such a clinging tendril as Minnie Swan."

"Some men like to try the girls to whom they are engaged, — test their love, — and he may be one of that sort."

"He is not my sort of man, and I won't speak to

him if he does not dry the tears of Gertrude Ingalls pretty soon!" said Mrs. Raynor with some spirit.

"My wife is a terror to evil-doers, Miss Vinton. It would be just like her to reprove the little Swan, and Nickerson too."

"I feel more like following the deserted girl than touching her persecutors, even with my tongue. There is Hugh with the one-horse wagon. Let us ride with him."

Charles and Kate asked leave to occupy the accommodating vehicle, but Miss Vinton espied some old acquaintance and left them. When they had reached the sacred pool they sat awhile under the balcony; then Kate said, —

"You stay here, Charley, until I come back. I am going up the long path to find Miss Ingalls. Don't worry about me."

Mr. Raynor saw that his wife's interest was too true and tender to suffer defeat, and he wisely refrained from further objections. Pushing into the shadowy woods, she tripped along somewhat apprehensively, half fearing she might find Gertrude in a faint, or dying of convulsive grief. She could hardly define to herself how she came to conclude that Miss Ingalls was to be found anywhere within the borders of the long path. It was perhaps only because this path led through the densest and most secluded portion of the woods that she traversed its rough windings. Had she herself been in trouble, just such seclusion would have answered her mood. Kate Raynor was one of the blessed among women. She knew of such trouble only through sympathy with

her friend and schoolmate Rosie Denton. Rosie sometimes hid herself among the vines about the Alleghanies to weep; sometimes she flew to the chamber of her dear pitying neighbor.

When half-way up the mountain path Kate thought she heard suppressed weeping, and looking in all directions she at length discovered Gertrude almost wholly hidden in the low branches of a young beech, of which she had woven a chair. To go to her hiding-place would seem obtrusive, and for a moment Kate was at a loss to know how to reveal her presence. The refrain of an old song was upon her lips, and she let it warble softly as a brooding bird might, and Gertrude started to her feet as she heard the musical voice singing, —

“I love my love, and my love loves me.”

“Oh, Mrs. Raynor, come to my nest a little while, will you?”

It was a welcome she had hardly expected, and hastening she was soon clasped in the clinging arms of the beechen chair.

“What would people think of my tearful face, Mrs. Raynor? I ought not to have exposed myself by going to the table; but Robert made me go. He said if I was silly enough to cry at nothing, the whole house ought to know it. He called it nothing, Mrs. Raynor. Would you call it nothing if you should see Mr. Raynor with his arm about some other woman, and her arm about him too, and talking silly flattery? You don't know Minnie Swan. She is in love with Mr. Nickerson, and she follows him in every possible way. She knows of our engagement, but what does

she care for that! I don't think Robert means to do wrong, but she fastens on him in such bold ways he cannot help himself. He says he cannot, without being rude. Mr. Swan has confided a heavy suit to Robert, and he does not wish to offend the family, so he lets that insufferable Minnie cling to him. He calls her a child; but she is a bold and calculating girl, needing the guidance of a wise mother, and her mother, poor thing! is of the same type with herself. I tell Robert it will hurt the girl to allow her to set her affections upon him, and he ought to shake her off even if he has to be rude; but he does not see his duty in that way, or if he sees it he is powerless in the presence of little Minnie's languishing airs. He says I am weak to care, that I know he only allows the intimacy because he does not want to offend the family, that I am sure of his love, and he loves no other woman, and all that; but I object to seeing my lover in the arms of some other woman and seeming to like it. Engaged people ought to be as true to each other as though they were married; don't you think so Mrs. Raynor?"

"I certainly do. Nobody can afford to risk the appearance of evil. If a young man pays tender attentions to others after his engagement it marks him as a trifler. Girls are so susceptible. They pin their faith on such little things. If a man is kind to them they are sure he is impressed by them in some serious way."

"Robert is a promising young lawyer, and if I do say so it is true, he is very attractive to young ladies, and more than one girl whom I know, admires him;

but it was left for little Minnie Swan to lead all the others in boldness. She writes long sentimental letters to him. She has written him letters since he came here. He shows them to me and laughs in his sleeve, and still he is not brave enough to stop her. I wonder if lawyers must learn to dissemble; if it is a part of the profession?"

"No, Miss Ingalls; Charley is as honest as daylight. He will not use extravagant praise even of his children, and never yet has he plead an unrighteous cause; and he stands at the head of his profession now that old lawyer Lynchburg is gone."

"What a happy woman you must be! Did n't you have any trouble before your marriage?"

"The woman Charles Raynor loves never has occasion to weep because of his attentions to others. He is kind and courteous to everybody; but he is always dignified, and above suspicion."

"I have a good mind to break the engagement with Robert. I fear this trait will follow him after our marriage, and if it does I shall never see a happy day."

"Some young man will take Minnie Swan out of his way. I would not be rash. Keep near him, and thus save him from her tempting wiles. There are some women who fairly weave a spell over men. No, Gerty, save him. Do not cast him off. He needs you. — It must be nearly noon. Will you walk with me down to the pool? I left Charles waiting there. Your eyes are almost free from traces of tears now; and the walk, and our daily caress of the tin pint, will make you wholly yourself."

The ladies go down the tangled mountain-path arm in arm like confiding school-girls, and Gertrude is pondering the advice of her friend. She thinks of Robert's easy ways, — not wilfully wrong but easily led, — and Mrs. Raynor's words, "keep near him," seem wise. Perhaps she did wrong in leaving him all the morning under Minnie's influence; but how could she do otherwise and not make a spectacle of herself?

As they near the Spring it is plain that Mr. Raynor is not alone, and Gertrude's heart gives a happy bound on discovering that Mr. Nickerson is his companion. They have been talking too. When Robert found that Mrs. Raynor felt uneasy about Gertrude and had gone in search of her, he said, "Women are a great puzzle to me. Gertrude is heart-broken if I pay the least attention to other girls. She is particularly hurt if I look at Minnie Swan. Of course I care nothing for Minnie; but she evidently cares for me, and it is not gentlemanly to be rude to a girl. Minnie has had a favorable opportunity to know me very well. Her father has intrusted a case to me involving a large portion of his fortune, and I naturally go to the house often to talk over affairs. The family are always present, and it is quite flattering to my vanity to see what confidence Minnie has in my ability. If all the others have their times of doubt, she never does. She is sure I shall win the case. It is an intricate case, and I am not so sure as I would like to be."

"Excuse me, brother lawyer; you said just now, 'It is not gentlemanly to be rude to a girl.' I fear the

profession leads us unconsciously to one-sided views. You say Miss Ingalls is hurt by your attentions to Minnie Swan. Is it gentlemanly to hurt her? Is it not a species of rudeness of which a true gentleman should not be guilty, to cause heart-aches and tears to the girl whom he really loves? You are engaged to Miss Ingalls, and expect her to be your wife. Are not her feelings the ones to be sacredly guarded? The marriage vow says, 'love, honor, cherish.' You are ready to take the vow, or you would not engage yourself. Do you cherish the heart of Miss Ingalls when you pursue a course causing her pain? I am an older man than you, Nickerson, and have seen more of the working of the human heart. A man's first loyal duty is to his own; to shield them from the world's rude blasts in soul as well as in body."

"But, Raynor, who wants to be in leading-strings? A man has a degree of independence to maintain. He must be his own judge in such matters."

"If you object to the leading-strings of love you ought not to be engaged. There is another clause in the marriage vow,—'forsaking all others.' We are not quite ready for the vow if we take pleasure in the society of others, and will pursue that pleasure though it breaks the harmony between loving hearts,—a harmony which should never be broken."

"Do you walk the straight path that you have just laid down?"

"Ask my wife. There she comes, and Miss Ingalls is with her. Have you had a pleasant walk, Katy?"

"Delightful; and I have rested in a sylvan chair wrought by fairies."

Robert Nickerson caught the mood of his friends, and when the ladies reached them, said, "I am glad to see you safe ashore. I thought, when you went off in the dew, you might possibly drown."

"You do not seem to have worried about it," said Gertrude.

"I have been too much absorbed to worry. But I did start out to find you, and brother Raynor said his wife had gone, so I sat here and talked with him. Don't run off so again, will you?"

"No, Robert; I am going to stay with you, and keep the little brown sparrow from pecking you in pieces."

CHAPTER IV.

A PREMONITION.

AS Mr. Raynor improved in health he was less dependent on his wife, and sometimes took short excursions with the young men of the hotel. He had become very well acquainted with Ellison Rossville, and was pleased with the unsullied honesty of the youth. One day while driving over the hill with Ellison he reverted to the vision of the old Doctor.

“It will become a verified vision, without doubt. People will swarm here like bees, and you must make preparations to receive them. You want to build a new hotel right on the highest point here. Make it large and comfortable, provided with all modern conveniences. And you want to establish a line of coaches between the Spring and Kingdom Station.”

“I don’t know where the money is coming from to build new houses,” replied young Rossville.

“The house will pay for itself in two years. And then, think of the immense revenue from the Spring. It will be constantly increasing, too. There is no risk in building; your house would be full at once. I am not sure but you will be able to cover this great hill with hotels and cottages, and see them as full as the Old Country Tavern is now.”

Ellison Rossville was not a visionary, but had the talents of a downright practical business man. He received the lawyer’s suggestions kindly and pondered

them wisely. The arrival on that very day of another Boston family, rendering it necessary to go over the rough way twice with the little one-horse wagon, served to accent the talk of 'Squire Raynor. The head of the family was very sick, and as he felt unwilling to be separated from his wife and children, they were all with him.

The grown-up son and daughters were a happy accession to the life of the Old Stage Tavern. They were not so overshadowed by the sickness of their father as to immure themselves or wear long faces, but were ready to make the most of this summer outing on their own account. It proved that one of the young ladies had been a year in the same school with Minnie Swan, and so the brother was introduced, and Minnie was called this way and that by the gay Stapletons, and had less time to pursue poor Nickerson. And, indeed, she had less opportunity to pour out her simple confidences, for Gertrude was with him much of the time. It was no uncommon thing for her, however, to come suddenly behind the young lawyer, even when he was walking arm in arm with Miss Ingalls, and whisper something in his ear. Such familiarity seemed the borderland of danger, and was thoroughly offensive to high-minded Mrs. Raynor, who often observed it, and also to Miss Ingalls, who could not help knowing it. Robert would tell her afterwards just what she said, and often these confidences revealed her as an unwise and fearless girl.

"Charles," said Mrs. Raynor, "are you not glad the Stapleton family are here? There they go off to the Shaker Village, and little Minnie Swan is with them.

There is material for a flirtation which will not hurt some woman's heart. George is too young to be engaged."

"There'll be a flirtation, then,—you are sure of that?"

"Minnie seems unable to keep a proper distance from even poor old Dr. Rossville; yes, where she is there will be a flirtation."

"Well, we won't care, if she stops following Nickerson."

"She won't stop. Did you see her this morning? She ran behind when Nickerson and Gerty were promenading, and caught his hand, and I think she put a written paper in it. Then she darted away. She is as sly as a cat."

"Have you seen anything of Miss Vinton to-day?"

"No; but I have heard something about her. That pale-faced lady, Mrs. Wingate, says Dr. Rossville would like to have her for a daughter. In other words, he wants Ellison to marry her."

"She would do a capital thing. When Ellison takes hold of business here he will make matters move. He will be a rich man not far in the future; and women like wealth and the comforts it brings."

"Don't men like it too?"

"Of course they do. How about Miss Vinton? Does she favor the match-making?"

"It may all be gossip, Charles. We are not to place great reliance on such reports. I do not know. She likes the place and the family—all. Perhaps if Mr. Ellison should court her she might like him. But fancy young Mr. Rossville courting a girl! He is as

shy as a girl himself, and hardly speaks to ladies, young or old. I wish Minnie Swan would take after him, just to see how quickly she would be taught her place. He would not endure her languishing airs a second. It is refreshing to see a man that the world has not spoiled. There comes Susie."

"Please, Mrs. Raynor," said Susie, "will you go and see my mother awhile? She is in her room."

Susie's young face looked drawn and white, as though some painful apprehension tugged at her little heart. She made her request, and hastened back faster than she came. Mrs. Raynor followed, and was soon in the chamber of the hostess.

"What is it, Mrs. Rossville?"

"I hardly know. There is a strange feeling about my heart. I have had it before, but not so severely."

She was ashen white, and her heart-beats were faint and low.

"No, do not call or alarm any one. If I should die, Mrs. Raynor, would you be the guardian of my little girls? There will be money enough to defray all expenses, but they will need some one to direct their education. Money is common trash, but true people are rare. I have watched you and your husband. You are different from any who come here. A hotel is not a good place in which to bring up children. I wish my daughters could have the influence of a quiet home. Oh if they could be near you, and grow up to be like you!"

Mrs. Raynor was touched to tears by the confidence of Mrs. Rossville, and promised to be a faithful friend to the little girls, and do all in her power to guide

them, in case they should miss the wisest and tenderest hand known on earth, — the hand of a true mother.

While she leaned over the faint breath to catch its whispers, chafing and caressing the high forehead, color began to creep back to cheeks and lips, and soon Mrs. Rossville said, "It is passing off. My heart beats stronger."

"You are working too hard, and need rest. You must spare yourself to enjoy this hill when your husband's vision comes true."

"I shall rally this time, but some time the attack will be fatal. Thank you for your promise. The boys can take care of themselves, but my daughters are yet children."

Mrs. Raynor lingered, performing various offices inspired by her womanly sympathy, until Mrs. Rossville, now apparently wholly herself, dressed, and went downstairs. The Shaker party was just coming in. Albert had driven the oxen to-day. Nickerson's picturesque panama hat was bending over a book in close proximity to a neat brown straw, in the densest tangle of the long path, in the very chair which Gertrude's hands had woven, until the shadows lengthened, and then they too turned homeward.

"All coming together," exclaimed Dr. Rossville, "just like chickens to roost. Why, Sicily, did you go? I should think you'd get tired of the Shakers, you've been there so many times."

"Oh, never, Dr. Rossville. Those saintly women charm me. I should like to stay with them a week. We have had a lovely time."

“These folks from Pennsylvania called ’em names. What was it, ’Squire?”

“Oh, my wife spoke of their peculiar hair-dressing as the ‘punkin cut,’ — a speech she borrowed from her mother; and we called the whole concern The House of the Women Ahead.”

“That is very expressive,” said Miss Vinton. “It is charming to see woman elevated as she is by the Shakers. I think I shall join them when I get too old to teach.”

“Better get married, Sicily, before you get much older. There are others quite as good as the Shakers.”

By this time all were fluttering about the piazza, young Stapleton marching up and down with Minnie Swan. Robert and Gertrude, having had their exercise, were seated near each other, when Minnie left her escort and came running to where they sat. She had some little trinket she had purchased “for her lawyer,” she said, and handed it to Nickerson. He could do no otherwise than take it, and passing it to Gertrude, they rose and went in to supper.

“Miss Swan, what made you call Nickerson your lawyer?” inquired George Stapleton.

“Oh, he is carrying a case for papa, and he comes to our house to talk about it until it seems as though he really belonged to us.”

“Miss Vinton says he is engaged to Miss Ingalls.”

“So he is; but he does not care anything about her. He had n’t seen me then.”

“Did he say that to you?”

“Not exactly that; but his attentions say it.”

“Whew!” said young Stapleton; and turning on his heel, he stalked rapidly away.

Mrs. Rossville was seen in her accustomed places of service about the dining-room, and Mrs. Raynor wondered if even her own family knew how she had faced death that day. The company at the tea-table seemed very gay, and one would hardly have surmised the presence of invalids among them.

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor lingered in the sunset light while reading letters and papers from home. The young lawyer was not a little disturbed by the movements of Orlando Yates, his political rival. Capital was being made of the absence of the people's choice, to influence the nomination of Yates. It was even asserted in the opposition newspaper that 'Squire Raynor was broken in health, and would never be able to serve his district as political standard-bearer.

“I think we had better go home, Katy. Things are becoming complicated there, and I am needed.”

“Not yet, Charley. Let us stay until the first of the autumn. Things are becoming complicated here, and I confess I want to see the tangles straightened. There is the Nickerson-Ingalls affair; and the merest hint about Miss Vinton and young Mr. Rossville makes me eager for more. You told the Doctor you would stay a month longer.”

“A part of that time has already passed.”

“I know it; and it has passed so quickly and so interestingly that I want the whole of it. We had good news from home, too, — I mean about the children and Grandma. Let Yates do his best. It will be all the

greater victory when you appear, as bright and fresh as the autumn flowers, and strong as Samson."

"The Doctor says I can take the water with me to ward off future danger."

"Send a barrel on ahead, Charley. It would not more than get there now by the time we do."

"Fine sunset, 'Squire," said Dr. Rossville. "Do you have anything like this in Pennsylvania?"

"Yes; these hills remind me of the little town where I found my wife, only there the water is not lakes, but a river. You should have boats on these lakes, Doctor."

"We shall; we shall in time. Steamers carrying pleasure parties and flaunting banners, and bands playing, you'll see when you come again."

"You don't think I will have to come again?"

"Not for your health. You're a well man now. But you'll come out of gratitude. You'll want to come."

"How long before the era of bands and steamers?"

"They'll be here inside of ten years."

"Oh, Doctor, how is Mr. Stapleton?" and Miss Vinton, smiling and happy, drew near.

"He is a sick man; I guess the sickest one that ever came here. But he'll get well. He'll walk to the Spring within a week."

"I hope so, Doctor. Mrs. Stapleton seems such a dear, distressed lady. She is so anxious about her husband."

"I told her she needn't be, if he only follows my directions. I watch him pretty close, and make him take the water often, and as much of it as he can possibly hold."

“Lovely sunset, Mrs. Raynor. I have some friends waiting for a twilight walk;” and Miss Vinton left the sun-bathed piazza.

“She’s a smart girl,” observed Dr. Rossville. “She keeps school in Pine Hollow, and they say she has the worst school in the State; but she trains them, and they’re growing as pliable as willows. I like Sicily. She is always smiling and pleasant, — just the woman to make a happy home. My Ellison is blind as a bat, or he’d see it.”

“Ellison is young yet, and his thoughts are on business. All these things come right in time,” said Mrs. Raynor.

Exquisite music floated through the open windows. Miss Ingalls was at the piano. She sang to her accompaniment, and Mr. Nickerson joined her. Both had rich voices, and they had evidently been cultivated. Mrs. Raynor wanted to see as well as hear them, and she and Charles went into the parlor. The twilight party was just passing down the steps, and Kate was glad to see the little Swan going off with the Stapletons. An hour of delightful music without the presence of a single discordant note was enjoyed by the Raynors and such other guests as had not joined in the walk. Again Mrs. Rossville was seen listening outside the door, while the old Doctor waited in breathless interest by the open window. When the singers grew weary, Kate read Whittier’s “Divine Goodness,” and soothed and softened in spirit by the chords of harmony and the poet’s inspiration, the night seemed to them next door to gates of Paradise.

CHAPTER V.

GALILEE TALKS.

“IT is just a week since the Stapletons came, and he has ventured down to dinner,” said Mrs. Raynor. “He looks very sick, Charles. What ails his eyes?”

“It is the effect of the disease. The brain and nervous system are drained, and the eyes become almost blind.”

“I don’t believe the New Bethesda will cure him. He waited too long.”

“Dr. Rossville said he would walk to the Spring in a week. He does not look much like it, does he?”

“Miss Vinton says he is going to ride down this afternoon.”

“That is more than he looks able to do. How he is bloated! Like one suffering from dropsy.”

“Oh, Charles, if you had looked like that I should have been in despair!”

Miss Vinton, so happily adapted to the office of hostess, introduced the Stapletons and Raynors as they lingered on the piazza after dinner.

“I understand you came seven hundred miles, sir. You must have had great faith, or else you were not very sick.”

“My physician was almost hopeless of my case, Mr. Stapleton, though in appearance I was not so sick a man as you are. It took another form,—a form that saps the life rapidly. But I count myself a well man

now. I am almost as strong as ever, and gaining daily. I hope you may be equally benefited."

"I came as a last resort, and without a particle of faith; but I have to own improvement quite marked in a week. Now, I am beginning to hope. The mountain air and abundant table are not slight helps to recovery."

"But the water is the thing that cures," said Dr. Rossville, who overheard Mr. Stapleton's remark. "You may breathe and eat to all eternity, and not get well on that. But the New Bethesda has miraculous power. It never fails if you follow directions. You must let the angel put you in, not linger round the edges just looking at it."

"You don't mean to say you want us to go bathing in your miracle water."

"No. I spoke metaphorical. I mean, you should do your part, and mind the Doctor. Don't empty the water out of the window, but drink it. That is the way Mark Chandler did, who was here two years ago, and I wondering all the while why he did not get better. He splashed a pitcherful on my head, and I found out his silly trick, and I tell ye I made him drink after that. Never was a gladder fellow than he was when he saw himself getting well. He thanked me with tears in his eyes for pouring it down him. I said you'd walk to the Spring in a week. Guess I was a little too fast. I wouldn't walk to-day; but about day after to-morrow you may, and it will do ye good."

"I am going to ride down. What time does Hugh get the team ready?"

“The team is always ready. You just say what time you want to go. I would n’t go till after three o’clock. Give your dinner a chance to digest, and the water will have better effect. Some of our folks going off to-morrow, — the Swans. He has a pretty heavy lawsuit coming in September, and I guess he’s uneasy. I never would have trusted it to such a young man as Nickerson. Old men for counsel, young men for war.”

“Perhaps Nickerson can fight the battle of this suit,” remarked ’Squire Raynor.

“Oh, the oxen! the oxen! May we have another ride with the oxen, Doctor?” exclaimed Mrs. Raynor.

“That’s just what they are hitched up for. I told Albert to take ye round by the lakes. It is beautiful; good chance for fishing, too.”

“Will you allow me to go, Doctor?” asked Mr. Stapleton.

“Yes, go. It won’t hurt ye. The diversion will do ye good. Nothing like keeping the mind off one’s pain. Drive up close, Albert, so Mr. Stapleton can step right off the porch into the wagon. That’s easy. Here comes Sicily. She can tell ye all about scenery. Climb right in, ’Squire. Would n’t you like a cricket or a chair, Mrs. Raynor? Quite a load, — five Stapletons, two Raynors, Sicily, and the Boston lovers. Where are the Swans?”

“Mrs. Swan has a headache, and Miss Minnie lost her brooch in the woods, and she and Mr. George have gone to find it. It is such a pity to lose the ride. But we will make the most of it; and such a congenial party!” said Miss Vinton.

They drive down the valley road,— a direction in which Mrs. Raynor had looked longingly many times and wished she had learned to be a better walker in her youth. She had decided that she would not leave this charming locality without a nearer view of the lakes, even though it did tire her all out to walk down there; and now the picturesque team and the pleasant company left nothing lacking to make a delightful excursion. She glanced at Gertrude, and saw that all was well. Her prescription charmed Robert, who was never so happy as in the presence of Miss Ingalls. He felt an inward peace quite foreign to him when Minnie Swan was doing her utmost to charm. He did not stop to analyze his feelings and discover the reason of his sweet content; but Mrs. Raynor could have told him in real Bible words that “Great peace have they who keep thy law, and nothing can offend them,” while “the wicked are like the troubled sea.” Kate called things by their right names. To her, it was wicked for Mr. Nickerson to break Gerty’s heart by his attentions to Minnie Swan, no matter how ardently she courted them.

Down the gentle slope into the valley of the lakes the patient oxen trod, while the happy company sang snatches of minor tunes, and sparkled with witty stories and repartee. Even Mr. Stapleton brightened sensibly, and added his contribution to the general fund. It was short, and all about the ticket agent at Kingdom Station.

“Folks seem to be thickening up considerable at the New Bethesda,” exclaimed the agent when he saw the whole Stapleton family. “I told a man the first of

the summer they'd never see stages on them roads, never. I'll have to take that back. Rossville will have to send his oxen if they don't get a stage pretty quick. Could n't take all Boston in a one-hoss wagon."

The appearance of families was a progressive movement unknown before, and a prophecy also. 'Squire Raynor could almost see the steamers on the lakes, and hear the bands, as they drew near to these transparent jewels set on the bosom of the vale. Alighting, they all climbed to the shadow of a copse overlooking the upper lake, and reclining on the soft grass feasted their eyes upon the placid water.

"Oh, to have a heart always as calm!" said Miss Vinton.

"Your heart is always calm, or your face tells lies," responded Mrs. Raynor.

"Yes, my heart is calm; but I was thinking of others. We know of many who are like this lake when the mountain winds lash it. I always want to help such people."

"You do help them by your own composure. They see what is possible to all the world if people only lived rightly."

"Good diet, Kate?" said Mr. Raynor.

"Lived honorably, truthfully, transparently. Did nothing which the dearest eyes might not look upon with approbation; nothing which God condemns, — that is what I mean, Charley."

"We should be perfect then, and nothing could be done with us but to make angels of us, Katy."

"We should have made angels of ourselves in that

estate, — angels of mercy to everybody who came near us.”

“See how prettily the lights and shadows chase each other across the surface of the lake! Just like life, is it not, Mrs. Raynor?” said Miss Vinton.

“Just like life on a sunlit summer day; but when the storms strike, the shadows are denser, the water is rough with the pelting of the elements, and the sunshine has to wait until afterward.”

“I have known only the sunlit summer day.”

“Nor I, through personal experience; but I have felt the rush of the storm, through the sufferings of those I love.”

Gertrude drew closer to Robert, and you might have seen her small shapely hand stealing into his. Did she think Mrs. Raynor meant her tears, and the conference in the arms of the tangled beech?

“Oh, ladies, don’t get sentimental; you make my head ache,” said Mr. Stapleton, in a tone so droll they could see he was not too ill to indulge a humorous mood.

“The jolt of the ox-team made your head ache. Let us walk across the field to the Spring; it is but a little way. If you tire we will all help you, and Mr. Albert can meet us there with his coach and span. What say you?”

All said, “Walk! walk!” even Mr. Stapleton; and Miss Vinton had the pleasure of leading the party over a way too little frequented to harden into a path, — a way where the golden-rod with its spikes of bloom stood sentinel, and wild asters starred the grass. Old apple-trees lifted their fruited boughs at intervals, and bar-

berries and elder-bushes made an almost impenetrable tangle about the stone-walls. There were no silken robes to suffer as the ladies pushed through the asserting undergrowth. All were clad in stout calico or gingham, and shod in a way to defy the briars that crept along the sward. Mr. Stapleton declared he liked the tramp; that he had much more strength than he supposed; that he could have fulfilled the old Doctor's prophecy and walked to the Spring as well as not.

George Stapleton and Minnie Swan were waiting near the Spring. They had hunted everywhere, and the brooch had not been found. George acted as water-bearer, and refreshed the pedestrians from the tin pint. They lingered and rested under the oaks about the Spring, until Albert had time to make the round-about way with the oxen, then all climbed into the wagon and rode slowly homeward.

"Been down to the lake and caught a Swan, I see," said the Doctor. "That's the way it will be in less than ten years. Birds will grow tame there just to make beautiful pictures for the throngs that come to sail and to row, and to go up and down in the steamer."

When the feat of Mr. Stapleton was told, the Doctor declared his prophecy had been fulfilled.

"It's every bit as far from the lake to the New Bethesda, and a harder walk than it is from here."

"I feel much better, Doctor, — much better than when I went to ride. The ladies came near killing the effect of your remedy by their sentimental talk; but I stopped them when I could n't stand it any longer.

Miss Vinton and Mrs. Raynor would make good preachers. Why don't you study for the ministry, Miss Vinton? I suppose Mrs. Raynor's work is marked out for her. She has a husband to take care of."

"Yes, and five children, Mr. Stapleton."

"Oh, Mr. Stapleton, I don't believe in women ministers," said Miss Vinton. "It is such an exposed position for a woman!"

"How exposed, any more than going to dinner in a big hotel such as the Doctor expects to have presently, or teaching school?"

"We all go to dinner together and sit together; one is not set above the rest for all the others to criticise. And in teaching, you are with children and young people, not with adults."

"I fail to see your objection. I have a sister in the ministry, and she moves my heart more than any of the men ministers."

"It is because of the sympathy between you."

"It is because of her persuasive power. She touches deep waters, where masculine plummets seldom sound."

"Jesus had only men among his disciples. If he had meant to put women in such a prominent place he would have set the example."

"You mean among his apostles. Mary and Martha and Mary Magdalene and the rest were disciples. That was a rough, fighting age, and the apostles had hard paths before them. They needed to be strong men; but now, when Christianity is organized and churches established, women can lead the flock safer and more gently than men."

“If Jesus had put Martha, for instance, among the twelve, I should know it was right; and though I might not seek such an exposed position, I should not criticise women preachers.”

“Jesus did a more striking thing than putting a woman among the twelve, and a more convincing thing too. Women were the first to see him after his resurrection, and he sent them to tell the apostles that he had risen; so you see they were ordained of Christ to be the first preachers of his full gospel. I take it there was really no gospel to preach until after the resurrection.”

“I never thought of that before,” said Miss Vinton. “I believe in the elevation of woman, in her education and equality; that is why I like the Shakers. But a woman in the pulpit seems out of place.”

“Because you are not accustomed to the sight. No other reason —”

“Father, dear, you will get tired,” said Miss Stapleton; and turning to Miss Vinton she said, “Father has a houseful of girls, and he thoroughly believes in woman.”

“It proves that his houseful of girls are good girls,” remarked Mrs. Raynor. “I have observed that the men who have the highest opinion of women are those who have associated with noble women in the home.”

Mr. Stapleton, of whom they had known nothing until to-day, had made a pleasant impression by his genial manners and exalted sentiments. They all watched him as his daughter led him to his room, — whither Mrs. Stapleton had fled with a headache as

soon as the party returned, wishing earnestly that he might be led rapidly on the road to health.

“Dear Miss Ingalls, how silent you have been in the midst of the pleasures and discussions of the afternoon.”

“I have been a happy listener, and I have learned something. I did not know that woman was the first preacher of a full gospel. The thought pleases me. It is such an emphatic example of Christ’s confidence in her. And then, Robert and I were reading this morning the Beatitude, ‘The pure in heart see God.’ There may be a tribute to woman’s purity in the honor conferred by Christ.”

“These thoughts are not new to me, but they are hallowing and uplifting nevertheless. We are called to our best life when we think what Christianity has done for us. No grovelling ways, no questionable actions, no secret life that cannot bear the effulgent sun of noon should ever be indulged by a Christian woman.”

CHAPTER VI.

REALIZED HOPES.

“CHARLES, don't you see how much happier Miss Ingalls seems since the Swans went away,—just as she did before they came? She told me to-day she dreaded going home. The suit comes off in September, and I suppose she knows that consultations with the father mean opportunities for Minnie to exert her fascinations. Gertrude will break the engagement if Robert shows his lack of loyalty many more times. She is gentle, but she is firm too, and a woman with high ideas of honor.”

“He would not marry the little Swan if she should break the engagement. Such girls as Minnie have to take up with second-rate men. No true and noble man is attracted seriously by a bold and forward girl.”

“Well, well! Look, Charley! If there is not Miss Vinton going to ride with young Mr. Rossville! I like that, don't you?”

“Yes, I like it if they do.”

“Of course they like it. At any rate, the old Doctor likes it. There he comes now. I hope he will come near enough for me to speak to him. Dr. Rossville, is Miss Vinton going to leave us?”

“No; she wanted to go to town, and Hugh and Albert are both off, so Ellison had to take her.”

“Do you suppose they will talk any?”

“She’ll talk; and I should n’t wonder if Ellison says something, get him off alone.”

“We shall have to leave you soon, Doctor. Only three days more.”

“I shall be sorry. My wife and Susie have taken a great fancy to you. Hope you will come again,— come and see the new hotel on the bluff there. I can see it as plain as though it stood there now. We shall go about building it pretty soon. It spurred up Ellison to hear the ’Squire talk about it as though he believed. It makes a man believe to come here and get well, don’t it, ’Squire?”

“I shall publish tidings of the New Bethesda far and near, and send all the invalids I see, to be healed. You must have your coach and four ready to bring them up from Kingdom Station. By the way, Mr. Nickerson and Miss Ingalls are to leave in the same train with us. Won’t you take us down with the oxen?”

“It would take considerable time. The boys can go with the one-horse wagon and buggy a good deal quicker.”

“But it would not be so picturesque,” said Mrs. Raynor. “I told Charles I wished you would hitch up the oxen.”

“If you want the oxen, Mrs. Raynor, you shall have them; but it will take a couple of hours to go.”

“All the better; we shall enjoy every moment of the ride.”

Dr. Rossville moved on toward the cornfield. Delicious sweet-corn was one of the daily viands, and the

Doctor knew how to select the best ears. Mr. and Mrs. Raynor left their hammock for one more stroll in the woods, fearing the sunshine might not be so inviting on another day. They met the Stapletons resting on the borders of the path as they returned from the walk to the Spring, which was now a daily venture. Mr. Stapleton looked the picture of happy expectation. He had improved wonderfully in health, and the mists of foreboding had left his face.

“Really, Squire Raynor, I thought the New Bethesda only another humbug, and came as a last resort, because friends urged it; and see what it has done for a faithless and unbelieving sinner! I am almost well; am beginning to feel attracted by the thought of business, and able to rush in after the old fashion.”

“The Doctor says everybody who comes is converted, and I think that is true. I shall have occasion to bless the miracle Spring for its healing touch. I wonder if Nickerson is better. He is very reticent about himself.”

“He is worried about his business. I know something of the case. He’ll lose it, and righteously too. Swan has been cutting a big swath on money that belonged to his aunt. Poor, trusting old soul! she thought her Silas could do no wrong, until all of a sudden the old lady got her eyes open, and set about recovering her own. She has an old lawyer and the right on her side. I pity Nickerson. I take it he was not really sick, only run down by work and worry.”

“I am sorry he is troubled. Of course his trouble will affect Gertrude, and she deserves to be as happy as the day is long,” said Mrs. Raynor.

“And so does he. Nickerson is a good fellow. He was unwise to risk this suit. A lawyer’s first work stamps him. He wants to be successful, and win the first case. Then his way is prosperous.”

“He wants to be sure he is undertaking a righteous cause, and then if he fails his conscience is not disturbed,” replied Mr. Raynor.

“Not many lawyers on that high level, I guess, Raynor.”

“All lawyers ought to be there. Charley is, every time,” said Mrs. Raynor.

“I wonder the angels let him stay in this wicked world.”

“The angels have no disposition to neutralize the virtues of the New Bethesda.”

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor pursued their course after this little episode, and as “all roads lead to Rome,” so on this rural western hill all the winding and tree-sheltered paths lead to the curative pool. The walks were solitary. It was seldom one met a loiterer, and the Spring presented no pictures of happy groups chatting and laughing under the oaks. Alone the lawyer and his wife drained the tin pint once and again, and alone they threaded the tangles of the wildest way on their return. These days, which had increased the vision of their faith, were fast closing, and as there was strength for a stroll through the woods that skirted the farthest clearing, they determined to use the morning in this pleasant fashion. They had looked with longing at this unexplored forest when prudence denied the answer to desire. Now it seemed not only possible, but a most alluring venture. Another picture

could thus be added to the rich mental gallery which this region had photographed. Passing onward with short excursions from the scarcely discernible path into the tangled and stony forest, the moments flew, as they might to happy children. Delicate mosses and vines of familiar aspect greeted them, and were lovingly gathered. The children at home would be glad to see that far-off Maine nursed the same beautiful forest growths which charmed their woodland walks in the vicinity of French Creek and the Alleghany. No sounds disturbed the soothing silence; even bird and insect life seemed to be hushed for the passage of this pair so attuned to the harmonies of the universe by their harmony with each other and with God that all things vocal and inanimate served their will and wish.

“We must stop in Boston a day or two, Katy. We want to see Bunker Hill and the State House.”

“We want to; but can we put two more days between us and the children when our faces are once turned homewards?”

“We shall be so interested in the ‘Hub’ that a day will be shorter than a flash of thought. I must see Canaan from the top of Bunker Hill.”

“Oh, Charles, what a hunger you have for the top of everything!”

“Yes, Katy; I believe in getting up in the world. I like this wooded height, but I want an observatory on the new hotel to answer my desire for elevation.”

“Will it be the Legislature, and then the Senate, and then the Presidency, Charles?”

“Oh, no; that would be going down. The truest

heights are among the common people. The honest man is at the top, whether he sits in the Presidential chair or across the pole of an ox-cart."

"And we have seen some real top people here, haven't we, Charles? Ellison and his mother and Miss Ingalls are as true as the stars."

"These rural places nurture the virtues. They draw life from the virgin soil, as the trees do. I wish my profession would let me live in the country."

"It will, Charley, when we can afford our span and coachman."

"Not far enough off to get the primitive growths, as we do here. The vicinity of cities is soon glossed over by the hand of cultivation."

"It will be a century before the woods are cut from Willard Hill. We can buy a lot up there, and be furnished with constant diversion from the legends about the old man. He went to the capitol years ago. Perhaps you will sit in his very seat, Charley. I'm glad you are married, when I think of the way he got his wife, — that beautiful Southern girl to be cheated so!"

"How, Katy?"

"Have n't you heard the story?"

"I do not remember. If it is a good story it will bear repeating even if you have some time told it. Lend to the prose of the story the music of your voice, please."

"He met a very accomplished young lady from the South while he was at the capitol. She was visiting friends in Harrisburg, and I suppose his wit told him of woman's love of comfort and luxury; so he courted her by telling her of his large estate, his mills, and his

negroes. She married him, and he took her to that old tumble-down house on the hill. Of course she was disappointed. She liked him, and if he had told her the solemn truth he might have won her all the same, for he was really a very gifted man. But she could n't help asking him about the mills and the negroes; so he took her out to the barn and showed her two old fanning mills, and said those were his mills; and then he led her to the edge of a fallow, and pointing out the half-consumed logs which lay rotting with their blackened sides toward the sun, he told her those were his 'niggers.' She fell into his lazy ways, and they lived a shiftless life. One day a man sought shelter from a shower in his house, and as they kept moving their chairs from place to place to escape the rain which beat down upon them, the man said, 'Why don't you mend your roof, Mr. Willard?'

"You would not have me go out now and mend it, would you?"

"No, but mend it when the day is fine."

"Oh, then it does n't need mending."

"That was Mr. Willard. Smart enough, but lazy. Don't you think laziness a sin, Charley?"

"Not always. Some people are born so, and can't help being lazy, any more than you can help having blue eyes."

"Born so?"

"Yes, Katy. That is a physiological fact, the natural outcome of overworked mothers. Did n't you read that exhaustive article in the 'New World'? I pity lazy people. It is a weight they have to carry for which they are not altogether responsible."

“We are lazing here in these charming woods until it must be nearly dinner-time.”

The Raynors walk onward toward the house. They have rested on mossy rocks and even on the leafy carpet by the way, and the morning has been like a swiftly passing panorama.

Two days of rain followed, and with preparations for the homeward journey and snatches of conversation with passing guests, the time slipped away. One long talk Mrs. Raynor had with Mrs. Rossville, and the hostess was assured that her request was not granted through a sudden sympathetic impulse, but because of real desire to fulfil faithfully the opportunities of life for that service which means a confession of brotherhood.

It was the very last day of summer, and the ox-team stood waiting by the porch. Mrs. Raynor lingered for her word of help from the high sources ere she could close the small Bible which had girded her with its promises two months before. She had read the travellers' psalm, and was listening with the inner ear to its assurances of protection as she passed over the stairs. “The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even forever more.” What marvellous preservation His leading to this mountain height had been! Yes, the New Bethesda had saved lovers to each other for a longer service in the needy ways of life.

Charles was making his farewells with the young men, and giving his final word of hope. Mr. Nickerson and Miss Ingalls, as bright as the sun after rain, stood talking with Susie and Helen. Gertrude had

great fondness for the little girls. Kate Raynor sought here and there for Mrs. Rossville, to find that she understood the long talk as their word of farewell; nor could she brook any other. They climbed into the wagon, — all but Nickerson, who said he must have the pleasure once more of remembering in a practical way the days of his childhood and youth.

“When we reach the rough wood-road you may be driver, Hugh. I would rather trust you in bad places than myself.”

“The coach and four, next time, 'Squire, as sure as sunshine after rain” said Dr. Rossville, as they started for Kingdom Station.

There was no cringing when the big wheels rolled over a stone, and no cries of pain. A jolly load, full of the sparkle of health's delightful wine, went slowly onward in the morning light, down the winding way, glad of the invigorating air and the help of the everlasting hills, and with unutterable blessings on the Rossvilles and their exhaustless New Bethesda.

There is no need to linger with the tourists after they reach the commonplace railway train; no need to follow the Raynors as they climb to the dome of the Boston State House, or look out over Canaan from the height of Bunker Hill Monument. Their exclamations of delight were first cousin to those of the many thousands who have visited these historic places until the steps they climb are like common dust. The homeward journey was comfortable, and without especial incident; and oh, the home-coming the most pregnant moment of a lifetime! We go and come, and the going makes the coming delightful. Home is never so fine and fair

as after enforced absence; and though we may have lived in princely places, home is lovelier than a king's palace, though it be but a mud cottage thatched with straw. So does the good God glorify the shrine of the family affections.

CHAPTER VII.

EVERY BREATH A DELIGHT.

FIVE years have gone by since Charles and Catharine Raynor sought the healing touch of the New Bethesda. They have been years fraught with intense service and profitable experience. The work of the opposition was powerless when the successful lawyer appeared upon the scene in vigorous health, and the people's choice was sent to the State capitol by an overwhelming popular majority. It is not quite certain that Charles Raynor sat in old Dan Willard's seat, — there had been improvements in the capitol since that far-off time, — but the place he occupied made itself felt for invincible honor and integrity. Not party votes merely, but an intelligent understanding of the righteousness of the measure appeared in all the action of the new senator.

Kate had a hard tug at the heart-strings before she could decide as to her own duty. The children were in school, and could not be removed to the schools of a strange locality. Alex had entered college; and so near and favorable was the location in this academic town that he could still enjoy his home, and even sit down at the family dinner without incurring more than a boy's needed exercise.

It was finally decided that the wife and mother should divide her time between husband and children. Kate went on to the capitol with Charles and stayed until she saw him comfortably working in the new grooves, and was assured that his home, though a strange hotel, would be ample for every reasonable need, and then she returned to the children. It was a one-sided and unsatisfying life, and she felt sorry that the pressure of duty had divided them. He served the term of his first election, and no entreaties of admiring fellow-citizens could induce him to accept a second nomination. He missed the presence of his family, the bright sayings of his growing children, their tender influence over him, and he knew that the formative period of their lives required the joint influence of father and mother.

And now Maud had graduated with the highest honors, and her brother, but a year in advance, was in the Law Department. The young girl had pushed aside every obstacle, and made her path through college bright and beautiful, and its goal a victory. When a woman bears the laurel, some recognition is likely to be made of her triumph by those who love her.

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor were in conference over the exciting incidents of Commencement, and planning some way of favoring their daughter with a pleasant vacation after the long and severe course of study.

“Let us take her to the New Bethesda, Charles.”

“We are none of us sick now, Katy.”

“Dr. Rossville said you would return, out of gratitude. It is a pleasant summer resort, and Maud would appreciate a visit to New England, and profit by it.

She hinted to me that she wants to go on with study. There are other lines which attract her. This summer journey will help her to see clearly and decide wisely. Let us go to Yankee-land, Charley."

"Has the Rossville circular, with its enticing pictures, quite captivated you, Katy?"

"Not that, Charles. The fact that the Spring cured my husband, thus preserving lovers to each other, will be a life-long attraction to me."

"The New Bethesda House looks hospitable and inviting. I am glad they built the tower. I shall want to look from its very pinnacle, if we go."

"If we go, Charley! Why not decide now that we will go, Providence permitting?"

"Do you want to take the whole family?"

"I had thought only of Maud, but should be as happy as an angel to take all the children. You remember my chief trial was the fact that seven hundred miles lay between me and my children."

"I thought your chief trial was that the handsome Bostonian whom you admired so greatly was not a model of propriety as an engaged man."

"What do you suppose has become of Mr. Nickerson and Miss Ingalls?"

"Married, probably, and as happy as they deserve to be, with two or three dark or blond cherubs filling the house with music."

"I hope so; but I don't more than half believe it."

"We shall very likely hear from them at the New Bethesda."

"Then you will go, Charles?"

"Yes; we'll go, and take the children. I suppose

Grandma would rather stay with Jane or Lucy than take such a journey. We will invite her, though. Perhaps she may favor the idea."

But Grandma said no, she would not take so long a journey in the cars for a sight of anything but the New Jerusalem, or a draught from any other water than the river of eternal life.

The children, from grave Alex, a year in the Law School, to eight-years-old Fred, were delighted with the prospect of a journey to a new and unfamiliar country. To Maud, who had spent her vacations in short excursions among her native hills and rivers, it seemed to offer an occasion of unbounded opportunity.

The plans were hardly decided, before the trunks were brought down from the attic. They wanted to make the most of their time; and early in July the family closed the doors of their ample and happy home, for an absence of two months in the high regions of New England.

The Lake Shore and New York Central pass through portions of beautiful and productive country. There was enough to attract young eyes to the windows, and cause exclamations of delight at frequent intervals. And to see places which the geography had told about was a new thing to the Raynor children. They enjoyed the Valley of the Mohawk, the Hudson, and a glimpse of the sea from Boston and along the Eastern Road with a zest which old travellers do not feel amid the storied localities of the Old World. They passed through Portland, that picturesque and beautiful city, the queen city of a great State, and crept along at an un-American pace until the glad cry was heard at last,

“Kingdom Station!” To Charles and Kate it seemed almost like the cry of “Kingdom of Heaven,” so intensely were their hearts thrilled by the memories of restoration which came on the heights to which Kingdom Station sits warder.

The stage is here, and has been for several years. A neighbor of the Rossvilles gives his whole time to this department of the attractive enterprise. It is really a coach and four. There is such a clamor for the top of this rocking, swaying ship, that Mrs. Raynor stills her own romantic desire and takes Fred inside, while the rest of the family, with a degree of appreciation of their father’s desire for the tops of things, climb with him to this movable observatory. How their hearts thrill with delight as the driver cracks his whip and starts toward the beckoning hills! The road has been improved, and an aching back could now endure the jolting. They can talk with the driver, and the elixir of the air and their own happy expectations make the heart bubble over. Oh the difference between this ride up the helpful hills and that suffering passage of five years before! Now, every breath is delight; then, every breath was a pain. The children understand the secret of their father’s happy mood, and are exultant even to the extreme of singing snatches of happy songs which resound among the wooded hills.

“I suppose we shall have no difficulty in getting rooms, coming so early in the season?”

“No; but Rossville has n’t built half large enough. It will be full and running over before summer ends.”

“Two hundred does seem small. I advised him to

build a large house, — large enough to accommodate the growing popularity of the place.”

“But even the old man’s vision couldn’t wholly convert the boys. They could hardly believe that the New Bethesda House would ever need to be enlarged. But it will. They ought to enlarge another summer. This is the third year, and it was full as a bee-hive clear to the cupola last year.”

“And the Old Stage Tavern full too?”

“Yes, both of ’em crammed; and all the neighbors had to take lodgers.”

“It is unprecedented prosperity, and deserved, — even a hundred-fold more.”

The children are alert at the sight of every tree or bird or squirrel that looks like home, and with singing, conversation, and laughter they make the distance over the sentinel hills. Presently strains of music steal through the trees, and as they emerge from the woods and see the New Bethesda on its very borders, a full band greets them with its enlivening chords. The coach halts, and a lad brings water for the passengers.

“Oh, Charley, the romantic tin pint is superseded!” exclaims Mrs. Raynor, as the lad hands them the clear water in transparent glasses. They drain the glasses in the midst of silent thanksgiving, and return them to the polished receiver; then, as the music of the welcome dies away, they climb the hill and alight on the piazzas of the New Bethesda House, which crowns the highest height. The young landlord, Ellison Rossville, comes out to greet them with the heartiness of a real home welcome. A bright-faced boy takes the hand-bags and shows them their rooms.

Mr. Raynor would like a bed in the cupola, but his wife is satisfied with a less ambitious locality, and they halt on the third floor. This will give the children ample exercise in stair-climbing. None of them are willing to rest until supper-time. They are too impatient to explore the old haunts, to wait even for a change of apparel. As they rush down the stairs and out into the open grounds, — Mr. and Mrs. Raynor not a whit older in manner than their children, — they discover that a plank walk connects the two hotels. No more waiting for the dew to dry off before taking the morning walk; even the mud of a rainy day is obviated by this wise provision. They run along this walk, and then turn and take in the location of the new house. It is altogether satisfying and delightful: nearer the pines even than the old one, and on the borders of the most romantic portions of the long path. Then they go on to the Old Stage Tavern. The children want to see it, and have the very room pointed out where their father drained the curative draught.

Dr. Rossville sits on the piazza as the troop arrive. For a moment he is a little dazed. Charles has grown a full beard since he was here before, but a look into Kate's face assures him.

“Squire Raynor, as sure as I am alive! I told ye you'd come, out of gratitude. Going to stop at the New Bethesda House? It's full and running over, just like the Spring, every year. We did not build large enough. We've been too timid. When a man has a vision he ought to follow it; that's what I tell my boys. They'll get up to my idea after a while. There are folks here from Chicago and St. Louis. It's

coming. There'll be folks here from all over this country, and Europe too. You found your coach this time, 'Squire. These your children?"

"We have brought the whole family, so that my wife may feel easy."

"A fine family, 'Squire. You'll have plenty of young companions. They come in families a good deal now. Come in?"

"I will go in and find Mrs. Rossville," said Mrs. Raynor. She passed Susie on the way, and hardly knew her; but Susie was deceived by no signs of bodily growth in Mrs. Raynor. She hailed and greeted her with the affectionate interest awakened by the previous visit. She was a young lady now in stature, and baby Helen was following hard after her.

Mrs. Rossville was superintending the supper. A glad light leaped to her face as she caught the vision of Mrs. Raynor, who assured her at once of her vigorous and healthy appearance.

"Yes, I have been well; one or two spells like the old one, that is all."

"You must be delighted over the prosperity attending the miracle Spring."

"Yes, I am glad, but mostly for the sake of the children. My girls will have no lack, and can go to school, and know the things that make women really attractive and of use in the world."

"We could not sleep until we had seen the old place. On several accounts we should have preferred staying here; but Mr. Raynor likes to be on the very highest places, and so he wanted to stop at the New Bethesda. He wanted a room in the cupola, even

there, but compromised by taking the third floor. We have our children with us, Mrs. Rossville, and I want Susie and Helen to know my daughter. They will like her, I am sure. I see it is almost supper-time, and we must hurry back. Come out to the piazza and see Mr. Raynor and the children."

Mrs. Rossville hesitated a moment, her native timidity holding her back, but finally went to greet the family of her admired friend. Maud seemed to her just such a girl as she would like to have her daughters know intimately. She was perfectly simple and natural in her manners. There were no young-lady airs about her, — no coquettish by-plays. Her blue eyes looked at you innocently as a child might look. She had kept her heart as pure and sweet as a lily through all the exactions of college life and the glamour of success. She had an erect and symmetrical figure, which fashion had never distorted; and though her features were not wholly Grecian, her face wore such a charming light that all who knew her spoke of Maud Raynor as a beautiful girl.

"Come, Charley, we shall have to break away from this delightful spot. I want to see the hundred guests about the supper-tables."

"You mean you are hungry, Kate."

"My eyes are hungry, certainly. I wonder if we shall see a familiar face."

"It is too early in the season to meet Miss Vinton; she comes every year."

"The school in Pine Hollow must be out before this time."

CHAPTER VIII.

DEBATABLE GROUND.

WITH the new house, a new order had unconsciously crept in. Ladies appeared at the supper-table in full dress, and radiant with laces and diamonds. Calico and gingham still prevailed in the morning, but every lady must look her prettiest at evening. Even the gentlemen laid aside their business suits and conformed to the new order. The at-home atmosphere so charming five years before at the Old Stage Tavern seemed a little chilled by the invasion of fashion. But Kate Raynor was independent, and she and the children made themselves comfortable. Not to be odd, they conformed measurably to the expectations of the place. The most of the day they could pass in the woods or on the wide piazzas in easy apparel, and to appear in soft wools or perhaps a summer silk at evening was only the custom of home. They had greatly enjoyed the freedom from rules about dress or appearance which prevailed five years before. It made life at this delightful resort more restful, and Kate and Charles had said they wished it might continue, but could not hope for exemption from that rule of fashion which invades all summer resorts whether on mountains or by the sea.

The Raynors found ample time for family life and the enjoyment of each other. There were so many guests

that it was not easy to fall into intimacies such as they had enjoyed with Mr. Nickerson and Miss Ingalls. They were becoming acquainted more slowly because of this, and their interest in each other. It was a new thing for the busy lawyer to have days together with his children, and they were very welcome days. He had not realized how mature in thought were Alex and Maud, nor how well furnished for the march of life. Each day they spent an hour or two in reading aloud some book of interest and value. The young people just out of school were not willing to give the flying hours wholly to play. They added to their store of English literature, and kept fresh the modern languages by daily conversations.

As August, the regular vacation month, approached, the hotel filled up rapidly. Miss Vinton and the Stapletons appeared, and among the guests were several tired ministers of different denominations. It was the custom of the house to hold religious services when there was a minister present to conduct them, and all rejoiced at the announcement that Mr. Winters would speak on the following Sunday. Quite a little anticipation seemed on tiptoe at the advent of this gentleman. It appeared that he was a regular guest at the house, and had been for several summers, coming for the first time five years before, just after the Raynors left.

"He does so much to entertain the guests that we are very glad to have Winters here," said Mr. Rossville.

"He is so kind to all the lonely and helpless," said Miss Vinton.

“He carries our water-bottles and shortens the way by his delightful conversation,” said Mrs. Stapleton.

“It is such a pity he belongs to the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood, and he so good and charming!” returned Miss Vinton. “I fear he will be the means of shipwrecking the faith of many.”

“Let us convert him,” said Mrs. Bolton. “He does not understand the Bible, or he never would stay with the Ancient Brotherhood.”

“All the churches think they find their faith in the Bible,” said Mrs. Stapleton. “I should not dare undertake the task of converting Mr. Winters. Sometimes the tables are turned, and the one essaying such a victory is himself defeated. Mr. Stapleton’s sister belongs to the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood, and you could no more change her than you could turn back the sun.”

The Raynors overheard this talk, and were curious to hear this exponent of the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood. They knew it to be a faith everywhere spoken against, but were not able to tell why.

“What is the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood?” inquired Maud, who had a religious mind, and was interested in following the division lines of the different churches.

“I do not know well enough to explain, my child; but we will all hear Mr. Winters. He seems a very agreeable man, and it cannot be a very bad faith.”

“It is too good—too good to be true,” added Miss Vinton.

“I don’t know what can be too good to be true,”

said Maud, "when we are thinking of the Heavenly Father's provisions."

"That we are heirs to an immense fortune, Maud," said Mr. Raynor.

"God does not dispense perishable fortunes; we struggle and toil for them. He gives us His love and His truth."

"Don't we have to struggle and toil for these too?"

"We toil for truth in any realm, scientific or spiritual; but the Father loves us, or He would never have called us His children."

"It is pleasant to think so, Maud, but we have not been so taught. We must cling to the true foundations."

"We will cling to the foundations, dear father, — they are true. The false is but sand."

They listen with interest to Mr. Winters. Even Alex, who has not heretofore been attracted by religious discussions, pays marked attention, while Maud drinks in the gracious message like one assuaging a long thirst.

"It is just what I believe, mother, and I am going to do more than believe it."

"Who has taught you the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood, my daughter?"

"A lovely country girl, Bessie Whitney, though she called it by another name. Many an hour we have sat under the willows by the creek while she told me of the faith of her beautiful mother. And she let me read her books too, and it was she who made sunshine for my soul all through the college years."

"Did you like Mr. Winters?" inquired Miss Vinton, as she passed the Raynors on the way to the Spring, next morning.

"We thought it a very helpful service," replied Mr. Raynor.

"Perhaps you belong to the same church."

"Oh, no; we have walked in the Church of our fathers without question. We like its ritual and its calendar of holy names. There was nothing antagonistic to the true faith in the sermon last evening. It only seemed to me a wider unfoldment."

"Mrs. Bolton is determined to convert him. You will see them in the corner of the parlor, the Bible between them, now."

They hasten on, and Maud draws near, where she can listen to the arguments. Her mother follows, that she may know more of the sunshine that lay about her daughter's college years. Mr. Raynor finds his first opportunity for a confidential talk with Mr. Stapleton.

"I have often wished to know the result of the lawsuit which was weighing poor Nickerson down five years ago."

"Just as I told you; he lost the suit. It depressed him terribly, and he left the city. None of his friends knew where he went. I suspect he has gone West somewhere."

"Did he take Miss Ingalls?"

"No; she is teaching school. The Swan girl made trouble between them, and I think Miss Ingalls rather lost faith in Nickerson."

"She ought not to have forsaken him in the midst of defeat."

"I guess he went off trying to forsake himself. A man cannot be on very good terms with himself when

he loses the confidence of such a woman as Miss Ingalls."

"Is the little Swan married?"

"What was it my daughters were saying about Minnie? Not married, I think, but on the eve of marriage. Something of the sort."

"Sunning yourself, 'Squire?" This was the greeting of Dr. Rossville, who walked along the piazza, bearing a water-bottle.

"Have ye noticed this bottle, 'Squire?"

"Yes, I have looked at it; a very pretty design."

"'Pretty' is not exactly the word. It means something."

"What does it mean, Doctor?"

"This head and face is Moses. Looks just like him. I've had a vision, and I know. You remember the children of Israel wanted water, and they clamored so and talked about Egypt, that the old man got a little vexed; and when he smote the rock, he gave it such an almighty clip that it struck clear through. That's the origin of the New Bethesda: same water that flowed over there when Moses smote the rock. He said *he* did it, you remember; but the Lord told him better than that. No man can bring water out of a rock without help. It is the Lord's doings, and it is marvellous in our eyes. It was marvellous then, and a good deal more so now. We call the bottle Moses."

"It does mean something, really. How much your visions have done to help the place! That bottle with its legend will be a perpetual charm. I see a great many of the guests carry it to the Spring."

"You must have one, 'Squire, to take to Pennsylvania. Allow me to make you a present;" and the Doctor gives the shining glass with its crystal contents to the man whose faith could see the hill covered with hotels and cottages.

"Oh, father," said Maud, "you should have been in the parlor listening to Mr. Winters and Mrs. Bolton. She is trying to convert him. She knows the Bible all by heart, and so does he; and oh, father, he makes it so plain that all life and hope rest on the love of God! Will you listen to-morrow? They are to talk again."

"I should be happy to, if they are willing."

"I did not ask; but of course a minister is glad to be heard. The more listeners, the wider the dissemination of truth."

"Where is your mother?"

"She is talking with Mrs. Stapleton and Miss Vinton. And, father, Alex has found a companion, — some one who can talk with him on any abstruse question. Have you noticed that light-haired young man who keeps near Mr. Winters?"

"Yes; I thought perhaps he might be a son."

"He is a young minister, just ordained, and belongs to the same church with Mr. Winters. Alex says he is real smart, and a good talker. They have been off together all the morning;" and Maud darted away to look after the younger children.

The band had a fashion of playing in the office a half-hour before dinner, and the young people as they came in from their outdoor games and woodland walks would dance or waltz in an informal way, keeping step to the tempting music. Alex Raynor and his sister

often joined in these dances, and they were always among the company who kept up the weekly hop. They had been taught to believe it a good amusement and excellent exercise when kept in check by rule and regulation. But to-day Maud was terribly shocked. Coming down the stairs from her own room, whom should she see among the dancers but Alex's boasted companion, the young minister? He was young, to be sure, and might be just as fond of dancing as Alex; but he was a minister, and there was a sentiment behind Miss Maud's religious code which said ministers ought not to dance; they must bid farewell to the follies of the world, and part company with every questionable habit. Some one asked her to join; but she went demurely in to dinner, wondering if it would not be well to caution Alex against close intimacy with a minister who had not learned that self-denial was one of the equipments of the profession. Then she began to think that perhaps this liberty was peculiar to the sect of the Ancient Brotherhood. She would know about it; she would ask Mr. Winters the very first thing after dinner. She hoped her father and mother had not seen young Hammond dancing; and if it was unusual, perhaps Mr. Winters could turn the current, and point the young man to the duty and power of example.

"Mr. Winters, I listened to you with so much interest this morning! May I ask you a question?"

"Certainly; any number of them."

"I noticed your friend Mr. Hammond dancing. Does your church approve of dancing by its ministers?"

"As a church we have no rules on the conduct of

our ministers, expecting the high moralities of our religion to shape the habits of individual members."

"Of course, dancing in itself is not wrong, not immoral, Mr. Winters; but do you think the people have the same confidence in a minister who clings to the follies of the world?"

"There is a sentiment, I think a righteous one, that places the minister on a level above worldly fascinations, and it would be better for the growth of the Christian Church if he always conformed his life to the high ideals. I suppose we cannot expect the young men to leap into stalwart Christians at a single bound. We must wait for them to grow."

"Will not Mr. Hammond lose his influence as a minister among the young people here by joining them in such familiar ways?"

"Some young men argue that they but follow the philosophy of Saint Paul, 'becoming all things to all men, that they may gain some,' by joining in the current sport, and that dancing is no more harmful than croquet."

"Would you dance, Mr. Winters?"

"I never learned, and it has no fascinations for me; while my young friend is a fine dancer, and as full of music as he can be. He can hardly refrain from keeping time in some manner in the presence of enlivening music. Life will sober him. It checks our impulsive gait soon enough. But, dear Miss Raynor, the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood throws a man on his own sense of right in such matters, while some of the churches prohibit dancing outright, even among church members; and I have seen Mr. Flint dance

two or three times in direct violation of the rules of his church."

"Is Mr. Flint a minister?"

"A minister and pastor in good and regular standing."

"I danced with him myself the other day. He enjoyed it as much as the young people, and he looks as old as my father."

"I suppose he reasons that in itself there is no harm in dancing. It is merely the poetry of motion; and here, where the perils attendant on late hours and cold homeward rides cannot come, it is but another innocent and happy pastime. I would rather see a minister dance than to hear him speak in an undisciplined manner. I have heard a minister speak in angry tones to his wife. That seems to me the unpardonable sin. I think the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood would call to close account such an offender."

"Oh, yes, the minister should be such a perfect man! His influence is gone when the people see that he cannot govern his own passions and impulses. My ideal of the ministry is very high, Mr. Winters, and I am sorry Mr. Hammond dances."

"Moralizing, my daughter?" said 'Squire Raynor, who in passing heard Maud's closing sentence.

"She has been talking very sensibly indeed. I approve of her position, and wish every minister answered to her ideal."

"We must not press our bright young Protestants into the monk's hood and cowl. They will not endure unreasonable restrictions."

“Let them pursue some other calling, father, if they are not ready to walk circumspectly.”

“There is great latitude of opinion about dancing; but I think we would all agree that the minister who cannot govern his temper incurs the censure of the Church.”

CHAPTER IX.

FRED DOUGLAS.

THE Raynors were sitting together listening while Alex read from Spenser. They were charmed by the quaint English, and determined to master the "Faerie Queene" during vacation. Looking from the window the 'Squire exclaimed, "There is Fred Douglas!" and in a second of time he was bounding over the stairs like a liberated school-boy. Before the family could recover from the astonishment of his sudden leave-taking, he was out on the plank walk, and arm in arm with this distinguished defender of a humiliated race.

Mr. Douglas and the Pennsylvania lawyer had met on other fields and in less peaceful air than that which stirred the pines about the New Bethesda. In the days of portent and omen, when there were voices in the very clouds, the friends of liberty were heralded from one to another until a close chain of confidence reached from the Slave States to the Lakes. Charles Raynor, while yet a lad, espoused the cause of liberty in its widest meaning, and lent the help of his agile frame on more than one occasion as a decoy to pursuing hunters. At other times he drove swiftly with his sable passenger to the next station, where the sentinel with his fresh horse looking toward Canada stood

waiting. He had met Mr. Douglas later on the platform, when each knew the danger of the mob. And now to see the venerable man in possession of the freedom which he had given the best energies of his life to achieve, to see him leisurely walking along the pleasant paths of a holiday home, quite annihilated the times when Spenser wrote, and the old kings and queens masqueraded. America walked before his chamber window, and to keep step with her great liberties was the overwhelming impulse of one on whom the war had rolled its heaviest agonies.

“There is 'Squire Raynor in close conversation with a negro!” said Mrs. Wilcox.

“Do you happen to know the name of that negro, madam?” said Mr. Winters, who overheard the remark.

“For the most part they have no names, except as they pick them up, or adopt their masters' names.”

“That man has a name which was a terror to the whole South in the time of slavery. That is Fred Douglas.”

“He is a negro all the same; and the New Bethesda House has no right to entertain negroes without asking the guests if it is agreeable.”

“Coming to a fine point, he is not a negro. His hair is straight, and he is three quarters white.”

“One who has any black blood is a negro.”

“Not according to majority rules. There is no man at this hotel deserving of the honor which should be paid to Mr. Douglas. Raynor is honored by his acquaintance; and if the guests do not receive him cordially they will disgrace themselves.”

"I know of one who will not receive him cordially, — that is Mr. Wilcox. We had negroes for servants too many years to take them as equals now."

"Mr. Douglas is a very gifted man intellectually, and thoroughly educated too."

"He has been a slave!"

"Yes, and he was bright enough to escape."

"Here comes Mr. Wilcox. Theodore, — Theodore, do you think the New Bethesda House ought to entertain negroes?"

"Ordinary negroes, perhaps not."

"Did you see 'Squire Raynor arm in arm with a negro just now?"

"Yes, Fanny; but that man is no ordinary boot-black. That is Fred Douglas. He is a great man, Frances. We don't mind the color of great men."

"I'm ashamed of you, Theodore Wilcox, to lose your Southern principles in the face of Northern sentiment! Why should you cringe before Abolition opinion?"

"I don't cringe, Frances. I have adopted Northern sentiment. It is my sentiment. It is my sentiment! It is as plain as the nose on your face, Frances, that every man is entitled to liberty, and I'm glad the negroes have it."

"Theodore Wilcox, I wish you had told me of this disgraceful change! I never would have come North — never!"

Mrs. Wilcox's emphasis was still hurtling about the piazza posts when 'Squire Raynor and Mr. Douglas came up the steps. Introductions were passed. Winters, the minister of the Ancient Brotherhood, greeted

him right heartily, and told him he had always been on his side; could n't stand anywhere else, according to his religion.

Mrs. Wilcox turned away, but not too soon to hear her husband say, "I am glad of the chance of seeing you. I'm a Southern man, but some time ago I learned that God did not make the world for just the white race, especially America."

Little groups were discussing the advent of Mr. Douglas. Would it be the popular thing to be on good terms with him? Some said, Would it be the right thing? Mr. Raynor and Mr. Douglas took a shady corner of the piazza, and continued the conversation which was of such vital interest to those who had fought in any manner, either with guns or with voice and pen. Old friends from the Stage Tavern had heard of his arrival, and drew near. Promenaders caught little snatches of conversation and dropped into the piazza chairs one after another, until there was quite an audience. Inimitable stories illustrated the conversation, and the observers were aware that no ordinary man held them in rapt attention.

"It is wholly useless to try to turn the tide against Mr. Douglas, — I told Mrs. Wilcox so. Why, Mrs. Raynor, the fact that your husband indorses him will be all the passport he needs," said Miss Vinton.

"Miss Vinton! the idea of Mr. Douglas needing a passport! Charles feels honored by his friendship."

"That gray-haired gentleman from Cole's cottage, — did you observe him? His face is like that of one of the Greek gods; he spoke to Mr. Douglas with the

most radiant smile I ever saw. He could n't have greeted a brother more cordially."

"That is Mr. Drayton. He is an old Abolitionist, and considers Mr. Douglas a brother. He and Charles have had some interesting talks about those old times. Mr. Drayton would go to the stake for his opinions."

"I like substantial people. I don't like people that never know what to say or do until they have seen what somebody who is supposed to be a leader is going to do. I shall speak to Mr. Douglas out of principle;" and Miss Vinton went on, to talk the matter over with another group.

"Mother, was n't it electrifying to see father bound out of the room, and Alex drop the book and rush after him as soon as he saw what he left for?" said Maud Raynor.

"And yet Alex was too timid to join them."

"I'll warrant you he heard every word, mother; and you saw how closely he crept to the talkers on the piazza. Alex has sound principles."

"Mother, there is the queerest-looking man out in the woods with father! His hair is 'most white, and his face is not exactly black, and they're whittling canes!" exclaimed Fred, as he reached in breathless haste his mother's room.

"That is a great man, Fred. When you are older you shall read his Life. It is as interesting as a story, — I mean a made-up story."

"May I stay out there, mother? He's telling-boss stories, now;" and Fred rushed back again to listen. Richmond and Willie usually divided their time be-

tween the Spring, where they liked to help the boy dip water for the guests, and the lake with its tempting pleasure-boats. This morning they had seen the new arrival, and when they came to dinner astonished their mother by saying they had been sitting under a tree all the morning, taking turns in reading aloud.

“What book could keep my boys quiet a whole summer morning?” inquired Mrs. Raynor.

“You see, Mr. Douglas’s bag slipped off the coach, and he just found it out when he got to the Spring, and Rich and I ran like mad, and found it more than a mile back, and he just opened it and gave us a book; and it is his own *Life*. Oh, mother, did n’t the slaves have a hard time?”

“You may follow Fred out to the woods and speak with Mr. Douglas. He knows your father, and will be glad to find that the sons of an old friend are reading his *Life*.”

Richmond and Willie bounded off with the glad abandon of youth, and were presently listening as intently as Master Fred.

“These are my sons,” said Mr. Raynor, when a pause was reached in the story.

“These are the lads who did me a favor this morning,” said Mr. Douglas.

“You are the man who did us a favor,” said Rich. “We’ve sat under a tree and read ever since. Willie thought it was dinner-time, so we came in, and mother told us we might come out here. Making that cane for me, father?”

“I have promised this one to Fred.”

"You may have mine, young man. I 've been struck with a bigger stick than that."

"I 'm glad you got away."

"I 'm glad the whole debasing institution has got away. I tell you it was awful on the black boys."

"You must speak to the people of the New Bethesda House, Mr. Douglas; it would be a memorable event. My sons ought to hear their father's fellow-worker; and there are many here to whom it would be a great boon."

"I suppose there are Southerners here with all their prejudices, who might think it an invasion of their freedom."

"There are Southerners here without their prejudices. I was delighted with Wilcox. You will consent, will you not?"

"If the House desires it, and no trouble will come to Mr. Rossville, I shall be glad to speak."

Mr. Raynor consulted with different guests, and found a strong desire to hear Mr. Douglas. As he moved among them from day to day gathering interested groups about him, dropping his wise or witty sayings even for the children, no one seemed to remember that there had ever existed prejudice against his race; and when the evening of the public address arrived, the parlors were crowded, while hungry listeners gathered about the doors. The farthest corner of the office resounded to the appeal of the orator, and some who had not intended to listen found themselves unwittingly arrested and carried along on the wave of eloquence. It was a privilege which the Raynor children appreciated, even to eight-years-old Fred, who

was very proud of the fact that he bore the great liberator's name.

"I am glad you heard Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Wilcox," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Theodore made me come down. He was just as determined as a regular tyrant. He said it was time I knew something about the Northern side."

"You are not sorry?"

"Yes, I am. I don't like to be stirred up so."

There were suspicious traces of tears about Mrs. Wilcox's eyes, and it was evident that her heart had softened not a little under the sway of the pathetic truth.

"It is the religion of the Ancient Brotherhood in practice, friend Raynor," said Mr. Winters, as the company dispersed for a breath of the open air.

"Quite an ovation to Mr. Douglas, and I am so delighted," said Miss Vinton.

"Oh, mother, it made me cry. Will there ever be any more slaves?" said Willie Raynor.

"Demosthenes himself!" observed Alex.

"Demosthenes' oratory; Saint Chrysostom's pathos, dear brother," said Maud.

"And more and greater than any ancient hero or saint, — the experience of a man who lived through the most pregnant times of all the ages," observed Mr. Raynor.

"And a man who bears scars in defence of liberty. Oh, my children, learn what a priceless boon this is which we call freedom, and defend it with voice and life!" said the mother, with emotion. She remembered her war-graves then.

The family walked to the Spring. Others loitered there in the moonlight discussing the address of Mr. Douglas. He had made a profound impression; and when he passed among them afterward there was a hush, as though an old prophet had appeared to the guests of the New Bethesda.

CHAPTER X.

“LEND A HAND.”

IT is coming true every day 'Squire, — the vision. Have you seen Colonel Raynes, from New Orleans? That's the farthest yet; but they 'll come farther than the width of this whole country to be healed by the New Bethesda. He's a fine man too, though he was a rebel colonel. But, 'Squire, I want you to talk with him. He is sick, — pretty bad, — and he don't drink enough of the water; acts just as you did. I told him about you; but you see I can't look after him at the New Bethesda House as I could if he was down to the Old Stage Tavern. Now, if you could tell him what the water did for you it might have more influence. I suppose he thinks I am enthusiastic because it is my Spring; but let him hear somebody talk who came here given up by the doctors, and he will begin to see that I'm not enthusiastic for nothing.”

“Are most of the people here out of health, Dr. Rossville?”

“There's hardly a sound one except the children, and the folks that have been cured and come out of gratitude. There's Winters, that Ellison thinks so much of; he'd 'a' been in his grave if he had n't come here

five years ago. He comes out of gratitude almost every year now, and Ellison says he's a great help in entertaining the new arrivals. He tells them what the water did for him, and being a minister they believe him."

"He seems to be talking religion as well as the New Bethesda. Mrs. Bolton has undertaken to convert him, and they sit with the Bible between them an hour or two every day, arguing."

"She'd better not. She belongs to the same church that I do, and I shouldn't dare try to bring Winters into my way of thinking. I know just how it would strike him. He'd think it was cutting up stars to make lightning-bugs."

"How do you suppose they will come out?"

"I heard Winters say that nobody ever yet studied into the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood without believing it. If that's so, it is plain how they'll come out."

"Did you know the New Bethesda House had to put up cots last night? It is full and running over."

"So are we; and the neighbors are getting chamber-sets for all their rooms, upstairs and down, and taking lodgers."

"There are some fine people here."

"Yes; the folks that come here come for something else besides just having a good time; they come out of principle. The best part of it is, if they come once they want to come again; in fact, they don't want to go anywhere else. Try to get hold of Colonel Raynes to-day, 'Squire. He's losing time." And Dr. Rossville hurried on to encourage some despondent

soul to hope for longer life on earth through the help of the New Bethesda. 'Squire Raynor hailed a Pennsylvanian who had made the journey from the Quaker City because of his testimonial to the helpful influence of the Spring, —

“How are the tides of life to-day, Mr. Farwell?”

“Rising. I feel like another man. When I came here I was weak as a baby. I don't mean physically, though I was weak enough in body; but I was low-spirited, despondent, and it is true, though I ought to be ashamed to say it, I cried half the time: could not help it. Everything was dark to me. You never did a better service to humanity, not even when you belonged to the underground railroad, than in telling the world of the healing properties of the New Bethesda. It does heal almost miraculously.”

“You have been willing to give it a fair trial. There is a man from New Orleans, Colonel Raynes, — have you met him? — who came to be cured, and will not avail himself of the opportunity he came so many miles to enjoy.”

“I take thirty glasses daily.”

“He does not take a whole glass at a time; thinks he cannot, though he is a large man. ‘As a man thinketh, so is he.’ How true that is! If we can make the Colonel think his way to even ten glasses daily, he will improve at once.”

“Do you suppose there is any danger of exhausting the Spring?”

“It seems to be a living spring, overflowing at the rate of three hundred barrels daily, with all the exhaustion of two hundred and fifty guests.”

"You ought to see my wife. Her face is actually two inches shorter than when we started from Philadelphia. It beats all how a woman can worship her husband!"

"I fear we are not half tender enough of this unselfish devotion. I reproach myself daily for little failures. Perhaps I have not been so polite to my wife as I would have been to Mrs. Stapleton or Miss Vinton, though I mean to be. I know if you set your boot, with nails in the heels, on the heart of a rose or a pansy, it may exhale fragrance, but it is the fragrance of a crushed flower, the aroma of a wound."

"They are powerful creatures for pardoning. Just tell them you're sorry, and they are as happy as nightingales once more, no matter how deep the ugly nails have pierced."

"Yes; and for that very reason we ought to beware of the hurts. Every wound leaves a scar, however carefully healed."

"The tramp has begun. I should think the planks would be worn as thin as shingles. Three times a day, up and down, up and down."

"The conference has broken up, I see. There comes Winters with Mrs. Bolton, and my wife and Maud are following."

"What conference?"

"Mrs. Bolton is trying to convert Mr. Winters, and my wife and daughter are so interested that they listen to every word, and I believe even Alex hangs around the outer rim, not too far off to hear."

"That accounts for your being alone, — the man who

has the most delightful family on the face of the earth. Why don't you listen, too?”

“The fact is, Farwell, I find I do not need to listen. My humanitarian ideas logically followed are the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood. And so while they stay in the stived parlor or on a corner of the piazza, I can breathe the mountain air in motion, and maybe convert some faithless soul to the virtues of the miracle pool.”

Mrs. Raynor and Maud took each an arm of the 'Squire and faced him toward the Spring. He and Mr. Farwell had lingered half-way up the hill on a convenient bench while they dropped their pearls of truth and good fellowship and reckoned their occasions of hope.

“Oh, father, you should have heard the talk this morning! It was like a vine-covered way leading into the everlasting light and joy of heaven. Mrs. Bolton said they would not talk any more; she would think about it. I don't see how she can help being converted.”

Maud's face was alight with the glow of a happy hope. She rejoiced, not so much that her school friend's sweet philosophy had found able corroboration, as that her mother should willingly listen and at last heartily approve.

“If father could only see the same head-lights!” exclaimed Maud.

'Squire Raynor quoted Tennyson:—

“Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Shall be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood.”

“Do you believe that, dear father?”

“How could a reasoning man believe anything else, and live his life in this changeful world?”

“And you have not read on the question, Charles, nor listened to the arguments?” said Mrs. Raynor.

“I have read my own heart, Katy, — the heart of a father.”

“Glory! glory! hallelujah!” said Maud.

“Let us go back by the long path. Winters is able, is he not?”

“And so persuasive. He seems sweetness itself in disposition; or is it the grace of the Lord?”

“Did many listen?”

“Yes, a good many, father. Alex listened, and he is talking on the question with young Mr. Hammond. It will soften the hearts of the people here, and make the atmosphere of the New Bethesda House like that of a great home.”

“There is a new minister here, — came yesterday. He is as young as Mr. Hammond, and with the same light hair and blue eyes.”

“And the same faith, Maud?”

“I make no doubt it is the same at the root, though its branches may hang out different colors.”

“Was that a blast?”

“Thunder, Katy. I observed the gathering storm some time ago.”

“We had better give up the long path to-day, and avoid a drenching.”

They turned into a shorter way still bordered by overhanging trees, and in some places arched by them, and with quickened steps gained the shelter of home in

time to avoid a pelting shower. Strains of music greeted them, and they hastened to the parlor to listen. A young man with refined and scholarly face was at the piano, singing. The tones were wondrous sweet, and the song a new one to the Raynors. When the last notes died away, Maud whispered, “This is the young minister who came yesterday.”

The rainy day was improved by the musicians and authors of the company. While song after song reverberated through the halls, here and there in a window-nook busy pens were flying in preparation of promised copy for the city newspapers, each following his specialty with perfect unconsciousness of the other, while some of the young men were mysteriously consulting with reference to future enjoyment.

The religious tone of Mr. Marshall’s contributions to this rainy-day entertainment awakened a desire to hear the young man in his official capacity, and at once he was invited and urged to conduct the service on the following Sunday.

“Father, Alex and Mr. Hammond are getting up an entertainment. There is a poor sick girl here, and the object is to help her, — that is, the ulterior object. Of course young men will be pardoned if they anticipate a good time. Will you help? Mr. Winters is going to take part, and Miss Vinton, and the Stapletons; and have you noticed those young ladies who seem to keep by themselves, and one of them is pale and sick? They are daughters of a noted authoress. They will assist, and together we hope to arrange for quite a brilliant time. Mother will read in her

inimitable way, will you not, dear mother?" And Maud goes to find Richmond and Willie, whom the rain has driven into the house, as two or three lads are needed to complete the cast for a domestic drama. Then what earnest study goes on in quiet corners or the more secluded chamber, the pale face of the sick girl pleading for devotion and faithfulness, and stimulating the brave young hearts in their noble undertaking. The rainy day is a very godsend. The house never seemed so much a home as now, when a mutual work is going on for a humanitarian end. The weather was forbidding for two or three days, — a cold August storm; but the New Bethesda House was like a hive of busy workers. Those who were to have parts were intently studying, while the benevolent-hearted lent their assistance by planning and making costumes, and interesting every guest in the object of the entertainment. There was to be an admission fee, and a contribution also. Mr. Marshall and Mr. Hammond were ready to assist in the music, and all were alive with expectancy.

Mr. Raynor found his opportunity to talk with the New Orleans colonel. He told his own story, and that of others who had come under his observation; but Colonel Raynes seemed immovable in the conviction that he could not imbibe a spoonful more than at the present.

"I fear you will not recover if unwilling to follow the Doctor. The prescription measures quantity as well as ingredients."

"I cannot drink water by the quart, for the sake of getting well; and death is an angel of mercy. You

Yankees have so changed our social order that we feel ourselves in a land of strangers. There is no escape except in death.”

“You are a sick man, Colonel, or these shadows would not hover about you. The social order of the South is indeed changed; but how much purer and nobler it is possible to make it in an atmosphere of universal liberty!”

“Some of us do not feel like exerting ourselves to create a new order. It is not easy to fit four millions of blacks into the grooves of freedom.”

“All the greater honor to him who takes up the hard task.”

“I do not court the honor, and I shrink from the responsibility. Your Northern papers and authors are continually pointing the finger of condemnation at us. I have just read ‘A Fool’s Errand.’ It is utterly false. There is no such bloodthirsty spirit among us. The Ku-Klux-Klan is a law-and-order league.”

“Is it not possible that this law-and-order league has degenerated in certain localities, so that ‘A Fool’s Errand’ easily finds its facts?”

“Southerners are a high-minded and noble class. They are neither midnight assassins nor spies.”

“I believe you, Colonel, with reference to the typical Southerner; but a great war stirs up the degenerate blood of communities. We were not free from villains at the North. But, Colonel, get well, and see the delightful change in operation a few years hence; then you will rejoice, as I do, that it has come. See, the clouds are broken around the western horizon; what magnificent colors the setting sun lavishes upon

them! How easy to see ships in full sail over crimson and amber seas, and volcanic islands sending up their smoke and flame! The sunset from this height is magnificent, and never so glorious as after a storm. Is there not a hopeful hint to North and South in this natural picture with its unvarying philosophy? I wish I could inspire you with my hope for the future of our united Republic. You would desire to live and be one of the happy recipients of its blessings, if not a formative force in creating them."

CHAPTER XI.

EXPECTATION.

THE guests of the Old Stage Tavern and all the cottages rallied to the New Bethesda House on the night of the entertainment. Busy hands had cleared the dining-room and erected the stage, and by close packing nearly all were accommodated with seats. Lily Tarleton, the sick girl for whose benefit so many happy thoughts and industrious hours had been given, was persuaded to be present, comfortably ensconced in a rocking-chair. The utmost care had been taken to conceal from her the object of the entrance-fee and contribution; but her shyness about being present made the managers almost afraid that some bird of passage had told the story. Maud Raynor had to use not a little of her sweet eloquence before Lily would allow them to draw her into the hall. The stage looked quite theatrical, with its improvised scenery, and in watching the players Lily's thought was taken from her own weakness. A simple domestic drama, calculated to set in relief the honest home affections and exalt the life of the family, held the attention as few great plays have done. The guests felt themselves individually responsible for the success of the occasion. Much of the acting was so natural, it hardly seemed the work of amateurs. Alex

Raynor excelled in stately elocution, Mr. Hammond in humor, Maud in pathos, and Miss Vinton in tragic tones. The sick daughter of the noted authoress invested her part with sympathetic enthusiasm. Lily Tarleton was but a degree weaker than herself, and to pour the warmth of her own flickering life on the altar of benevolence was an opportunity enlisting her deepest heart. The fellowship of pain was an unseen but real union between them.

The Raynor lads made the child-life of the home very attractive, while their youthful voices held the close attention and interest of young and old. Maud had improved the juvenile asides by improvisations of her own, which were received with delight.

The drama closed by a tableau of happy domestic life, — the family about the evening fireside engaged in their various occupations of work and study; the grandmother reading the Bible, a peaceful light upon her aged face as she looked from the open book to the living epistles about her.

After the drama, came what to many was the cream of the entertainment, — readings by some of the chief elocutionists of the company. Mrs. Raynor appeared in the costume of Queen Elizabeth's time, and called "the cattle home across the sands o' Dee." Mr. Winters read from "Snow-Bound," giving the picture of home comfort in the midst of a rigorous New England winter, when —

"The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle."

Esquire Raynor read "The Fireside," Mr. Marshall sang the "Old Oaken Bucket," and the pleasant evening came to a close. The sentiments had been uplifting and in harmonious keeping, and the influence was helpful to all.

When account was taken of the receipts, seventy dollars were in the hands of the treasurer. As Lily Tarleton was borne back to her room, Maud Raynor lingered for little helpful ministries; and when she said good-night she left a package in the hand of the poor girl which would enable her to stay the needed time at the New Bethesda House without fear of impoverishing her widowed mother, or taking the bread from the mouths of the younger children.

"Mother," said Maud, "Mr. Hammond says he has been on the stage a good many times. When he was younger he was carried away by the fascinations of the theatre."

"And he compromised by entering the ministry?"

"He was converted first. He has told Alex and me about it. He had a beautiful sister who suddenly sickened and died, and the minister at the funeral said she was lost. Think of it, mother,—a young girl who had never done anything wrong, lost! Mr. Hammond was very young then, only seventeen; but he made up his mind then and there that he would be a minister for the sake of following in the footsteps of Jesus, who commissions his ministers to 'comfort all that mourn.' He did not know anything about the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood. He knew that the heart that is bereft of a dearly-loved one has all the anguish it can endure, and that there is but one

office for those who would approach such a heart, and that is the office of comforter. There was a new college quite near his home, and it was built and endowed by this church of which Mr. Winters and Mr. Hammond are ministers; and when he went there he learned that a great denomination believes that the minister commits the unpardonable sin who fails to comfort all who mourn."

"Have you ever talked with Mr. Hammond about the influence of example?"

"In a general way, mother. But when Alex and I like to dance, and we are all young together, I cannot speak of that with very good grace; but I wish you would. If he should dance at parish parties I know it would make trouble for him. And he will, he likes dancing so well."

"He enters into all the pastimes with a good deal of interest, I notice. He started that blindfold game the other evening, which offended Miss Vinton so seriously."

"It was all meant in good part, mother. Miss Vinton was very sensitive, where you would not have noticed or cared."

"There are always sensitive people in gatherings of any kind, and the pastimes should be above any danger of even a suspicion of personalities."

"They are talking about something for to-morrow night which will be astonishing if it can be done. Mr. Hammond says it can. But I must not tell. Are you tired, mother dear?"

"A little anxious, that is all."

"Not about me, I hope?"

“Mr. Hammond is very attractive, and you know very little about him, Maud. Be reserved and careful.”

“He tells everything about himself to Alex and me. He seems to want us to know his past history. Alex is charmed with him.”

“I am not wholly pleased with his familiar ways. I have observed him closely when you and Alex have been with him.”

“He seems very childlike and confiding. One cannot hold such a person at arm’s-length. He is more like a girl in his manners than like a mature man and minister. I have seen him more frequently since we began to get ready for the play, and it seems as though we had always known each other.”

“Susie and Helen will need you now. You have withdrawn yourself from them for several days on account of the play. Run down and read with them occasionally, and let Mr. Hammond drift a little farther away.”

“Mother, dear, I hope you don’t think my heart in danger! You mistake your little girl, if you do. I have a nebulous career before me, and it is slowly assuming definite form. Love and marriage are not in the near future to me. If they come at all, it must be at a later period.”

“I wanted to put you on your guard in the presence of a man who seems very sweet and gentle, — just such a man as women love and trust, and yet not always wisely.”

“I presume Mr. Hammond has a sweetheart. We used to have a proverb at college that the ‘Divini-

ties mated before they matriculated.' Almost every one of them gets engaged before he is out of college."

"For that very reason girls should be on their guard. The profession brings the minister into more intimate relations with families than any other, and his sympathetic and official attentions may be misinterpreted."

"We played the domestic play, dear, precious, discreet mother, and that's the end of it."

Mrs. Raynor held an unopened letter in her hand while she talked with her daughter. Maud observed it.

"Who is it from? Why don't you read it? How can you wait, even to counsel me?"

Mrs. Raynor, still with the anxious look upon her face, put the letter in her pocket, remarking that she would sleep before reading it. The evening had been exciting and wearisome; the postmark on the letter made her apprehensive. She thought she recognized the chirography.

"Can you sleep with an unopened letter in your possession?"

"I always wait the opportune moment before reading what may bring me unrest or pain."

"The children acquitted themselves very well," remarked Esquire Raynor, when his wife closed the door of their room; "and young Hammond is really quite an actor. It was very creditable, very creditable indeed."

"Yes, and the delightful part is the greenbacks which the entertainment puts into the hands of sick Lily. Let us not talk. I am a trifle weary."

With the morning light Mrs. Raynor opened and read her letter. It was, as she had apprehended, from Gertrude Ingalls, who had heard through the Stapletons that the Raynors were again at the New Bethesda. She had taken no vacation except the rest in her own home, and was meditating a few days at the Spring, tempted to undertake the journey by the hope of seeing a sympathetic friend. Mrs. Raynor desired and yet dreaded to see her acquaintance of one summer. It would be a living tragedy to see the laughing light on Gertrude Ingalls's face veiled in shadow.

"Shall we ask her to share our daughter's room, Charles? Mr. Rossville said last night that every available space was full."

"Yes, if Maud is willing. When does she come?"

"The 20th. Why, that is to-day! There will be a crowd over Sunday, no matter how many departures there are. I will ask Maud;" and Mrs. Raynor goes to her daughter's room.

"Yes, mother dear, I should be delighted to have Miss Ingalls share my room. I was on the point last evening of dividing it with Lily Tarleton. A second thought made me fear you would object on account of possible danger from associating with one who is ill."

"I have that little anxiety settled now, and will run to the Spring before breakfast, as I am ready, and my family still resting off the excitement of the play."

"Alone, mother dear?"

"Yes; this morning I shall not object to being alone."

Mrs. Raynor's thoughts were on her friend, whom, from her happy security as wife and mother, she looked upon as defrauded and bereft. She recalled Tennyson's couplet, —

“ 'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.”

and wondered if the philosophy would apply to a loss which comes from the intrigue of a heartless girl and the disloyalty of an avowed lover, or if it meant only the loss which is marked by growing grass and blossoming daisies. Of course the heart is enlarged by an honorable love; but is it not also shrivelled by disappointment, — its living currents thrown back to chill and to drown? And then to know the degree to which human weakness can descend as it is exhibited by a fickle lover; is there any enlarging power resulting from a love thus rewarded? She came to the conclusion that only the true love over which no shadows of estrangement or disloyalty gather — the faithful love lost by death — could have inspired the laureate's couplet. Anything less is apples of Sodom, — dust, ashes, shame.

At the Spring she found Colonel Raynes sipping slowly his half-glass, while she dipped and drank her two. She took occasion to add her emphasis to her husband's effort on behalf of this splendid Southerner.

“We want you to live, Colonel, and see how glorious a truly free Republic is. Please take larger draughts from the miracle pool. It will restore you: it never fails. While there is life, there is a chance for this fountain to save.”

But the Colonel only sighed, and said, “If life and

healing depend on impossibilities, I shall have to go down. It is literally impossible, madam."

Mrs. Raynor pressed the matter, telling him there should be no such word as "impossible" in the vocabulary of a soldier; that where there is a will there is a way.

"Not always, madam. We started out feeling ourselves equal to the undertaking of conquering the North; but you Yankees made us own the word 'impossible.' There was a will to be independent, but you blocked the way."

It was useless. The Colonel was evidently a disappointed man, whose sickness had resulted from brooding over the war and the changed order it had caused; and where the mind is sick the body has poor chance to be whole. Joy is the best nerve tonic; a happy heart the best medicine. If the loving pulses of the heart beat sadly, the whole world is out of joint. How do men dare attempt to contravene the Divine decrees, and expect even a passing pleasure from the defiant step?

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEAUTIFUL TEACHER.

GERTRUDE INGALLS came in the afternoon coach. It seemed strange to see her coming unattended, when memory took in the first vision of her lovely face. Mrs. Raynor hastened to join her, that no sense of loneliness might oppress her spirits in this unfamiliar place. She was escorted to Maud's room, glad to find evidence that some one had cared for her comfort. Mrs. Raynor observed her face, fearful of possible changes. Five years of school-teaching write their lines even when there are no sorrowful heart-pangs adding their weight to the daily care. Miss Ingalls was indeed changed. The care-free face of the young girl which so charmed Mrs. Raynor at the breakfast-table five years before was more serious and thoughtful. The flitting sunbeams which then played over her cheeks and among the masses of her yellow hair had gathered into a steady, softened light. Hers was not a sad face, and yet the reader of expression would know that sorrow's shadowy hand had helped in moulding its serenity. There was no look of one at odds with the world, or meditating upon past injuries. Miss Ingalls had overcome even her regrets, and through faith and work reached victory. This was the

reading as she laid aside her wraps and passed the common greetings of friendship.

Then Mrs. Raynor and Maud left her.

“She has the face of a crowned victor, mother,— a victory in the most trying race. I shall be in awe of her.”

“She seems to me a sterling character, my daughter; a woman to be loved of women. How hard it must have been for her to give up the love of such a charming man as Mr. Nickerson, and to feel that all this anguish came because one of her own sex sinned against the sacredness of their engagement! How do men and women dare transgress the laws of God in such ways! Do they think He is blind, or that His righteousness shall fail of its exactions in their case? He has said that ‘Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,’ and His word never fails. People have to suffer for their sins, and according to their sins. I pity Minnie Swan and Robert Nickerson when their day of retribution comes.”

“I presume Mr. Nickerson is enduring his day of retribution now. It must have been a terrible upheaval of primitive rock which sent him from the familiar places of home, society, and business into exile.”

“I pray it may be so; and that, purified as by fire, he may return and build the old wastes with Miss Ingalls. They seemed exactly suited to each other. Whatever temptations may come in your way, my dear daughter, remember this,— never become fondly familiar with a man whose heart belongs to another. In the code of morals this is the unpardonable sin, with only wreck and ruin in its course.”

After the Raynors leave the chamber, Gertrude Ingalls, in fresh apparel, sits down by the small table. Her head is bowed upon her hand, and her lips move in prayer. It is her daily and hourly plea that the good God will give her strength to lean upon His changeless love and do life's work in His name. And then for Robert, that his eyes may be opened to see that great peace have they who love the heavenly law, and nothing can offend them; while the wicked are like the troubled sea, tempest-tossed. Prayer is her girdle of supporting power, and the Divine Word her promise of help. She reads verse after verse of what the saints of old said and did in life's straits. She repeats again and again the forgiveness of the Cross, her thought with Robert in his exile. At length she remembers that her friends may deplore the long waiting, and trips lightly down the stairs. Young Mr. Ross-ville suddenly meets her with a great joy upon his face. Not a guest at the Old Stage Tavern, nor a single member of the family of the host, but did homage to the rare beauty of Gertrude Ingalls. She is glad of the hearty welcome. A change in the old scene of home and street and schoolroom will help a heart grown weary in the set grooves of duty. She goes unconsciously out to the piazza. Alex and Mr. Hammond are coming in from the woods. They pass her, and as the young men climb the stairs, Mr. Hammond says, —

“Did you notice the young lady we passed?”

“I noticed some one in passing, but whether young or old I could not tell. People are passing and re-passing continually, and I do not always look up.”

“You ought to have looked up. She was as radiant as the sunset, — a most beautiful woman.”

“She must have been my mother’s friend, the teacher from Boston. She expected her to-day.”

“That young lady is fit for a goddess. It is not possible such beauty is allowed to brood in a schoolhouse. We shall see her at supper. Let us dress, Alex.”

As they gather in the office before the dining-room doors are open, — guests become ravenously hungry in this high latitude, — Miss Ingalls is with her friend Mrs. Raynor, and the young men are introduced. Mr. Hammond lingers in conversation, holding Gertrude for the moment by his brilliant powers. Richmond and Willie hurry upstairs to wash off the evident signs of contact with fishing-boats, bait, and summer dust. They have caught sight of Miss Ingalls.

“Rich, is n’t the Boston schoolma’am pretty as a picture? Would n’t you be glad to have her in our school?”

“No; I’m afraid we’d look at her all the time and forget our lessons.”

“There would be danger of that. Let’s astonish mother by fixing up.”

Fred now rushes in, and the boys take especial pains to look well at the supper-table.

“Rich, this is the night we’re going to have the show.”

“Oh, yes; the lifting show. I don’t believe they can lift me with just their fingers, let alone a big man. Hurry, Fred; we’re late.”

The boys have beautified themselves in an astonishingly short time, and now rush over the stairs in any-

thing but a decorous gait. The family have gone in to tea, and they pause and grow a trifle abashed as Miss Ingalls's face shines upon them from their family table. Mr. Winters and Mr. Hammond have been transferred to the same table. It is now full. The boys are introduced in quiet tones to their mother's friend, and the hour passed in the supper-room sparkles with witty and delightful conversation. They promenade the piazza a few moments in the gloaming, and then, so eager are the boys for the show, as they call it, that all repair to the parlors. Hints go from one to another that something unusual is to happen, and all who are curious hasten to see.

Mr. Hammond introduces the entertainment by saying that any one volunteering will be lifted from the carpet by the ends of the fingers of four persons present, and two of the lifters may be girls. Richmond Raynor, with an air of unbelief, volunteers. He thinks they had better try a boy first. The four lifters inflate the lungs, and slipping the ends of their fingers under the prone form of the lad lift him as high as their shoulders. Larger persons now volunteered, and were lifted one after another, until the witnesses began to think Mr. Hammond a witch, when Mr. Farwell came forward. He was over six feet in height, and weighed nearly two hundred. The lungs of the lifters were inflated, and after two or three trials Mr. Farwell was lifted, though not quite so high as Master Richmond Raynor. The entertainment was greatly enjoyed, especially by the children, and the philosophy of the inflation duly discussed. Afterwards there was singing, and the voice of the Boston

teacher added interest to the songs both old and new.

As Mr. Hammond and Alex Raynor walked to the Spring before retiring, Miss Ingalls came up again for discussion.

“How does it happen that so handsome a woman lives single until she is twenty-five; do you know, Alex?”

“My mother has told me. Mother teaches us by example. She gives us object lessons, and she gave Miss Ingalls’s love history to impress a moral upon her son. The story had a powerful effect.”

“I should think so. You are as shy as a fawn. You hardly look at the pretty girls here. Tell me the story, please. It may help me. If I have a weakness, it is my admiration for every lovely girl I see.”

“Five years ago she was here with her lover, a young Boston lawyer. They seemed perfectly happy together for a few days, when a family came whom her lover knew. He had in charge a case for this Mr. Swan involving many thousand dollars, and had been quite a frequent caller at his home. The daughter, Minnie, was too young to have developed common-sense, if she is ever to possess that needed ingredient of character, and she was charmed with the young lawyer, and took every possible method of showing her feeling. Nickerson, like plenty of other fools, enjoyed her adoration, and I guess he paid her back more than an engaged man had any right to, and the matter went on until Miss Ingalls lost confidence in him; and after the trial Nickerson lost confidence in himself. He had lost the case, and lost the girl he

loved, and Minnie Swan's fascinations died out like the flash of fireflies, as such false and wrong attractions always do; and Nickerson fled, nobody knows where."

"And the goddess went to teaching school. It is an abominable shame!"

"I think she must be happy in her calling. Her face is wonderfully serene. She is more beautiful than I supposed, though my mother always spoke of her as a lovely girl."

"She is the handsomest blonde I ever saw. I like dark eyes best, — I suppose from contrast."

"Are you not engaged, Mr. Hammond? Pardon the question, but we used to have such a joke on the Divinity boys about early engagements."

"The world is so full of beautiful women it is hard to decide. I believe a minister ought to be married before he settles over a parish, but I am no nearer that desirable event than when I entered college; in fact, not so near. I knew then a girl whom I thought I might some day marry, but she slipped away from me into the unseen country."

"Suppose you try for Miss Ingalls. You have both loved and lost."

"If she were dark, and as radiant, I would; but two such light persons do not mate well."

"Are you going to mate according to physiological rules, Hammond? If I ever see a girl that I love, I shall not stop to ask whether she is a good contrast."

"The contrast admits of a stronger attachment, so the wise say."

"Nonsense! Look at my father and mother. They are about the same color, blue-gray eyes and brown

hair, and they are the dearest pair of lovers that ever were mated. There is no flaw in their conduct toward each other. They are perfectly respectful always, as much so as strangers, and as lover-like as though life were a perpetual honeymoon."

"Be thankful, young man, for your birthright. It is worth something as an outfit for life, to be happily born. I wonder what makes the world so full of clashing and discord, and the happy homes so rare?"

"That you ministers may have something to do, I suppose. To elevate and purify the life of the home ought to be an ambition worthy of the highest endowments. I go into other homes sometimes with the fellows, and positively I could not endure to be spoken to as some parents speak to their children. Father and mother are as polite to us as though we were people of consequence; and I have come to think that children should be spoken to politely always, and it pains me to witness what some have to suffer. You have noticed the Stoddards. How they yell at each other on the croquet-ground, — father, mother, and children all alike! I could not play within hearing of their unpleasant tones."

"I wish I were going to preach next Sunday. I have a sermon on the home, and positively I would take it. Wonder what Marshall will talk about? Don't you think him very reserved?"

"He is very tired. His first settlement was in an exacting place, and he has worked up to the limit of his ability."

"That may account for it. But we all come here because we are tired. I suppose each has to take his

own way of resting. It has rested me, meeting such a royal fellow as my friend Raynor."

"I don't like to be too much alone. A congenial companion increases enjoyment. I can heartily reciprocate your sentiment. There is my mother with Miss Ingalls. How romantic to go to the healing pool at night! Father cannot be far off; he guards mother in such loving ways."

"That is your father with Miss Maud, if I mistake not. They are bearing 'Moses' between them. Let us not intrude. I want to see Miss Ingalls by the morning light next time."

The young men disappear in the shadows and seek their own rooms; Mr. Hammond's thought lingers around the question of mating.

"Young Rossville ought to marry. A great home like this needs a feminine head as well as a masculine. Women often need to confide or counsel about the things that happen from day to day. Fancy a woman trying to approach Mr. Rossville! He is as shy as a girl."

"Have you seen him greet Gertrude Ingalls? It is like worship, my mother says."

"Gertrude Ingalls does not seem made of common clay. I can appreciate Mr. Rossville's worship of such a girl as she."

"There is a rumor about the house that Ellison and Miss Vinton may sometime marry."

"She is very suave and agreeable. He may marry her if he wants to. On the whole, I think I would rather see him married to Miss Vinton than even worshipping Miss Ingalls."

“Oh, Hammond! You are seriously touched by the blonde’s beauty. The idea of grudging the very best to Mr. Rossville!”

“I hear your family coming. What a glad girl’s laugh your mother has! Such a laugh can come only from a happy heart. She has four boys. I hope none of you will make that laugh less glad;” and Mr. Hammond, with a sigh born of bitter memories, bade his friend good-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

MENTAL TONIC.

“ I AM so glad we are to hear Mr. Marshall this evening, are you not, Mrs. Raynor? The Church of the Ancient Brotherhood has had the service two Sundays in succession, and now it is our turn,” said Miss Vinton.

“ He is a charming singer, and I hope he can preach well. We have missed you, Miss Vinton; have you been ill?”

“ Oh, no; Dr. Rossville invited me to pass a few days with his wife. She is lonely, even though the house is thronged. Congenial companionship cannot always be found in a summer hotel. I have known the family a long time; we are very intimate. I saw Maud with Susie and Helen. What a dear girl your daughter is! She must be a great comfort to you. You are a blessed woman, Mrs. Raynor, in your family.”

“ Maud is interested in Susie and Helen, and passes all her spare time with them. They are reading together Tennyson’s ‘In Memoriam.’ ”

“ It is a profound poem for such young ladies.”

“ Maud studied it in her course at college, and can explain all the blind passages.”

“What a help that will be to Susie! Susie is such a dear girl, and so faithful, I am glad Miss Raynor likes her.”

“Well, Sicily, I’ve been hunting for you. Seems to me you ran off rather unceremoniously. I reckoned on your staying over Sunday.”

“Oh, Dr. Rossville, I had a delightful visit; and I must come to my own room on Saturday night, you know.”

“My wife is going to have the pot pie to-day just as they make it in Pine Hollow, and you must come down to dinner. She expects ye.”

“How very kind! I’m sorry I spoke about it. It is a great deal of bother to make it, Doctor.”

“Bother! no. My wife don’t count it bother to cook. She’s used to it, and likes it, Sicily. I’m going down to the pool. Don’t you want to go along?”

“I have just declined dear Mrs. Raynor’s invitation, and it won’t do to go now. I have a great deal of religious reading to do to-day. Religious reading on Sunday, Doctor, always. I don’t believe in secular reading on Sunday, nor Sunday newspapers. They are very demoralizing.”

“Oh, Sicily, don’t get narrow! There’s worse things than reading the papers on Sunday. It is worse to neglect your health. There’s Colonel Raynes. He’ll die, just because he don’t do as he is told. Tremendous will a man must have, to say he can’t drink a glass of water! Ought to die! Such folks have n’t backbone enough to live!”

“The Raynors have talked with him, and say he is disheartened. He does not want to live. The war

made such changes, you know. It was so delightful to be taken care of by the colored people!"

"He can be taken care of by the colored people now. Plenty of 'em down there, and he's able to pay. Better go down, Sicily. It is next to worship to go to the Spring. I don't want you to forget about the angel round the old Bethesda, and he's just as much here as he was there;" and Dr. Rossville passed on, while Miss Vinton went to her room to engage in religious reading.

"Well, 'Squire, you're in good company. You're always in good company. I'm glad you're not afraid to stir the waters on Sunday. Sicily would n't come down. It is a good thing to be pious, but we make a mistake when we are scared to go where the angels go. The Spring, 'Squire, opens right into the place where the Bible was made, and all the piety comes from. That girl along of your wife,—seems to me I've seen her before."

"That is the young lady who was here with the lawyer who drove the ox-team to Shaker Village five years ago."

"Oh, yes. Very handsome girl. Is the lawyer here too?"

"He is in the West, I believe."

"I thought they'd get married before this time. But there's no reckoning on young folks nowadays. I believe my boys are bound to be old bachelors, every one of 'em. It makes me sorry. I want the Rossville name to live along with the New Bethesda, forever."

"It will, Doctor, whether your sons marry or not.

The pool and its discoverer are inseparably linked, and will continue so to the end of time."

"Is n't that Farwell along with Colonel Raynes?"

"Yes; Farwell talks with him every time he meets him, and so does Winters; but you cannot move him any more than you could move the Gulf of Mexico."

"I want the folks that come here to get well. It hurts the Spring if they don't. Nobody outside knows how contrary they act. If they come here and don't yet well, the Spring is blamed. Raynes himself will go home and say the New Bethesda could n't cure him! Of course, just looking at it won't cure."

"Some people are immovable, Doctor. I would not be troubled about it. Enough are cured to carry the tidings far and wide. You will have to enlarge your accommodations."

Mr. Hammond and Alex were sitting under the trees, while Mr. and Mrs. Raynor, Maud and Miss Ingalls, remained under the balcony of the Spring. It was Mr. Hammond's glimpse by daylight. He had been late to breakfast, and missed the methodical teacher. The brilliant sunset in whose light he first saw the goddess, and the illuminated parlors afterward, shed no glamour over her face. The searching day found neither fault nor flaw. He made no comments, but passed a mental verdict altogether satisfactory, while he talked with his friend of other things.

"Have you seen Marshall? We young fellows take it seriously when a service lies a few hours before us. I suppose Winters is always cool and calm, but I am full of tremors. I heard a young man say the other day that he had lost seven pounds of flesh in a week,

and the sole cause was the anxiety he felt about taking the service for an old minister in a large city church. The world may think of us as volatile and care-free, but the deeps are alive with religious fervors and holy desires."

"It is a very exacting profession. You have to make one or two pleas every week. A lawyer would not think he could do such a vast amount of intellectual work."

"We could not do it without the suggestions and inspirations of the Bible. If our minds are dull and unproductive, we read from the Book and are quickened. One little sentence will suggest a whole sermon. That is the secret of the minister's prolonged years of original labor. The highest and most profound themes stimulate and attract him continually. There is mental tonic in a meditation on immortality, or the Beatitudes of Him who brought to light this great doctrine of the Church."

"Do you ever feel that the profession holds you too closely; that there are worldly things you would like to do, if not for its condemnation?"

"The ministry condemns no good worldly work, and the minister's life is given to a warfare against evil."

"Suppose you wanted to speculate in stocks, or buy houses and farms, not willing that old age should find you penniless; could you do so without violating the religious ideal?"

"We are saved from these temptations, dear Raynor, by our poverty. We never have anything ahead to invest in Atchison and Topeka, or houses and lands. And we give up the world, — I mean we choose to live

without its treasures and accumulations, — when we enter the profession.”

“Suppose some rich parishioner should leave you a handsome bequest. Would you dare invest it in worldly-wise ways?”

“I should consider it duty to invest it as safely and profitably as possible. I would not run any wild-cat risks. Prudence and forethought, the same virtues that are honorable to manhood, are alike honorable to the minister. He is a man, with a man’s human needs.”

“There is something pathetic to me in the self-denial and narrow ways followed by the profession. There are exceptions, of course. Though young men of wealth seldom enter the ministry, the minister sometimes marries a rich wife; and in that case, if he has wisdom enough to manage her property, he will be saved the haunting spectre of an old age of poverty.”

“I am not troubled by that spectre, Alex, and do not believe it haunts the profession generally.”

“You are young. Perhaps I received too deep an impression from an old minister who used to come to our house to see Grandmother. He did not look as though he had ever had a square meal in his life; and Grandma has told me how little he received for his services, and how circumscribed he was in everything.”

“You are counting out the spiritual satisfactions, the joy and peace of believing and serving in so divine a calling.”

“These helps must be overwhelming, when we consider how fully the clergy rely upon them. But,

Hammond, they will not feed and clothe your family, nor pay your house-rent."

"Transmuted into work they will. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Not in any miraculous way. Seeking involves toil. Seeking righteousness means seeking a righteous life in all its ramifications; right relations with the business world and the social world, as well as the religious world. Such a man will never lack."

"As long as he can work, perhaps not. But when he is old, and the people begin to have itching ears for a young voice, how then?"

"Oh, then, Alex, interest on the invested bequest will have to keep him! I have no fear. The promise will never fail. Failure and suffering come because the promise has not been kept in all the wideness of its meaning."

"Suffering comes to many a faithful minister, I believe, because the people fail of keeping the promise. It is a great calling, Hammond, and the pews do not realize their obligation, or such specimens as Grandma's minister would never be seen."

"The ladies are rising to go home. Let us join them."

"Would you like a walk through the woods, Alex, or do you and Mr. Hammond prefer to linger here?" said Mrs. Raynor, as she turned toward the entrance to the sylvan way. "Come, Charley, let us all go together," as Mr. Raynor lingered talking with his friends from Philadelphia and New Orleans.

Mr. Raynor joined his wife, and Maud walked with

Miss Ingalls. Mr. Hammond took his place with the young ladies, while Alex bent over the open book on his knee, saying he would read until the dinner-hour.

On reaching one of the convenient benches in the heart of the shadow, Maud found Susie and Helen waiting for her. They had agreed to read an hour in this quiet place, and she turned to sit down with them. Miss Ingalls was left to walk on with Mr. Hammond or join the young ladies, which she hesitated to do, as she had not been invited to take part in the readings. Gertrude showed embarrassment, which Maud was sensitive enough to understand, and at once she invited her to stop and read an hour before going up to the house.

“May I not read with you? It will be a pleasure. I have heard about the Tennyson Club;” and Mr. Hammond halted with Miss Ingalls. They were not far from the chair which she had constructed from the limbs of the young beech. Memory suffused her face. Mr. Hammond noticed the heightened color and the brilliant beauty of the telltale blood. A new seat had to be improvised, as the bench would not accommodate all, and Gertrude wove again a sylvan chair. Then the reading began. Mr. Hammond’s musical voice rang among the trees like the tones of a minor bell. He was in high spirits and at his best, called out by his deepening admiration for Miss Ingalls. The readings and Miss Raynor’s comments continued an hour and a half, and even Mr. Hammond, with his college honors fresh upon him, felt that he had learned something about the mystical poem which he never knew before.

“Will you assist in the singing to-night, Miss Ingalls? We want to support Marshall handsomely. I have interviewed nearly all the musical people here. I want a fuller volume, if possible, than we had at the last service.”

“Ah, Mr. Hammond, the Tracys would not sing for you because you dance,” said Miss Raynor in an impulsive and half-jesting tone.

“Was that the reason? They dance. I have danced with them.”

“But you are a minister, and there is a sentiment against it. Ministers are examples.”

“If it is wrong to dance we had better all stop. I will set the example of stopping if you think the Tracys will follow it.”

“Not that. They think it right for them but wrong for you, because you are, or should be, an example to the flock.”

Mr. Hammond seemed to be meditating. He was very sensitive to blame, and felt the weight of Miss Raynor’s remark. He wanted to stand well in her esteem and that of Miss Ingalls also.

“Is there much of that feeling among the people here?”

“I suppose everybody thinks with the Tracys on that question.”

Maud had committed herself, and it was her disposition to be thorough when once a disagreeable duty confronted her.

“I wish some one had been kind enough to tell me. I like to dance, and have joined in the pastime because I enjoy it, and because young men were needed, sup-

posing that in such a place as this no harm could come of it either through example or otherwise. What do you think, Miss Ingalls? Is it wrong for a minister to dance?"

"Not wrong, perhaps; and yet I should not wish the minister with whom I had danced, to bury my dead."

"We have to pass suddenly from grave to gay, in our profession. My friend Winters attended three weddings and three funerals in one day. They were so arranged that they alternated. He went from one to the other, finishing the day by a home wedding at evening, where all were gay and happy. And so the Tracys would not sing for me because I dance. You sang, Miss Raynor."

"I believe in doing as I would be done by. The service was for our spiritual help, and the singing an expected part of it, which it was our duty to add to your offering."

"I supposed it was because I belong to the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood that the Tracys and others were absent. Thank you for telling me, Miss Raynor."

The guests were pressing in to dinner. Many had come from surrounding towns as a kind of holiday excursion. Young men with their sweethearts came timidly in to the tables. Maud observed one of these couples with interest, and was sure they got up from the table hungry. They had not known how to order a sufficient dinner. And then it was painful to see them trying to use the silver in unaccustomed ways, not willing to seem singular among so many. How quickly home-training is discoverable in public places!

The young people are advertising agents of the manners and customs in which they have been reared, and no amount of after training can wholly gloss over early defects.

Mr. Marshall had kept himself so aloof from the life of the house except on the rare occasions when he played accompaniments or sang, that he was scarcely known by many of the guests; whereas young Hammond was on familiar terms with numbers of them, and known by all.

There was a large gathering in the parlors at evening. The people came and were seated in good season. Miss Vinton, radiant with anticipation, assisted certain elderly ladies to comfortable seats, and busied herself in seeing that all the singers were in position and supplied with books. There was time for a good deal of arrangement and anticipation. When every preliminary was adjusted, the audience waited breathlessly, after a while a little nervously. When Mr. Marshall came in he seemed aware of having kept the people waiting beyond the hour. He came forward to the improvised desk hurriedly, after the manner of the elder Dickens. There were no outward signs of embarrassment. The singing was inspiring. Prejudice had kept none in the background, and the young man acquitted himself like a veteran. His sermon was brilliant with illustration and alive with the latest thought in theology and science. The Springfield Board would hardly have sent young Marshall as a missionary if the sermon at the New Bethesda House had been the criterion.

Mr. Winters rejoiced in its spirit, and so did Mr.

Hammond. Secretly there were others who were glad of its noble tone and fraternal sentiments.

“A delightful service!” exclaimed Miss Vinton, as little groups sought the open air after the close and heated temperature of the parlors, — “a young man of rare promise.”

“It pays to stay apart in the desert or on the mountain, Alex, before one faces such a responsibility. A man gets possession of himself in this way,” said Mr. Hammond.

“He gets possession of the eternal helps,” said Mr. Winters, “and learns thus to forget himself.”

“Is there really no difference, father? Do all the ministers preach the gospel of hope nowadays?” said Maud.

“Not all, my daughter; but an educated young man would not advance objectionable dogmas in such an audience as a summer hotel affords.”

“It is a fair expression of the sermons I listen to every Sunday from old Dr. Wise,” said Miss Vinton.

Miss Ingalls walked arm in arm with Mrs. Raynor.

“It was a brilliant sermon, Gertrude.”

“Yes; but I enjoy and am helped more by the simple quiet unction of a minister whom I must strain my ears to hear. He has been my pastor from childhood, and I have learned of him to listen for the still small voice.”

“Then you would not enjoy being electrified; but there are many who demand that style.”

CHAPTER XIV.

A HOLIDAY OPPORTUNITY.

MRS. RAYNOR and Miss Ingalls passed much of their time together in the open air, while quite an intimate friendship had grown between Squire Raynor and Mr. Winters. One day as Kate and Gertrude were reading under the pines, and the gentlemen not far off whittling canes and talking on humanitarian questions, Mr. Hammond came to them, saying:

"We want to make up a party for a drive to Batesville. Will you join us?"

"It would break the monotony; let us go, Charles," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Monotony, Kate, on the hills of the New Bethesda! That is a slander. Everything is fresh, as though a new world were created each day especially for our enjoyment."

"I have sat in this hammock a good many times, Charles, and you have quite a forest of canes which you have whittled sitting on that very bench, or one nearly like it."

"And yet every cane is an individual invention. The heads are different, and no two of them measure the same in length or circumference. My very whittlings are original. No monotony here, Katy!"

"Will you go for the sake of the ride? I want to go."

"There's a rival pool at Batesville," said Mr. Hammond. "Mr. Raynor will be interested in that."

"I don't wish to see any other water than the New Bethesda. But, Katy, if you wish to go, I will go. How many can you take?"

"All who desire to go will be provided with teams. I would like a congenial company in the barge. I have been teasing Marshall, and he has really promised to go; also Alex, Miss Raynor, and Miss Vinton."

"I wish Susie and Helen could go with us," said Mrs. Raynor.

"The very thing Maud has gone to see about."

"When do you propose to depart? Can I finish my cane?" said Mr. Raynor.

"Go at once. Dine at Batesville, and drive over the hills. It is a perfect day."

Maud was seen coming with Susie and Helen. The ladies returned to their rooms for needed changes of apparel; and soon the barge, with Mr. Marshall, Mr. Winters, and Mr. Hammond, the Raynors, Miss Vinton, Maud, Susie, Helen, and Miss Ingalls, was speeding down the hill. To say that Mr. Hammond had planned the excursion on purpose to become more acquainted with Miss Ingalls, might be making an extreme statement; but this thought was certainly uppermost. She was always with Mrs. Raynor or Miss Maud, and to join them would seem intrusive. The days were flying, and Everett Hammond was missing a coveted opportunity. A ride of twenty miles would bring the party into proximity, and a chance for character study in connection with the charm of a beautiful presence would be thus afforded. The knowledge that Miss

Ingalls had loved and lost was no barrier. In fact, there was a pathetic charm about this experience which caused him to think of the young teacher with a lingering fondness. He did not dare imperil his hopes by any bold or sudden approach, but he wished to originate something that would allow him to be for hours in her presence without seeming to have made that desire an object. Mr. Hammond as an inimitable story-teller, a fine singer, and an excellent mimic. The rural way afforded opportunity for the happy company to indulge in a gay mood without offence against any proper notion which might receive a shock on hearing a barge full of people singing songs. There were long stretches of sparsely settled or wooded country, and these were utilized for the most hilarious songs. Alex Raynor, usually demure and studious, could sing his college songs with spirit, and with Mr. Hammond to lead, and the ladies, who if much associated with college men learn these songs, to follow, there was singing that aroused the echoes as they sped along. Mr. Hammond was gratified that Miss Ingalls joined them. She did not live in shadow because of her disappointment, but made herself agreeable in whatever society she chanced to be.

When the singing waned, story followed story, Mr. Winters and 'Squire Raynor being apparently in a strife as to which should obtain a certain mysterious prize which Miss Vinton had offered for the best. The drive was delightful in its exhilarating accompaniments, and the pleasant town of Batesville reached all too soon. To see the pool which in ambitious rivalry was sending out its advertisements was the object of

the excursion, and the party stopped at the hotel which had sprung up in connection with it. It was somewhat late, and the dinner not what it would have been an hour before. But good appetites had been provoked by the drive, and in the midst of pleasant faces and bright comments everything was merry as marriage bells.

In pairing off for a walk to the spring Mr. Hammond adroitly drew Miss Ingalls into conversation which could not well be broken off, and they walked together. The subject led into personal experiences as illustrations, and Mr. Hammond gave Miss Ingalls some of the salient points of his career. He was singularly confiding in this way, seeming to desire a full understanding of himself as the beginning of coveted friendships. Miss Ingalls listened and commented, but she was not tempted to any history of her past by the example of the young minister. What he had learned through the Raynors was all he seemed likely to possess. But the walk furnished vantage-ground which he could follow, and perhaps up and down the planks at the New Bethesda or through the woodland ways he might walk with Miss Ingalls. A few days yet remained before the shepherd must seek his gathering flock.

“It is clearer than the New Bethesda,” said Mr. Marshall, as the party held their sparkling glasses, seated on the encircling benches or standing under the conical roof.

“Look up,” said Mr. Winters. All looked at a deep-blue ceiling; then some went outside to examine their glasses.

"It is the blue ceiling, Mr. Marshall," said 'Squire Raynor, "that gives the exquisite clearness to the water. It is delicious water, a good, pure spring; but the New Bethesda heals the sick, and restores the lame, and makes the blind to see. In my heart it can have no rival."

"Nor in mine," said Mr. Winters. "We who count ourselves among the restored, and now visit the New Bethesda out of 'gratitude,' as Dr. Rossville says, shall not be likely to be drawn away from our first love."

"Real help from any source should hold our loyalty," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Your remark ought to be true as regards the help of the Church, certainly," said Mr. Winters; "and yet not all the lepers give thanks for their healing. It was so in the time of Jesus, and is increasingly the case in our day."

"In social life too," said Mrs. Raynor, "instead of being true to our helpers, how often we see persons tire of those who are of real service to them, and even resent as intrusive their kindnesses."

"And did a teacher ever know such a thing as loyal love from her pupils?" exclaimed Miss Vinton.

"There is one phase of this lack of loyalty," continued Mrs. Raynor, "which seems to me peculiarly ungracious and hard, and that sometimes shows itself in the home. I have a dear friend, — we have loved each other since childhood, — a woman of rare intellectual gifts, whose husband is a professional man. She is a great help to him in many ways; but that man would go to the stake sooner than confess that his wife ever helps him. If she pours her power through

him, it is thereby transmuted to his, and she gets neither thanks nor glory."

"And who has not known young persons, lovers perhaps, where the lady was like a strong anchor holding the purpose to honor and duty, and some attractive girl who had nothing to commend her but her coquettish ways came along and caught him with her eyelids, and lo, he was no more!" said Mr. Hammond.

This expression brought the flush of recollection to Miss Ingalls's cheeks, and it seemed to Mrs. Raynor almost cruel of Hammond. She hastened to give another experience. She was a woman whose life had touched closely other lives. Men and women trusted her, and turned to her for counsel.

"I have a case to the point," said she; "an old gray-haired man, he is now, who in youth was engaged to a lovely girl, true and honest and faithful as the stars in their courses. At a party one evening the kind of girl whom Mr. Hammond describes, met him and so fascinated him that he broke his engagement and afterward married her. His friends said he would suffer for his heartless deed, and he has suffered. His wife had an infirm temper whose offensive qualities she exaggerated by intoxicating liquor taken in secret, and he never knew a happy day of real reciprocal love and enjoyment. She did thorn him into a saint, though. He became 'lord of himself though not of lands,' — a man who is as sweet and gracious and gentle as the most saintly Sister of Charity."

"'Perfect though suffering,'" said Mr. Winters.

There were tangled growths about the pool, and the party dispersed to hunt for any new flower or creeping

vine, while some climbed to the height of a rocky wall not far away. Mr. Hammond wondered if a certain tree not far from the path to the hotel were a real Lombardy poplar, and by a question put directly to Miss Ingalls led her apart to observe the tree.

"We have a tree in the Middle States," said he, "seldom seen in New England, — the cucumber-tree, we call it. It is closely related to the magnolia, and grows to great height and girth. The rigors of this Northern climate will hardly allow it to exist here."

"I have seen it," said Miss Ingalls, "on the lawn of a friend; but no careful cultivation could prolong its life. Its foliage grew yellow, and the next year it was quite dead."

"I am glad I coaxed Marshall to come with us. Young men can hardly afford to play the recluse. He seems to enjoy it, too."

"He certainly seems to enjoy Miss Raynor."

"I noticed that he sought her side in the walk to the spring."

"He watched the play of her face during the ride, with a look full of admiration."

"Sometimes these summer outings result in life-long attachments. Such sensible people gather at the New Bethesda that it is a natural thing for them to become attached to each other. I shall always hold the Raynors as dear friends."

"The Rossville girls are very winning. Their kindness seems so genuine, I trust them unconsciously."

"Miss Helen is developing rapidly. She is becoming quite a noticeable girl, — a fine figure, and dreamy, interesting face."

“Maud Raynor has been a great help to the girls in directing their reading and advising about their education. They are both going to school in the autumn.”

“Do you like teaching, Miss Ingalls?”

“It is an absorbing employment, and it is good for the soul to be busy.”

“I wish I might ask a favor which would give you a little more to do, if your soul really needs work. Are you at all interested in the humanitarian movements?”

“Oh, yes, Mr. Hammond, — Country Week, Flowers for the Hospitals, Scrap-books also, and the thousand and one kind objects which Boston carries in her great heart.”

“The one I would mention is somewhat different. A lonely minister, not far off in foreign climes, but fast anchored in a New England seaport, would like to correspond with an intelligent woman like yourself. He needs counsel from the feminine heart on many questions which he could not carry to his parishioners. Would you consent to serve in such a humanitarian direction?”

“I am an indifferent letter-writer, Mr. Hammond, and could neither interest nor help such wisdom as is supposed to inhere in the clerical profession.”

“I think he would care more for the counsel than the garb in which the thought was dressed.”

“Really, I have other and deeper reasons. I have known letters to do immense harm.”

“No harm could follow, unless the correspondence was carried on indiscreetly, or by persons who thus invaded the rights of others.”

“Perhaps your minister may have a sweetheart who would object to the counsel of the school-teacher. It is just here that I have seen the harm befall.”

“I promise you he has none. The sweetheart long since went to sleep under the daisies, or he would not ask this favor of another woman.”

“And if the woman has a sweetheart not asleep under the daisies, she should beware of the peril of a correspondence with an interesting young minister.”

The little compliment quite put Mr. Hammond at ease and on good terms with himself in the face of Miss Ingalls's refusal, and they rode homeward, toward sunset, in pleasant mood, though greatly subdued since the effervescence of the morning. Mr. Hammond decided that he would make some pretext to write to Miss Ingalls, and he believed she would answer him. This thought made the closing days at the New Bethesda less painful. He could not help seeing that she avoided him, though very cordial when they chanced to meet. It was soothing to interpret her manner as an excess of diffidence in the presence of one whom she had acknowledged as interesting.

CHAPTER XV.

HER NEBULOUS CAREER.

“CHARLES, Mr. Marshall asked Maud to correspond with him, and said very flattering things to her.”

“Of course she did not consent? She knows nothing of Mr. Marshall.”

“She asked me about it, and would like your advice also, before giving an answer.”

“Sensible girl, to realize that advice in such matters from those who have been over the road may be of some value. Miss Ingalls would not be teaching school had Minnie Swan asked her mother if it was proper for her to court an engaged man.”

“Then you do not approve of the correspondence?”

“Certainly not. Do you, Katy?”

“No, Charles; I am aware of the perils of such a step. I should be sorry to see our daughter using such freedom of expression to a young man as I have seen in certain letters confided to my perusal.”

“She would be discreet and above reproach, I have no doubt. But Marshall is a stranger, and though a minister, not to be trusted as a white saint by any means. What do you think Winters told me? — Hammond confides in him everything, — that Hammond

asked Miss Ingalls for a correspondence! Such a presumption on his part, knowing as he does her relations with Nickerson!"

"I suppose he thought her relations with Nickerson had come to an end; but I do not think so. Such a patient and yet hopeful spirit covers a degree of unslain love, I am sure. Her trust is shaken, but her love is not destroyed."

"An eventful drive, was it not, Katy? Two young ministers the same as proposing to the young ladies of the party."

"I do not think the request for a correspondence involves a proposal of marriage."

"That depends; but when young men make that request they have marriage in view if all things are favorable."

"I am glad of these closing days. Home and its quiet atmosphere will dissipate all the mists that partially obscure the vision in such a large society. Why, Charles, it is like a party all the time. At first we had each other; but now even the boys are monopolized by others than their own family, and drawn this way and that, we know not whither."

"Oh, yes, Katy; we know they do not go beyond the woods or the lakes."

"Richmond and Willie went on a water-wagon to Kingdom Station the other day. They said they only meant to ride a little way when the man asked them, but it was such boss fun that they went all the way."

"There was no harm in that, Katy. Boys are full of life, and when they let it effervesce in wholesome ways we must not be too exacting."

“There is Mr. Marshall walking to the Spring with Maud. I hope she is not interested in him.”

“The following is doubtless all on his part. Walking to the Spring cannot harm her.”

“The opportunity it gives him for saying flattering things is the chief danger.”

“What do you think Maud meant when she hinted about her nebulous career?”

“A half-defined purpose to study for the ministry I think.”

“There is too much prejudice to overcome. I can hardly wish my daughter such a grim battle.”

“I suppose we must allow our children to follow the leadings of fitness and desire. We can advise, but we transcend even parental authority when we prohibit college graduates.”

“I am glad we have the younger boys. It is so natural to say to somebody, ‘Thou shalt not’!” said Squire Raynor in quiet sarcasm. He never commanded in his own home, but advised and counselled, and achieved a finer order and more hearty obedience than the domineering spirit can possibly gain.

“Winters is to leave this afternoon. He tells me that he has a wife. I supposed him to be a bachelor. She passes her vacations very quietly among her kindred.”

“I don’t like that. He ought to bring her here. How could you and I endure separation for a whole summer?”

“We could endure it if necessary. I think Mr. Winters can hardly afford to bring her here. You know ministers have to do as they can, and not al-

ways as they would. They lay up treasures in heaven, and have a pretty small bank-account on earth."

"He evidently enjoys the society of women. He is always walking with some forlorn woman, carrying her, 'Moses,' for her, or helping her in some way."

"Mrs. Winters may prefer the society of her kindred. He says her family are very closely attached to one another, — a clannish family."

"Oh, Charles, this revelation provokes my curiosity. I want to know just the kind of woman Mr. Winters has for a wife. Make him promise to bring her here some summer, and we will come all the way from Pennsylvania to see her."

"Miss Vinton, wait a moment. We are going down the walk;" said Mrs. Raynor, as she saw that lady turning toward the Spring. They followed and joined her.

"I leave to-morrow, and I am so sad;" and Miss Vinton really looked as though she had been weeping. "I should like to stay forever on this lovely height; but I must go down to my work. School in Pine Hollow begins next Monday."

"We must hasten too, on account of the children, though Charles would like to tarry longer. You and Mr. Raynor ought to buy a lot here, and prepare for winter residence as well as summer," said Mrs. Raynor, playfully. "I am ready to go. Indeed, I begin to long for home, almost counting the hours."

"You have enjoyed the summer?"

"Oh, yes; but I love my home, and the children are beginning to need it. There is a good deal of excitement here for young people brought up as quietly as ours have been."

“It will do them a great deal of good, Mrs. Raynor, being here, breathing this mountain-air and drinking the healing water; and I don't believe the little excitement will harm them. They are so decorous; such orderly children.”

They reach the Spring. Maud is sitting under the oaks in earnest conversation with Mr. Marshall. Mr. and Mrs. Raynor are somewhat nervous as they observe them. Miss Ingalls evidently feels her isolation, as she reads at a little distance; but seeing her friends, rises and joins them. Mr. Winters, Alex, and Mr. Hammond return from the lakes, where they have enjoyed rowing with the boys. All meet for the first time since the drive to Batesville.

“Where shall we be a week hence?” said Mr. Hammond.

“About our Father's business, I hope,” said Mr. Winters. “We have had a long holiday and a rare one, and it is time for work to begin.”

“We shall all go home refreshed, and strong to do the awaiting work,” observed Alex Raynor.

“What a notable cure was Farwell's! He told me he never felt better in his life than on the morning of his departure. But poor Raynes came discouraged, and left in the same spirit. He is to try the mountains awhile,” said Mr. Raynor.

Dr. Rossville, coming from the barrelling-house, heard the remark.

“Mountains won't do him any good. He's committed suicide. Come all the way from New Orleans to try the Spring, and then not drink! I call that deliberate suicide. More than fifty folks sicker than

he have been cured this summer. Look at Gill, from Chicago, — as strong as Samson! and when he come, it took Hugh and Ellison both to get him off the coach. But he believed, and he drank. That's the way to do. Moses had faith when he smote the rock. Faith did part of it; striking did the rest. Faith and works, — that's the way to salvation, and there ain't no other."

Mr. Marshall and Maud drew near to listen to Dr. Rossville. His quaint manner and incisive truth always drew an audience.

"Mother, I will walk up with you. I have scarcely seen you since breakfast," said Maud; which left the young men to group themselves to their liking, as 'Squire Raynor at once stepped to the side of Miss Ingalls. He believed that she was annoyed by attentions from Mr. Hammond, and would protect her. Miss Vinton lingered with other friends who would sympathize with her in her sorrow at leaving the New Bethesda.

Mrs. Raynor and Maud strolled away from the others, leaving the planks for the soft grass.

"Mr. Marshall and I have had a lively discussion on the woman question. He does not believe woman has any sphere except the old one of home and society, and says a woman preacher is a standing menace of the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments. He got excited, mother. I was scared at his show of temper. I got the better of him in the argument, because I had the right side, and it nettled him awfully. Mother, I can decide without your help. I do not desire a correspondence with Mr.

Marshall. My minister must govern his temper even in discussion."

"Your father said you knew nothing about him."

"He revealed himself, — a hot-headed bigot and as narrow as a tape, on the great questions which all the world is facing."

"He did preach gloriously, Maud."

"He did not stand by his own humanitarian philosophy in his argument to-day. I wish men, especially ministers, would be consistent with themselves."

"Custom has long familiarized them with the one way of looking upon woman. Even when reason is convinced, many fail of living according to their convictions. They are not converted through and through."

"He said his wife must think as he did in all things. That would reduce her to the level of a baby. '*Must* think'! Why cannot our opinions and wishes be respected as though we were individuals, with the same accountability which men feel? There can be no true fellowship without mutual respect for the convictions and the feelings of each. Fancy my precious mother telling 'Squire Raynor he must think just as she did! It would be equally proper. Fortunately, between this blessed pair there are no awful chasms; but suppose there were. Suppose you believed in the fullest freedom to your sex, and father did not; your difference of opinion would be as respectfully handled as the subjects on which you agree. It is such a glorious victory to learn to be sweet and gracious!"

Mr. Marshall saw the close conversation of mother and daughter, and when all had reached the hotel and

dispersed to prepare for dinner he lingered to greet their return. The roundabout grassy way made them some minutes behind the others. Mr. Marshall had reflected, and was not on good terms with himself.

“I have had a warm discussion with your daughter, Mrs. Raynor, and would like to continue it by letter, if you are willing. I am open to conviction on that question.”

“I would rather my daughter should keep aloof from discussions. She has studies in hand, and lines of work which might suffer. Your own study and reflection will bring you to the light. You will not need to discuss the question except in the court of your own reason. All the world is tending toward liberty; and woman, half a slave heretofore, feels the trend of the general thought.”

“I think it profitable to measure swords by discussion. Truth is cleft from error in this way. What say you, Miss Raynor? You seemed to enjoy the tilt this morning; and you bore a valiant part.”

“Let us wait a year, and if you are not converted by personal reflection, tell me, and I know my parents would not object to my doing the world a service by helping to liberalize one of its leaders,” said Maud, fearing she had been too severe in her judgment and decision concerning Mr. Marshall. The waters were oiled; and though Maud remembered with pain the ungoverned temper, she felt happier because of her own sweet overlooking.

No one knew that Mr. Hammond meant to take the afternoon coach with his friend Winters, and all were surprised when they saw him on the porch equipped

for travelling. He had made himself so agreeable, and so helpful in all the games and pastimes, that there was quite a demonstration of regret at his departure. The young people gathered about him, urging him to remain to the end of the week ; but to no avail.

“I can see my flock gathering to be fed. They look hungry. I have not a straw for them ; not even a spoonful of salt. I must go to my own quiet den and prepare for Sunday.”

Mr. Hammond climbed to the top of the coach, and made great show of sorrow by professing to weep profusely. He wrung his handkerchief, and copious drops fell on the ground. The children wondered ; but the elders knew he had provided for this scene at the water-faucet.

Mr. Winters takes gracious farewell of all whom he knows, and some whom it would puzzle him to call by name. He remembers even the servants, — for he believes and practises the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood. He has a few words apart with Ellison Rossville. They are grateful words, and signs of a sincere and growing friendship. The coach departs, and the people comment.

“Winters acts as a minister ought to,” says Dr. Rossville ; “but that youngster’s pretty full of the Old Nick. He’ll get sobered soon enough, though ; and he does seem to enjoy making folks laugh.”

“He has amused us greatly, Doctor.”

“It’s a question whether the minister is just the one to turn clown, Sicily.”

“Oh, Doctor, he has been very polite to all the ladies ; and though he has told the funniest stories,

and danced too, when we think a minister ought to be an example, he has made the house more lively and brilliant. Such young men add so much to a large company. Leaders of amusements are always needed in such a place."

"Why, Sicily, I thought you was down on him."

"I do think him too volatile for a minister, and I decidedly object to his dancing; but it is delightful to see the good points in departed friends."

"Dead ones, we always do; but we generally say our wickedest things behind living folks' backs."

"Oh, Doctor, don't say any wicked thing about me when I go!"

"You'd better stay, Sicily. I would n't keep school in Pine Hollow all my days. This is leap-year, and if I was you I'd do some courtin'."

"You make me blush, Doctor!" and Miss Vinton trips away.

"Sicily is a fine girl," says the Doctor to the listening group as she departs. "She and my wife was born in the same town, and her mother cooked the same kind of things. We always make a pot pie for her just as her mother used to."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFESSION.

“CAN you give me one more half-day, Mrs. Raynor?” said Miss Ingalls. “You have been so very kind, I almost hesitate to ask it on the eve of our departure; but the thought of separation makes me aware that I have need of counsel. You know something of the world that was mine, and I can talk with you.”

It is indeed the eve of departure, and the half-day must be taken at once. There are no awaiting half-days in which to linger about the woods and waters of the New Bethesda. The trunks are already packed, and stand in silent array like grim sentinels.

“You will give the afternoon to the boys, Charley, and they will not miss their mother,” said Mrs. Raynor, feeling that Gertrude Ingalls had greater need of her than her own family.

The ladies walk toward the entrance to the long path. It is a dense and secluded way, sought by few of the guests. Passing down the gradual descent, now on the softest of carpets, — the deposit of successive growths of pine needles, — and again over stones and jagged rocks, they come to a place where a small stream trickles across the path. There are accommodating bowlders near the crystal rivulet, and the shadow of the dense forest is altogether inviting. They halt, and

drop down on the cool rocks. Then Miss Ingalls remembers the chair where her friend found her five years before. Its arms are softer in recollection than the mossy rocks, and she looks about for a convenient beech. The journey of discovery is short, and soon the ladies have woven the lithe green limbs into a seat so caressing that there is no chance for them to drift apart during the conversation.

Gertrude holds a little package which she unfolds, the telltale blood suffusing her face.

“Robert has written me, the first time in five years.”

“I am glad you have heard from him. I knew you would,” said Mrs. Raynor.

“He is in San Francisco, where he went on leaving Boston. He has built up quite a practice there, and has been very prosperous. I will read a part of the letter:—

“ ‘ When I left home so unceremoniously, I was humiliated by defeat, and ashamed of myself. The loss of the case was sufficiently depressing to a man who needs success and prosperity in order to keep out of the “slough of despond;” but the loss of your confidence was a million-fold harder to bear. I tortured myself by recalling every silly thing which had helped to destroy your trust; and while a man made up as I am enjoys the good opinion and praise of others, I could see that every word which Minnie Swan had loaded with honey-dew for my delight was like a sharp instrument cutting into my very life. And if I shuddered with shame as I remembered lingering in the atmosphere of her devotion, what was my torment on recalling the returns I had made in word and look and tone; and I having given my heart’s love and promise to another,— only caring for this by-play as one might care for a pleasing picture or a sweetened

draught! Gertrude, oh, Gertrude! humiliation is too weak a name for the shadow which engulfed my very manhood. I, who had the wine of life within my reach, had broken the goblet, and now my lips pressed the gall. Every recall of the months in which the fascination of a tempter dishonored the name of lover, filled me with condemnation. I was older than foolish Minnie, and should have repelled her sweetness even at the risk of offending the whole family. They berated and cursed me when I lost the suit. If the cursing had come before the trial, it would have saved the bitterness of these years.

“ ‘And then, Gertrude, I am not a petrified bundle of selfishness. I have suffered; but my deepest pain has come in the thought of the suffering I inflicted on you. I courted and won the love of one of the noblest and purest of her sex. She filled the horizon of my hope and satisfied my deepest present need. You were all in all to me, Gertrude. My love and loyalty to you never wavered, even when the fool’s-cap blinded my eyes. You could not see that. I seemed to you unstable, inconstant, and it is plain to me now that my conduct warranted this decision; though it piqued me then, and helped to drive me from you. Is there any forgiveness in this world or the world to come for the suffering I have inflicted on the woman I love? Think of the expression! Think of the deed, — loving a woman, and making her miserable! An incongruous fact. But, Gertrude, I was blind. How often in my exile I have recalled the words of your minister the last time we went to church together: “Retribution overtakes the sinner sometime, somewhere, and he cannot escape from himself until the uttermost farthing is paid.”

“ ‘I have waited until suffering had time to do its perfect work in me; and the thought comes now, that while I court the lash that my sin may be thoroughly expiated, perhaps this distance and this silence may be hard for you to bear. Have you blotted me out of memory? I deserve it. I fully

believe that the sin of wounding a loyal love is the unpardonable sin among men. If woman can pardon, — if you can pardon, Gertrude, be assured that one who has felt the lash of retribution as my sore heart has felt it has passed beyond the danger of a second fall. I shall know how to be true. I shall know how to prize the lost trust if it can be restored to me. Even Raynor, who was the pattern of all virtue in husband and lover too, shall not be more faithful than I. Gertrude, once my Gertrude, is there any hope? ”

After the reading, Mrs. Raynor and Miss Ingalls sat in silence, — a tearful silence on Gertrude’s part, — and then the question came, —

“Can I trust him? Dare I trust him again? It was a terrible experience; but had it come after our marriage, it would have been immeasurably more humiliating. Do you think he can be true?”

“It is genuine penitence, Gertrude. I should trust if he were my lover. It is hardly possible for one to incur again such excess of remorse. I am sure he will be true. We have not spoken the name of Minnie Swan before. What has become of her?”

“She is married, and has gone away from the city.”

“Did she marry well? Such girls seldom make sensible marriages.”

“To all appearance, very well. She married a man whom she had known but slightly. They did their courting by letter.”

“Minnie had a very facile pen. I remember the confiding way in which she wrote to Mr. Nickerson. You know you showed me two of her letters that day in the woods.”

“Yes ; Robert would read her letters and toss them to me with apparent unconcern.”

“It was real unconcern, Gertrude. Had the letters been precious to him he would have hoarded them. He carried your letters next his heart, and his dearest friend never saw them. That ought to have been a strong evidence to you that he cared nothing for Minnie Swan.”

“I have tried faithfully to crucify my love for him, but with poor success. How I turned back to Robert with a great longing when young Hammond asked me to correspond with him ! There seemed a degree of sacrilege in the very thought.”

“If your love remains unchanged, Gertrude, you will be able to build again the broken trust. Such penitence can have only a full and free pardon. You are not the woman to fail to forgive when you have the chance. That he has asked your pardon in such a frank and noble way proves him a genuine and true man at heart.”

“I never doubted the truth of his deepest heart ; but oh, it is so hard to bear when a lover seems to be fickle, and blown about like thistle-down !”

“But even the seeming has gone by with Mr. Nickerson. You will answer him frankly and nobly, as he himself has written. Do not pain him by the shadow of a doubt.”

“I must slay the last shadow of a doubt before I can be happy. Distrust is a perpetual haunting shadow. The one who feels it knows no rest. A dull ache throbs in every heart-beat. The pain of real bereavement is peace in comparison.”

“Why, here are Richmond and Willie! What brought you, my dears?”

“Father has had a telegram, and wants to take the night train. Grandma is very sick.”

The ominous shadow of bereavement gathers about the happy heart of Mrs. Raynor. She had lost two brothers in the war, but since that fateful time sickness and death had passed her by. A long period of peaceful days unbroken and unclouded had been hers. Charley's mother was like an own mother to her; she had spent much of her time with this favorite son, beloved and honored by all his household. A woman of incisive speech and clear understanding, she was the safe counsellor of all her children.

The ladies hurry homeward. Miss Ingalls is taken out of herself in sympathy with her friend. When they reach their rooms they find Mr. Raynor and Maud packing the hand-bags and getting together wraps and umbrellas. They make a hurried departure. There is no time for Mrs. Raynor to run down to the Old Stage Tavern for a parting word with Mrs. Rossville, nor for Maud to say good-by to Susie and Helen. They reach the afternoon train by great effort, the Jehu driving of Hugh Rossville making possible what the regular stage could not have done. Miss Ingalls has a slight dread of reaching Boston at night, but overcomes her fear for the sake of traveling with her friends. Mrs. Raynor had grown very dear to this lonely girl, and seemed to her like mother and sister too. Her wisdom and girlish ways were so blended that she filled the void in the heart of Gertrude, — a void which every woman feels, bereft of these

sacred family ties. In the face of this threatening loss Gertrude Ingalls tells Mrs. Raynor of her own family. She had been silent with reference to any sorrow except her trouble with Robert Nickerson; but during the five years she had lost both her parents and a lovely young sister. The circumstances connected with their deaths were so painful that she could not recall the time without great anguish, nor could she inflict her own trouble upon happy friends. It was when the Raynors were hastening home, summoned by the threat of imminent death, that she told them the deeps where her own soul had travailed. The calm which was her habitual mood seemed almost superhuman now that her weight of woes was known.

“Does Robert know how you have been bereft?” said Mrs. Raynor, after the painful revelation.

“He would have mentioned it in his letter had he known.”

“You had your great loss to bear alone! How sorrowful!”

“Not alone. I have a noble brother who keeps the home open for me; and I found help, — unseen sources, scarcely dreamed of before. Pardon me for telling you, but I thought it might help you.”

“It helps me to see that a young girl can be both martyr and hero. I know the old have reached the mortal limit. It is their time to die, — the natural time, the providential time, and such bereavements are not so hard to bear as when the young are taken. But, oh, the broken ties! No matter how late the hour of life, there must be the heart-ache over the missing presence, the love withdrawn!”

“It is for such a little while, at the very longest, that we soon learn to look forward in a kind of happy expectancy to the time when we shall all be together again.”

“We are helped in our troubles by the thought of fellowship of suffering. It is a valley of shadows through which all must pass. And then, recent literature has made the unseen world so real to us. Miss Phelps has helped me wonderfully by her books.”

“I see all her philosophy in the one book, Mrs. Raynor, — the Bible. But you have not had the wise and patient teacher who has guided me. I believe he sees through the gates and knows the beyond. And his light is Christ, and the assurance of God’s love.”

“I shall find more and more of divine revelation now that I have tasted a wider philosophy, and shall read the Bible with new hopes. Oh, the doors that open to us in life!”

They reach the great city, and after seeing Miss Ingalls safely provided with a carriage, hasten to the Albany depot, and while the great train thunders on they try to sleep. The children have no difficulty in adjusting themselves to the strange order; but Mr. and Mrs. Raynor cannot at once dismiss the thought that runs faster than the train and questions of the watching stars how the strength holds out, and whether they shall be in time for recognition by the fading life.

There are no delays, but the distance seems to have doubled since in the delight of happy anticipation they journeyed to the New Bethesda. But the good God was merciful. Grandma lived to greet her chil-

dren and hear them tell of the fitting summer; and when she passed on it was like falling asleep, so peaceful was the change.

The family slipped quietly into the home grooves, the children were again poring over their books, and Maud, full of the purpose of a great hope, was still climbing the hill of learning; but now the themes are life's sacred and vital concerns, — the nebulous career a journey marked out and classified.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WONDERFUL WEB.

THE July heat had been intense in the Pennsylvania valleys, and something more than gratitude was tugging at the hearts of the Raynor family. A place in which to draw a full and refreshing inspiration seemed imperative. They were sitting at evening on the moonlit porch of their handsome home, discussing the situation. Alex had just gone away on his wedding journey, and the family had decided to pass the summer at home. A good deal of bustle and work had been caused by the wedding, and they were in that state of weariness which makes home doubly restful. Then, the house had been for weeks like a hotel, and it was delightful to be able to see one another once more. But oh, how the sun glared by day, and the nights were sweltering! Mrs. Raynor found herself very weary. It had been a strain on the heart-strings to give up her first-born to the keeping of another woman. He would come no more as of old, with his first thought for her; and although she had given him into the care of a lovely girl whom he had known from babyhood, she had given him, and she felt the meaning of the change. She had kept all these things to herself, not parading her grief or her weariness, until now the hour seemed ripe for a

word of revelation, which a single remark from Mr. Raynor drew forth.

"The heat is so prolonged and intense, Katy, I think we shall have to go North for a while."

"I had hoped we could rest at home this year, Charles. We have had such a hotel in our own house that I need quiet."

"I think you need more than ever a change of scene, and rest from your housekeeping. You must be very tired, after all the flurry of Alex's wedding."

"Something ails me, Charles; I think a good cry would do me good."

"That reveals the strain your nerves have undergone. I confess it has not been perfectly easy to me to face the fact of having Alex away from home."

Mrs. Raynor left the piazza and went into the parlor through a low open window, and had her needed tears alone.

"Mother does need rest and change. I never saw her so nervous before," said Maud.

"You need a new outlook, too. What a serious, persistent work you have done since our summer at the New Bethesda! You have grown, my daughter."

"I trust I have, in mind and spirit. There was no particular need of physical growth."

"We all need change. It was unwise to decide on staying at home."

"If you go away, you will let us go, won't you, father?" said Willie.

"Certainly. We will all go together."

"I suppose there is only one place on the face of the earth where you will want to go, father. Can't Rich

and I go with the fellows to the Adirondacks? We want to, awfully."

"I know you do; but I fear it will trouble your mother to have you go into camp with a party of young men."

"Prof. is going, to look after them. He says there is no other vacation to be compared to camping out. Let us go, father."

"We will talk it over with your mother. Have you spoken to her?"

"Well, not much. She seemed so sorry to have Alex go off, we did not dare to."

"It will be extra trouble to get you ready for camping."

"We can buy everything. Fleischer keeps the whole rig, even to fishing-rods. And, father, they start on Monday."

"Have you made all arrangements for your summer journey?" said Mrs. Raynor, coming through the open window. She had evidently heard the conversation, despite her gush of tears.

"Oh no, mother. We never settle anything without you. But, mother, we do want to go to the Adirondacks."

"Are you willing, Katy?"

"You will think it very strange if I give my consent, won't you, boys?"

"We'll think you are the loveliest mother on the face of the earth."

"If Professor Graham is to have the party in charge, perhaps I will let you go. A vacation is not good for much, unless we go where we wish to."

“Why, Katy! I never dreamed of your being willing to let the boys go.”

“Alex has gone. He has done what he liked. Richmond and Willie shall not be crossed,” said Mrs. Raynor.

The boys gave three cheers, and were generally hilarious over the easy conquest. They had not expected the most persistent pleading to accomplish it.

“We will all start on Monday,” said Mrs. Raynor.

The tense nerves were relaxing, and she was ready to be taken care of. Indeed, she slept in a half-listless way while Mr. Raynor and Maud got everything in readiness for the journey. The family travelled together through a good portion of the State of New York, and when the boys left for the train to the Adirondacks, Mrs. Raynor parted with them cheerfully, as though they were going on a day's visit. She was not a woman to worry about her children or anticipate evil; but she wanted them near her, and had suffered the pain of sensible loss when they were absent. Mr. Raynor and Maud were made very watchful and anxious by her care-free manner in reference to the boys; and particularly so when she seemed quite willing to have Fred go with them. This, Mr. Raynor could not allow. A lad of eleven was quite too young for camp-life in the mountains. So Fred was in a state needing pacification, for he too had the camp fever in excess. When assured that he should fish and hunt, and help the Spring boy dip water for the guests, and row on the lake, and ride to Shaker Village, and perhaps attend the State Fair at Batesville, he began to appreciate the advantages of

the vicinity of the New Bethesda. And when he observed that his father and sister were very watchful of his mother, who slept much of the time, the thought of the camp grew less and less fascinating. There was little interest in the scenery along the way. Thought and care were centred within the small palace which bore them onward at mad speed. Mrs. Raynor, when questioned as to her feelings, simply answered; "Weary, oh, so weary!" and slept on. She did seem like her old self when she heard the familiar watchword, "Kingdom Station!" and while they rode up in the coach, looked with interest at everything along the way. As they neared the Spring, and the music of the band wakened the echo, she said, "It is just heavenly to be here." The coach halted, and a lad of perhaps fourteen years brought them water. As they rode on, she said, —

"Did you notice him, Charles, — the boy who brought the water? What dark eyes he had, and such a pale face! His neck, too, was scarcely larger than a chicken's. He must have been ill. Perhaps he came here for his health. He is no common water-boy, I am sure."

'Squire Raynor was glad of these signs of interest in the living present. Perhaps it was only weariness; but he had feared his wife was on the verge of brain fever or some alarming illness.

"How the hotel has been enlarged!" all exclaim as they take in its new dimensions, Ellison Rossville had not forgotten them in the midst of his prosperous and absorbing business. He was the very first to extend the welcome of the new house.

A boy takes the hand-bags and conducts them to the elevator, where colored Dick serves with the courtesy of his race. They reach their rooms.

“Charles, did you observe the boy who brought up our things? He looks like the one at the Spring, only healthier, — the same great dark eyes. They must be brothers.”

“Perhaps they are,” answers 'Squire Raynor, somewhat abstractedly.

“How nice everything looks here! I'm glad we came. I'm so tired!” And Mrs. Raynor goes to sleep, while the others run downstairs to examine the improvements. The office has been enlarged, while a commodious music hall furnishes room for the dancers and an ample space for all the entertainments and Sunday services. The Old Stage Tavern, too, has been improved, and the two hotels will now accommodate five hundred guests. They are full in every part, and so are the cottages. The Raynors encounter Dr. Rossville on his way to the Spring.

“Well, 'Squire, gratitude does not die easy, does it? And so you've come all the way from Pennsylvania again. Hope you got a room. We're as full as an egg. I've got some good news; Hugh is married. There's some hope for the Rossville name. Mary was married before you ever come here. Guess you never saw our Mary. She's here this summer; but her children have some other name. Brought all your family, 'Squire?”

“Only four of us this time. My eldest son is married, too; and Richmond and Willie have gone with the professor and fellows of the college to camp in the Adirondacks.”

"Better camping here! It's all talk about the Adirondacks. There's nothing there but common lake water and woods. You have the woods here, and the lakes, and water that will cure all the sick, and keep the well from getting sick. How's your wife?"

"She is very tired and sleepy."

"She'll get rested. Just let her drink the water and sleep all she wants too, and she'll be as bright as new in a few days."

"I suppose there are people here from every State in the Union, Doctor."

"Pretty much. There are folks here from Texas, and plenty of 'em from down South. And Pennsylvania beats all! You must have told a pretty good story, 'Squire. There are whole families here from your place."

"The truth, in my case, made a good story."

"And they believe you, if you are a lawyer."

"Yes; my Quaker blood can't help being honest."

"That minister you whittled canes with is here this year. He's been over the pond and got a little bilious, shook him up so. I can understand it when they come over here, but what a live Yankee wants to go to Europe for I can't see. No water there fit to drink. That's what hurt Winters. He's temperance, and would n't drink the stuff they bottle over there, but would drink water. He believes in water, and if he'd stayed where he could get it pure he'd never been sick again."

"Have any Europeans visited your Spring yet, Doctor?"

"Yes; a lot of Englishmen over here last year, and

they fairly swarm down from Canada. You'll see 'em. Any quantity of trunks that have been over. They leave the marks. Even Winters left his, and his big bag is daubed all over with foreign stamps."

"We learned three years ago that Winters has a wife. I hope she is with him. Mrs. Raynor has a great curiosity to see her."

"She's coming for a week or two. He's been sick ever since spring, and sick off and on ever since he went to Europe. She's a great housekeeper, I guess. My Helen tells about what the folks say up there, and she is staying to take up carpets and clean house, — could n't do it before, — then she's coming down. We're always glad to have her."

"Then she has been here before?"

"Oh, yes, she comes, but she never stays long. Ellison makes it easy for 'em, but they say she likes quiet. Too many folks here for her to have a good rest."

During the conversation with Dr. Rossville, Maud has slipped down to the Old Stage Tavern to see Susie and Helen. The years have been passed in the best schools, and the young ladies are realizing their mother's desire. Helen has grown tall, and is much like her mother in face and figure. She is a serene and quiet girl in her manners, while Susie has much more of the sparkle and gayety so common to young-ladyhood. But Helen has developed naturally. She was a quiet, even child, not given to excess of feeling or expression. Her dreamy eyes mark an introspective mind. She impresses Maud as having taken the lessons of life seriously, and with a high desire to profit by them.

The young ladies could only pass a word of greeting, with promises to meet often, as Maud wished to return to her mother. She could not hide the little anxiety she felt for the unnatural condition of Mrs. Raynor's health. Susie and Helen were very sympathetic, and walked half-way to the New Bethesda House with their true friend.

Maud found her mother dressed for tea, and seeming quite rested. As soon as she entered her mother's room, Mrs. Raynor asked her if she had noticed about the halls the boy who brought up their hand-bags.

"I am sure he is brother of the one at the Spring. And, Maud, I had to ring for warm water, and a boy came, — not the one who brought up our things, but another, with the same great, dark eyes. I believe there are three of them. I never saw just such eyes but once before, and somehow they haunt me. You have heard me tell about going to school at St. Stephen. There was a little girl in that school who had just such deep luminous eyes. We used to look after her in passing, and say something that would make her look up. She was the youngest girl in her class, and when composition day came she astonished pupils and teachers. She wrote verses that might have been Longfellow's, they were so thoughtful and so perfectly finished. She wrote for the village paper even then, and we all thought she would make a great author. But I never heard a word from her after I left St. Stephen. I am curious about those boys. They have Arena Remington's eyes."

"Oh, mother! How can you remember eyes so many years?"

“Ordinary eyes I could not; but her eyes were deep wells of thought. I have watched the papers and magazines, sure that I should see her name; but I never have seen it.”

“But, mother dear, there cannot possibly be any relation between the waiter-boys at the New Bethesda and your school-friend in that far-off State.”

“Why not? We are here; she may have come here. The railroad makes short work of travel.”

“Let us go down to supper. I passed father talking with Mr. Winters on the piazza. He is all right, and will not need any fixing. You look radiant, mother. Is it the memory?”

“I feel as though I had touched an electric wire.”

“What a sensitive mother you are!” said Maud, without the least faith in Mrs. Raynor’s intuitions and comparisons. They descend to the dining-hall, having met ’Squire Raynor on the way.

“Pardon me, Katy, for leaving you so long. I met Mr. Winters, and we had so many things to talk about that time passed unheeded.”

“I did not need you, Charles. I have been weaving a wonderful web. Maud thinks it less tangible than a spider’s weaving; but we shall see.”

They are met at the entrance of the supper-room by a new face, and escorted to a table at the left of the door, where they can look down the hall and see the sparkling array. Mr. Winters is at the same table. The Raynors are alive with interest in the new arrangements, and especially the new faces.

“Who is the head waiter, Mr. Winters?”

“A young German, — a Divinity student.”

“So the college is sending its men to serve the guests of the New Bethesda?”

“Yes, there are several college students here. It is quite a fashionable way for the student to pass his vacation. He can turn waiter at a summer hotel, have a good refreshing vacation, and earn something to help him through the next year.”

“The head waiter has a very refined face, Charles.”

“Yes, Katy. Years of European culture have gone to refine it. Look at him now, adjusting the chair for that bloated, red-faced man. Rather incongruous, is it not?”

“How can he wait on such people?”

“It is a good way to turn an honest penny. Genius and worth are nearly always poor. I suppose he has to make his own way through college.”

“What a pretty girl our waiter is! And she looks refined, too.”

“Yes, Mrs. Raynor,” said Mr. Winters, “the waiter-girls are many of them teachers or students. The New Bethesda is gaining a great name for the excellent care it takes of its help, and each year sees improvement in the class of servants. Young Gaston, the head waiter, is peer of the best of us, and some of these girls are as scholarly as the ladies they serve.”

They linger in the pleasant supper-room until Mrs. Raynor fears she shall miss the entrancing colors of the sunset.

“Let us go and look through the gates,” she said on rising; and they repair to the piazza. The west is aglow with light, and all the clouds are tinted by the flame of the dying day. Like the halo of a saint in

his passage through the fire are the splendors of the sunset from this mount of vision. As though he would gather all the glories of the day in one shining quiver, to show how grand a thing it is to finish the race and pass on, is the voice of the glowing west to these passionate lovers of Nature. Every hue is illuminated and intensified by the shafts of light which dart among the changing clouds, weaving new shapes and increasing the miracle glory. It is no strain of imagination to see islands in a limitless molten sea, and volcanoes belching volumes of flame. Ships under full sail of gold and crimson canvas plough the ocean of light. Processions of illuminated faces throng the horizon. The hills in shadowy outline reflect the sky. The lakes sparkle in their lowly fashion, asking only that they may mirror the wonders which bend above them. How small the ambitions and the employments which possess our little earth, when compared with the glory of the heavens, — the transfiguration of one single sunset hour! Mt. Washington forty miles away, and the inviting observatory which crowns its height, as visible as the cottages along the winding road of the lake valley! It is a wonderful scene; and it rivets our attention many times and oft as we sojourn upon these favoring hills.

“Was there ever a more magnificent sunset?” said Squire Raynor, after watching in rapt awe until the illuminated clouds turned ashen, and the night had come.

“One must travel far to see its equal,” said Mr. Winters. “Once among the Rocky Mountains I saw a wild and grand sunset. There had been a terrific

storm of rain and wind which broke away just as the sun was going down. The massive clouds were illuminated as though they were on fire, and no weird shape on earth but could be imagined flitting about the western horizon. It was less placid than New Bethesda sunsets; more like a storm of shotted clouds or a charge of soldiery. There was swift and startling change among the fancied shapes most fascinating to the imagination. I have seen sunsets in the Old World, but am ready to aver that ours are grander. We have more frequently the presence of masses of shifting clouds, while there it is glaring brilliance."

"I almost feel as though I had passed through those shining outer gates," said Mrs. Raynor.

"Oh, mother dear," exclaimed Maud, "you have had too much scenery, and too little silence and rest! You must come upstairs this very minute;" and Maud places her arm about her mother, that her vigorous strength may support the flagging energies.

Mr. Raynor withdraws from his friend and follows them. He would make the way for his wife like a garden-path bordered with flowers; and now that she needs him he is doubly thoughtful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LIKE HER MOTHER.

“I DON'T feel like rising, Charles,” said Mrs. Raynor, as the morning light flooded her room and she saw her husband dressing for breakfast.

“Then I would n't, Katy. Just lie and sleep all you wish to.”

“I lost a good deal of sleep, Charles, thinking about Alex.”

“I know you did, and you worked too hard getting ready for the new housekeeping. Your breakfast shall be brought up, and you shall eat in bed, as the English do. Sleep until you feel like getting up, if it takes three weeks, Katy.”

“I feel as though it would take a year; but I must not lose all this delightful opportunity in sleep.”

“Maud will see to everything, and the dear mother shall be utterly care-free.”

One of the dark-eyed boys is set apart as Mrs. Raynor's especial waiter. He answers her bell and carries up her meals, while Maud waits like a guardian angel to minister in all possible ways. They rouse her at meal-time, but for the rest of the day she sleeps on. Mr. Raynor examines her pulse and temperature, to be sure there is no lurking demon of sickness; he watches

her breathing awhile, and then finds his friend Winters, or some new guest to whom he can tell the story of the miracle Spring. He needs the open air, and there is no reason why the most devoted husband should count his wife's respirations while quietly sleeping. Sometimes the expressive face of the boy brings to mind the web she wove on the night of her arrival, and visions of the little girl at St. Stephen mingle with her dreams. She looks at him intently when he brings anything to her room, but cannot force her lips to frame the question she secretly wishes to ask him. It is such a romantic dream that she dallies with it, half fearing a questioning word may shiver it to atoms.

As Maud moves among the guests, those who have known her mother notice a striking resemblance. The girlish look has given place to mature thoughtfulness. Long years of study have made their indelible impress. While Mrs. Raynor rests in her upper room, Mr. Raynor finds himself counselling with his daughter as had been his habit with her mother, and confiding in her judgment more and more. She takes sole care of Fred; though for that matter Fred makes her care easy by keeping away from restraint. He revels in the charm of the free wild life so dear to the heart of a boy. To wear old clothes, and stay in the woods or about the lakes, is heaven enough for him.

Walking in the Music Hall one day arm in arm with her father, Maud observes Mr. Marshall at the piano. The music ceases, and they greet each other.

"That year of waiting solved the problem, Miss Raynor. I believe in the fullest opportunity to woman,

and that she is in the right place, in any place which she knows how to fill."

"I knew you would think yourself into the light, Mr. Marshall. Honest thought solves most of life's problems."

"We have both used the wrong term. Woman's equality cannot strictly be classed as a problem. It is a self-evident truth."

"And yet the time was, when this truth was not evident to you."

"Because my eyes were not opened. Thank you, Miss Raynor, for making me look the truth in the face. With me, seeing was believing."

"I am glad to hear your confession. There are believers who hide the truth under a bushel. I know men who believe that our colleges ought to be open to women, and yet who are not ready to act as they think. Some fear of the results of change, some flimsy web of policy, entangles and slays their righteous conviction. You are more conservative here in New England than anywhere else. Our home college is administered on the broadest principles. The West is progressive. You cannot crowd its expansive life into the shell of yesterday."

"New England moves slowly but surely. Harvard has made an advance which means co-education in the near future, and the younger colleges will fall into line."

"How much nobler for the younger colleges to lead. They have no gray customs to bow down to. The widest present thought should mould the life of to-day in education and in politics."

“And in religion too, Miss Raynor. Andover makes a sorry spectacle, fighting the battle of conservatism.”

“You think so, Mr. Marshall?”

“How can a mind open to the light think otherwise?”

“Confession is good for the soul.”

Miss Raynor turns away to join her father. He is talking with a group of Canadians who have come to the New Bethesda, as the halt and maimed visited the Bethesda of Palestine. They are waiting for the troubling of the waters, and some strong hand of encouragement and help. This they find in 'Squire Raynor, and as corroboration of his statements he calls Mr. Winters.

“You are not a well man, Mr. Winters,” said Mr. Flagg, one of the group.

“That is true. But the malady healed by the Spring has never returned. I spent a summer in Europe, and tried to see and take note of everything in a short space of time. In fact, I worked myself to death in sight-seeing; and with excessive weariness, and Rome in midsummer, I am a good deal broken. But I had uninterrupted health after my first visit here until this attack of malaria.”

“The water ought to cure your malaria.”

“It will, Mr. Flagg. I am gaining in strength daily.”

“The old Doctor says it cures everything. He claims so much for it that I am losing faith.”

“Don't lose faith, with living witnesses all about you. This great hotel crowded in every part is a living witness to the value of the Spring. All who come here are benefited. My wife is toned up at once on

coming here. The water is like wine to her in its exhilaration."

"It is a most delightful summer resort, I acknowledge. The extended view is worth something to men cramped in small city offices ten months of the year. And then, we have a jolly company. They don't look or act like invalids."

"Some of them look pretty solemn when they arrive; but the sky changes and clears perceptibly in a day or two."

"I like the young landlord. He seems to look upon us all as his family, whom he is in duty bound to make as happy as possible."

Maud was sitting in her mother's room. Several days of the opportune summer had already passed to Mrs. Raynor in a semi-oblivion; but she was beginning to come to herself, and take interest in the little incidents transpiring around her.

"You will be able to go downstairs to-night to the surprise party, will you not, mother dear? It will be great sport to surprise the English lions. Mr. Winters has it all planned; and, mother, Mrs. Winters is coming to-day."

Mrs. Raynor visibly brightened. Mrs. Winters had been a myth heretofore. She was interested in seeing her clothed in flesh and blood.

"Yes, Maud, I will make an effort to go down. I don't care about the surprise party, but I do want to see Mrs. Winters."

"You may not see her. Susie says sometimes she keeps her room for days together, and is not seen except in her early and late walks to the Spring."

“I suppose she comes here weary, as I did this summer, and stays alone until she gets rested.”

Mrs. Raynor dressed, and was ready for the surprise party, but she did not see Mrs. Winters that night. Mrs. Lincoln, the housekeeper, assured her that the minister's wife had arrived, but would not leave her room. Yes, she was weary. She was always weary; but the New Bethesda acted like a tonic. She would be visible perhaps to-morrow.

The guests gathered in the Music Hall, and when all was ready the Canadian party were ushered in. Mr. Winters received them with a speech of welcome in which he recognized the amity between the two great English-speaking nations, and hoped it might last forever. Mr. Flagg responded right heartily, and there were speeches from others. Music followed, and some one called for “God save the Queen!”

“Do not,” said Mr. Winters in assumed gravity, “embarrass our English friends by asking for their national ode. I never yet met a subject of the Queen who could sing it. I was once on the St. Lawrence with a regiment of British soldiers, and they could not get through the first verse. Again, on returning from Europe we were making merry with song and story, and there was a clamor for ‘God save the Queen!’ I tried to quell it before anybody was humiliated, but did not succeed. One brilliant English lady took her seat at the piano and started off bravely on the first verse, but failed before she got through it, nor could she recall a line of the other verses except the refrain, ‘God save the Queen!’”

“There is a reason for that, most reverend Ameri-

can," said Mr. Flagg, in the same gay humor of the minister. "The ode is execrable poetry and contemptible sentiment, and none of us know it, because we will not waste time in committing the hateful stuff. We love and honor our Queen, but we want to express it in decent English."

Then there was a shout of applause, and all the company sang "America," the Canadians joining in good round voices and making no mistakes in the text. The evening was a merry one, and the Canadians were more and more impressed by the good-humor of the guests at the New Bethesda. In passing out of the hall, Dr. Rossville, who seldom attended the evening entertainments, said: —

"There's no difference, Mr. Flagg. We might as well forget about the wars, and think we are all one. If I was you I'd drop 'God save the Queen,' and pretend that "America" was my national ode. You all know that. — Why, here's Mrs. Raynor. Got rested? I've been wanting to see ye. You remember Sicily? She's married. We sha'n't have her here any more. I believe Ellison is bound to live an old bachelor."

"Our boys have to choose for themselves, Doctor. Strangely enough, they never marry the girls we pick out for them."

"If they'll get married, all right. But living single in this country, where there are three or four women to one man, is a sin; yes, I call it a downright sin!"

"There are a good many sinners, then, and they are increasing. The extravagant habits of the time are a terror to the young man thinking of matrimony. He

must begin at the top of the ladder. Girls expect an elegant home and one servant at least to begin with."

"Sicily knows how to work. Her mother brought her up right. She's married a farmer, and of course she'll have to work. No girls, unless they're needed. There's no excuse for my boys. They can afford to live in style. There's a fortune coming right out of the ground for them. I liked Sicily. She was always pleasant."

The Canadian party moved to the piazza for a promenade, in which many of the guests joined. There was brilliant moonlight, and all the witchery of flitting shadows so charming on a summer night. Crickets had begun to prophesy of the coming autumn, and a dreamy undertone mingled with their myriad voices. All the meadow stretching down to the Old Stage Tavern seemed full of them.

"It is a lonesome sound, always," said Mrs. Raynor.

"The crickets are not very lonesome, Katy. I should say they were about a million strong, by the sound of their piping."

"They tell us of autumn winds and closed doors, and all the storm and gloom of winter."

"And of all the snug comfort too: the open fires, the warm carpets, apples roasting on the hearth, nut-cracking, and the long evenings for reading. There are no lonesome sounds, Katy, when we are all well and have love and home."

"Oh, Charles, how you help me! When I get rested there will be no lonesome sounds. I shall forget the crickets. But truly, Charles, ever since I was a child

the first appearance of the crickets has made me sad. I wonder if I could walk down to the Spring?"

"Of course you can, with my strong arm to lean on. Would you like to have Maud on the other side? Where is she?"

"I saw her walking with Mr. Marshall. Don't call her. Young ladies need some liberty. Maud has confined herself to me very closely."

"I wish she would not give her time to Mr. Marshall."

"How selfish, Charles! He is interesting, and Maud likes to converse with him."

"I heard him tell her he was on her side of the woman question,—reached it alone, without letters from her."

"Then they will not lose temper in argument."

"I'm afraid they will think too nearly alike."

"You don't seem to like Mr. Marshall."

"Mr. Marshall is well enough. I suppose I shall not like anybody who tries to come between me and my daughter."

"Their fellowship is purely intellectual. It could be nothing else between Maud and Mr. Marshall."

"And yet, I remember you were quite concerned about Maud's heart when she was thrown into Mr. Hammond's society by the little play they learned together, Katy."

"She was younger then; and Mr. Hammond was just the man to attract a young girl."

"Is that Mr. Winters, just ahead?"

"It looks like his figure. He is carrying somebody's 'Moses,' as usual."

“It is very kind of him. He must be bored by these women who make such a constant demand upon his services.”

“I presume he likes it. Perhaps that is his wife, — almost as tall as he is.”

“If it is, Katy, let us not disturb them. She did not appear at supper, and of course wants to keep away from people to-night.”

“I am dying to see her, Charles. What do you suppose she is like?”

“An unassuming domestic wife, from all I can gather.”

“Just a common woman? Winters is quite elegant, and they say he is a very successful minister, — that he does not move from place to place, but has covered nearly his whole public service by two city pastorates.”

“Ministers often have inferior wives. I mean, women who do not keep up with their intellectual advancement. I suppose it is because they do not go courting like other men, but marry the first girl who smiles on them.”

“Perhaps it is because they marry young, — ‘mate before they matriculate,’ as Maud says. I shall be sorry if Winters’s wife is not his equal.”

They sit awhile under the balcony and hear the musical jingle of glasses and bottles as the pilgrims refresh themselves and prepare for any possible thirst on a hot August night. There is low laughter, and Mrs. Raynor hears Mr. Winters say, “Take another glass, Cornelia.”

“It is Mrs. Winters, Charles!” she whispers; and

then listens for Cornelia's voice to answer, "Yes, Raynold, give me another. I shall take three."

"How do you know his wife's name is Cornelia?"

"Whom else would he call Cornelia? I know Mr. Winters as well as anybody here, and he does not call me Kate, or Catharine."

"Yes, it must be his wife. She is not afraid of the water, evidently."

They linger by the Spring, taking their glasses slowly, with little gurgles of musical laughter now and then, and presently pass out, almost brushing Mrs. Raynor's dress, as she sits near the door; but doubtless supposing strangers wait their turn, they pass on.

"I like her voice, Charles; there is character in it."

"There is certainly decision in it. Such voices can lay down the law, Katy."

"They generally belong to women capable of laying down the law."

"They went off in a clinging way, like a pair of lovers."

CHAPTER XIX.

REPEATED VISIONS.

MRS. RAYNOR'S watch for Mrs. Winters at the breakfast-table was doomed to disappointment. She was seated early and lingered long, but neither the minister nor his wife appeared. And then she walked awhile on the piazza, hoping to encounter the new arrival; but all in vain. Finding her strength largely restored, and remembering that she had not seen Mrs. Rossville since she came, she walked down to the Old Stage Tavern. The Doctor met her at the door. He was about to take his morning walk to the New Bethesda.

"I guess it did you good to sleep. You look rested. Come in; my Mary is in the parlor. You never saw my Mary;" and Dr. Rossville with evident pride introduced a young matron to his friend from Pennsylvania. Little children were clinging to her, but there were no lines of care or annoyance on her face. "A wonderfully calm and sweet face," was Mrs. Raynor's mental comment. A pleasant light played over it in conversation, and as they talked for a few moments Mrs. Raynor felt the charm, and gladly submitted to the irresistible spell. She had been thinking of the minister's wife and longing to meet her; and now a woman fit for any sphere had dawned upon

her unexpectedly. Oh, if Mr. Winters's wife should only prove to be as sweet and gracious! As this thought crossed her mind she almost feared to meet the woman whom she had heard named Cornelia by the rim of the miracle Spring.

Mrs. Rossville leaves her cares and is willing to fold her hands awhile and talk of other days. As she greets Mrs. Raynor, her daughter finds that the morning caller whom she had thought of only as one of the many guests at the New Bethesda House is the lady her mother has talked of so often as one who had captured her heart. The times come back in swift review, when there was no coach and four, and when the twenty guests at the Old Stage Tavern drove to the Spring in the one-horse wagon and drank from the tin pint.

"They were fine old times, Mrs. Rossville, as full again of romance as these times. Oh, the rides behind the oxen, and the smell of the new-mown hay!"

"And we had a living romance here too at that time, — a pair of lovers."

"Yes, and as happy as Adam and Eve in the Garden, until the serpent came. Have you heard anything from Miss Ingalls since she was here three years ago, Mrs. Rossville?"

"Hugh was told by some one supposed to know, that she had gone to California."

"That means she is married to Robert Nickerson."

"We did not hear that she was married. She was a beautiful girl, Mary, and he seemed a superior young man. But he must have had a weak side to

him, to pay so much attention to that little Minnie Swan."

"It was a kind of family entanglement, brought about by the lawsuit. Poor Nickerson suffered enough because of it."

"I am glad if he did. He deserved to suffer. But how do you know, Mrs. Raynor?"

"Miss Ingalls had a letter from him which was full of the bitterest remorse. He asked her pardon too, and the way was open for a reconciliation. Gertrude's only fear was that this weakness might follow him after marriage, when any such defection would be a million-fold more humiliating."

"She has grounds for such a fear. Open-hearted and reliable men are so from early life. They neither wound sweetheart nor wife."

"I was quite sure Miss Ingalls would marry Robert. She loved him notwithstanding all his seeming faithlessness. I don't know whether she had will enough to resist the sway of her affections after receiving his pleading letter."

"Susie and Helen have had some good visits with your daughter, Mrs. Raynor. Oh, I hope she won't have such heart-aches as poor Miss Ingalls suffered. Attractive girls are in great peril. I am glad to hear of the good work she has prepared herself to do."

"Yes; Maud thinks only of her books and her mission. She has never received attentions from gentlemen. She takes her own straightforward way, and does not invite attentions."

"Will she settle as a pastor?"

"Oh, yes; she is already invited to a pleasant little

parish in a lovely town quite near home, and begins her work in October."

"How you will miss her!"

"Yes; parting with Alex almost broke my heart. Maud is my only daughter. But she inspires me with her enthusiasm for her work, and in that way I shall find strength to bear the separation. It is sacred work, and all my heart goes out with her into it. I wish I too were young, and could see such a career opening before me."

"Can you say that, and you such a happy wife and mother?"

"I should want Charley and the children with me!"

"Ah, there it is," said Mary Hart. "Woman yearns for 'Charley and the children.' Her noblest career is in these natural relations."

"You are quite right. There is no higher calling than motherhood; no nobler career than to be the true guardian of a home; but there are religious natures who are taken quite out of the ordinary grooves by some great awakening light, and who desire with an intensity almost superhuman to disseminate that light. I am glad my daughter can be voice for me."

Just then Fred came running in, asking for his mother.

"Father says you can have just the loveliest ride, if you wish to. Will you go, mother? Say yes, because he said I might go too."

"Yes; I think I should like to ride this beautiful morning."

"Hurrah!" said Fred, as he turned to run back

with his mother's consent. Mrs. Raynor followed at once. As she reached the piazza of the New Bethesda, she saw Flint, the dark-eyed boy who had cared for her many needs during the sleepy days, talking with a tall lady in a very familiar way.

In passing she heard him say, "No, Aunty, I do not mind it at all. Some of the people are rather imperious and exacting; but I am here to serve them, and I mean to fill the bill."

Mrs. Raynor felt her heart bound with electric throbs. "His aunt. Who is his aunt? Why, it must be Mrs. Winters. Yes, that is the very figure Mr. Winters called Cornelia; and Charles said Winters was a Pennsylvanian. Oh, it is no dream!"

"Come, Mrs. Raynor; the horse is restive."

"Charles, I don't wish to go."

"Fred said you did wish to go, and I had the team in readiness."

"I did; but, Charles, I am as weak as a child."

"It will do you good, Katy. You have tasted the summer air measured by your open window, and need a good full feast of it."

She climbs into the carriage in an abstracted way, and Fred is tucked between them. They drive off. Flint Wentworth is still talking with the woman whom he called Aunty. Mrs. Raynor glances at them and obtains a half view of the lady's face under her drooping black hat. She notices that her garments are black, unrelieved by any color. It is not a handsome face, — not a face one would look after a second time, unless some association, as in the present instance, awakened interest.

"Come, Katy, you must enjoy this breezy morning behind Mr. Rossville's new horse. See, he has granted me the honor of driving him first. Isn't that a light step? Perfect beauty, I call him. He'll take us over the hills like the wind."

"Yes, Charles; but I have had such a thrill."

"That is good. Thrills help the blood to circulate."

"I must know all about it."

"All about what, Katy?"

"My romance. You know I spoke to you about those dark-eyed boys. Well, to-day I saw Flint talking with a tall lady that I am just sure was the minister's wife, and as I passed them he called her Aunty. I knew they were no common servants."

"Winters says there are college students here, and that it is a common thing for them to pass their vacations as hotel waiters. Perhaps these boys are among them."

"Has Mr. Winters told you anything about these boys?"

"No. I have seen him talking with them; but he talks with the help as kindly as he would talk with Ellison Rossville himself. Winters belongs to the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood, and lives his religion."

"Mother, I heard the Spring boy call Mr. Winters Uncle, and I've seen them talking lots, when Ralph was n't busy," said Fred.

"And you are sure Mr. Winters is a Pennsylvanian?"

"Told me so himself. He has walked the streets of

Meadowville as familiarly as we have; lived only a dozen miles away."

"There's a chain binding all events, Charley, and I shall find out all about it."

"All about what, you mysterious dreamer?"

"I have told you about Arena Remington, the little girl at St. Stephen who had the most wonderful eyes I ever saw. Well, these boys keep me thinking of her, as though there were some secret wire connecting all our hearts. Their eyes are not so glorious as hers, though Flint's are nearly like them; but they have a shade, a quality, a glance — what shall I call it, Charles? — like hers; and I believe she is the mother of those boys."

"I hope she is, Katy. They are nice boys, and I know you thought her quite a wonder. Not only her eyes but her mind attracted you."

"If I could meet her among these hills! — well, it would be almost too much for mortal strength to bear. There seemed something sacred about her. It may have been her poetic nature; but she affected me strangely, as though not altogether of this world."

"You were always an idealist, Katy. You discern the wings where ordinary people would only see a worm."

"Arena Remington had wings, Charles, and they were scarcely hidden."

"Yes, I know. The poems you showed me were quite above common school compositions. It is strange we never encountered her in the magazines, when she had such unusual power. Do you know whether she had a sister?"

“She was very shy and reticent, never speaking of her family; but one day we were all in a state of rebellion over Miss Farwell’s new rule about recess, and Arena said her sister gave the largest liberty to young ladies out of school-hours, and she had never had it abused. So we all knew she had a sister who was a school-teacher.”

“Well, Katy, you really have a slender thread to hang your romance on. Forget your battery of thrills awhile now, and take in this view. Did you ever see a grander succession of hill and vale even among the Alleghanies? The outlook is broader here, not shut in by such gigantic forests. What diminutive things these trees are compared with the growths of old Pennsylvania! But I suppose this is not any of its primeval forest. It is a kind of second growth, or perhaps third or fourth growth; we don’t know how many times clearings have been made here and abandoned to the wild beasts. How the lakes sparkle in the shadow of these hills! Diamonds, Katy, under the shadow of my lady’s eyes.”

“That is a diminutive comparison, Charles. The lesser to the greater is the rule.”

“Not always followed, even by poets. You remember Longfellow’s comparison of the moon’s reflection to ‘a golden goblet falling and sinking into the sea’?”

“Yes; and I remember it as a fault in my beloved Longfellow’s verse. The lakes, Charley, are grander than all the diamonds in the world.”

“But these hills, Katy, are not grander than my lady’s eyes. My comparison is not a failure! Isn’t

this horse a superb trotter, — almost as good as our Fanchon? You look better already, Katy. I wanted to take Maud, but there were a fairy chair and woodland readings to claim her. She has wonderfully good times with Susie and Helen. Somebody will break his heart over Helen. She is growing very statuesque and handsome.”

“She has a very sweet disposition, which is better than personal beauty.”

“The disposition is a thing of doubtful quality. It must be tried to be proved. When the sweet girl makes a serene and even-tempered wife and mother, then we can decide on the quality of the disposition.”

“Is your remark equally true when applied to amiable young men?”

“Certainly. We are to grow in grace, as the Bible says, — grow better and stronger under the stress and strain of life. That is the only true development, the only sign of real character. Anybody can smile when all the winds and tides are in his favor. It takes a sterling man to hold himself in the upper air of composure when the buffetings come. It is a big battle, but a grand victory, to rule one’s own spirit. Shall we turn homeward? You must not get too weary.”

“Yes, Charles. It has been a very full morning, and if I sleep awhile before dinner I shall be surer of myself.”

“If all the world were as even-tempered as you are, Katy, there would be a good many more happy homes!”

“If we were made without nerves, Charley, to get

tired and sore! — Oh, I wish Alex had lived single five years longer!”

They sped swiftly over the hills, and Mrs. Raynor had time for her nap, while the 'Squire sat in a shady corner of the piazza. Looking up from the paper he was dreamily reading, a pale face met his eyes and held his attention. There were no invalids about the New Bethesda who carried such a look of extreme weakness and exhaustion. “That man has come too late,” he says; and leaving his corner he goes to encourage him by the story of his own restoration.

“I have not a particle of faith,” says Mr. Cutter. “I came because I was fairly forced to come by my wife, who believes her minister knows everything. He was cured here, and he is eternally telling of it; but he never was as sick as I am, or water would not have saved him.”

“Fearfully sick men have been saved by coming here, — men whom the doctor had given up to die.”

“It is not reasonable that spring water can cure such a case as mine. Dr. Rossville has just been telling me about Mayor Somebody who was given up to die before election day, and that less than two months off, and he got well by staying here a few weeks and gulping water by the quart. It is not reasonable.”

“My friend, you must save your condemnation until the water has really failed in your case. It will help you, and it has cured the very worst cases. If it cures you there will be another advocate equal to Mr. Winters and myself.”

“You know Winters? He's my wife's minister,

and between them they brought me out of my comfortable home to die on these rocks."

"You are not going to die. Can you walk as far as the Spring?"

"No. I can hardly stagger the length of this piazza. But I have the water; Dr. Rossville has given me 'Moses' and a glass, and told me just how much to take. I shall take it out of sheer desperation."

"If you follow his directions you will be a new man in a week, Mr. Cutter."

"About as well expect a dead tree to sprout," said Mr. Cutter, as 'Squire Raynor moved away, remembering that it was time for his own walk down the fourteen hundred planks.

The guests were coming in from different directions, with appetites stimulated by exercise on these breezy hills. Each had followed his whim, and there was ample space for individual preference. If the sun shone too hotly, the croquet-ground under the pines was shady enough, and the aroma of the trees like elixir while the game went on. The lazy had hugged their hammocks, Cræsus had driven his span, romantic girls had dallied with the evergreens of the long path, the musician had tortured the piano; and all these differing tastes had one taste in common, which the head waiter and his retinue of pretty girls well understood.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DREAM REVEALED.

“**M**RS. WINTERS does not look at all like Arena Remington, and yet she suggests her in some ways,” said Mrs. Raynor. “I must ask her to come to my room and tell me everything. She has no such eyes as the little girl we all adored at St. Stephen; and then she is tall, and Arena was small and slight. Her face bears the marks of great sorrows, though it lights up when she speaks. I want to know, and yet I am afraid to invite the possible destruction of my dream.”

“Come downstairs, Katy, and cheer up poor Mrs. Cutter. I have been talking with her, and she is sure her husband will die. She is a parishioner of Mr. Winters, and he asked me to do what I could for them both.”

“There, Charles, Mrs. Winters is talking with the other boy, — Paul, they call him.”

“Oh, yes; I have seen her waylay them on the stairs, or anywhere, and say something to them. She is evidently very much interested in them. The housekeeper says they are very nice boys.”

“I fear I cannot get interested in Mrs. Cutter, Charles.”

“Of course you can. I never knew you fail to become interested in a person who needed you. The

Cutters have just come, and Mr. Cutter is in a bad way. His wife has reason to fear. Oh, Dr. Rossville is talking with them. He will brace them up more than we can. Come out to the hammock a little while."

They enter the shadow of the pines. Presently Mr. and Mrs. Winters come toward them, as though they had some purpose, which is soon made known, for Mr. Winters says, —

"Squire Raynor, Dr. Rossville sends me after you. He has a stubborn infidel in Mr. Cutter. Will you come and help us inspire him with a little faith and courage? Our wives can take this time to become better acquainted."

Mrs. Winters and Mrs. Raynor are soon seated in the same hammock, and, strangely enough, Kate is trembling in every nerve.

"My husband tells me you are Pennsylvanians," says Mrs. Winters. "I feel a clannish interest in people from the dear old Keystone, and know we shall become acquainted at once."

"Yes, we are natives; and I have almost the same feeling of kinship for those who hail from the land of my love."

"I am not an original Pennsylvanian. I was born in New York, but removed to Pennsylvania when a mere child, and it almost seems native land to me. All my school-days were passed there, and the romances of youth were woven under her giant trees."

"Why did you come so far away? Your home is in New England?"

"A minister has the fortune to make great changes. Mr. Winters came East to visit an old friend; preached a Sunday or two to eke out his travelling expenses,

and as a sequel settled here. It is like coming back to my birthright. My parents were New Englanders, but Mr. Winters's family are genuine Pennsylvanians."

Maud came running to her mother like a little girl, to ask if she might drive to Batesville with a party of young people, and take Fred too. "It will keep him out of mischief, mother. Susie and Helen are going, and Mr. Ellison Rossville has promised to drive for us."

"The ride is so safely planned, my daughter, I think you can go. Yes, and take Fred too."

"How delightful to have such a daughter!" said Mrs. Winters.

"Have you children, Mrs. Winters?"

"I have none of my very own; but I believe my sister's children come into my heart almost the same as though they were really mine. She and I were more closely united than most sisters. We thought alike, and never had any disputes. And then she seemed to me almost sacred, — not quite like other women, — and I felt a motherly tenderness for her, and it increased with each new life given to her care. Her children are really my children."

"I heard one of the boys here call you Aunty."

"They are her boys. There are three of them here."

Mrs. Winters's eyes were full of tears, and Mrs. Raynor knew some great sorrow was tugging at her heart, but she could no longer keep silent.

"These boys," said she, "affect me strangely. When I first saw the one at the Spring, and then one after the other the two came to my room, they sug-

gested one whom I knew in my youth. Their eyes are like hers. I have been weak and trembling just looking at them and thinking of my schoolmate at St. Stephen."

"St. Stephen! Arena went to school at St. Stephen. Is it possible you knew my sister?"

"I knew Arena Remington, and I would give the world to see her once more. We almost adored her. She was away beyond us all in her thought. And such a poet! and she was not sixteen years old."

"Yes, Mrs. Raynor, we shall have to 'give the world'—the latest failing breath of this world—before we can see her. She crossed the river more than two years ago. Life has never been the same to me since she went away. But tell me,—I heard Mr. Raynor call you Katy,—are you the Kate Shippen who made the little parties for the strange girls, and were so kind to them? Oh, many a time Arena has told me how you helped to make the school a great happy home."

"Then she remembered and spoke of me? I would rather have her remembrance than all the honors of St. Stephen. And I can see her only in these boys?"

"She left a daughter, who is coming for a few days. She is very young, and the housekeeping cares fall heavily upon her. She needs rest in change."

"Three boys and a daughter left motherless?"

"Oh, Mrs. Raynor, there are six boys,—two of them scarcely more than babies when she left them; the eldest a freshman in college."

"I seem to be dreaming. I thought her children

would be children of the brain. What a noble record of motherhood!"

"She laid aside her pen entirely when she was married, and gave her whole life to her family. She never took a vacation save the few days when she would come with her babies to my home. I never saw so devoted a mother."

"Arena Remington was known at St. Stephen as a personified conscience. She never thought of herself even then, but of some backward girl whom she could help."

"How it brings in review her life, to meet one who knew her in her happy girlhood! It was a short life, but oh, so full! She seemed a prophet as well as poet; but all poets are in a sense prophets. I remember a little poem in which she sketched her own history. It was written as far back as the years at St. Stephen, when she had no thought of going to the sea-shore for a home, — written long before we settled in Oldport. The closing lines have rung in my ears like sad bells jangling out of tune since she left us. Did you ever see them? —

‘In the dusk light of a house by the sea,
Now she is dying, poor Anne Marie!’”

"I have the poem, Mrs. Winters. She read it at a little exhibition, when all the happy village was there to listen."

"You lived in her world, Mrs. Raynor, and appreciated her. It is a comfort to know this."

"How strange and unreal it all seems! Tell me something to make this revelation less a dream. Did she visit you, and in that way come to settle by the

sea? She loved the woodland ways of dear Pennsylvania, I know. Never a ramble in the forests but she was ready to join us."

"Yes; she came to make my home less lonely. I had left all my family, and everything was strange to me. Even the trees and the roofs of the houses were unlike those at the old home. It was a great work that we had undertaken, and our parents spared Arena to keep us in heart. She met in Oldport her future husband. Five years after our settlement there they were married."

"And so soon the history of her life is written!"

"Yes; she had been married but nineteen years. She had great joy in her family. If she could have seen her children grown to maturity and taking their places in the world, her joy would have been more and greater. They honor her name, and I trust will be true helpers in the world's good work. You may think it strange to see the boys serving at the New Bethesda. We sometimes call the loss of property misfortune, when it is really the best thing for the growth of manly character that the yoke be borne in youth, that the value of a dollar be learned by being earned. Inherited money is often recklessly spent; the money that we toil for is appreciated. The work and experience will be good discipline for the boys. Poor Ralph's health was sadly broken. He went down to death's door the same week in which we buried his mother, and has never fully rallied. He is thin and pale. We hope much from the invigorating help of the New Bethesda."

"Is the daughter like her mother?"

“We hope she will become more and more like her as she grows older. Her hair and eyes are like her mother’s, but her features are different. She is like her in spirit; and that, after all, is the true likeness.”

“Will she soon be here? I am eager to see her.”

“She must come soon, if at all. Our time is fast flying. Mr. Raynor will find her a full-grown humanitarian. She has just graduated from the high school, and she did such a brave thing we are all proud of her. There was a colored boy in the class, and when the young ladies were arranging for their commencement reception and dance, one after another said, ‘I will not dance with James Morgan!’ Mabel heard them, and then said calmly, ‘I shall dance with him. He is a good boy, and stands well in his class, and I don’t care anything about the color of his face.’ Mabel Wentworth had spoken. The young ladies began to be ashamed of their remarks, and one after another joined in the spirit of good-fellowship, until Mabel had carried the whole class. The Wentworths are an old family; her father has been mayor of the city, and Mabel won three of the high school medals.”

“That is noble independence for a young girl. The world will hear from her yet. How much comfort Arena’s children must be to you!”

“I need them. Arena was the last of my family. Our three brothers early went over to the majority. What havoc the war made among the homes of our land!”

“Did you lose brothers in the army?”

“They contracted disease which left them a few

lingering, painful years; but the war killed them as truly as though they had fallen in battle."

"My brothers fell in battle."

"The greater glory and the briefer pain."

"Perhaps we had better go to the house. Mr. Raynor spoke of a Mrs. Cutter whose husband is very ill, who needed me. I have n't been quite well this year. I may have to lie down."

"You tremble, Mrs. Raynor. Come to the house and rest. Do not take any more care. I will stand by Mrs. Cutter. She is pretty strong of herself, but it does her good to meet those who know that the New Bethesda has healing power. Mr. Cutter berates it terribly; but if it gets hold of him it will conquer in the absence of faith."

The ladies walk slowly out from the shadow of the pines, Kate bending now and then to gather sprays of low blueberries thick about her feet. They were new to her. The western borders of Pennsylvania nourish no such fruit. The morning had been a strange, sad revelator, and to go alone with God and think seemed the only rest. She did not appear at dinner, and Maud, fresh and bright from her swift ride, flew to her mother's room to see if the terrible lethargy again enthralled her.

"No, my daughter. But I have lived too fast; too much that is strange and unreal has flitted before me. It is just as I knew. Arena Remington is the mother of those dark-eyed boys, and Mrs. Winters is her sister, and the very last of her family. It is a long, sad story to come to such a heart as mine all at once. Just let me rest. Tell father not to be troubled."

“We are troubled. Even Mr. Gaston inquired for you. What a gracious gentleman he is! Mr. Rossville is fortunate in having one in his position so pleasing to the guests.”

“There will be a young lady here this afternoon whom you must know at once, — Arena Remington’s daughter. I heard Paul tell his aunt as we came in from the grove that his sister Mabel would be here to-day.”

“A daughter! Sister of your boys! Why, mother, what a romance it is!”

“She is very young, — only sixteen; but you will find a mate in her as really as in Helen Rossville.”

“Yes, mother. I wish you could go down to dinner — as hungry as I am.”

“You have driven to Batesville, while I have been turning over the dead leaves of the past.”

Maud Raynor returns to the table. The great hall is very brilliant with its crowd of well-dressed people, its waiters in white, and the happy look on all faces which comes of pleasant surroundings and courteous service. Mr. Cutter is at the table for the first time, a little improved as to color, and the casual observer might say he was eating like a wood-chopper. Mr. Winters and 'Squire Raynor had passed the morning with him. They had told him stories of the curative power of the Spring, until he had evinced just the dawning of faith.

“Not on account of your boasting. I’m used to the minister, and I’ve no great faith in lawyers; but I do feel just a grain better myself,” said he.

“You won’t put it that way,” said Dr. Rossville,

“when you’ve been here long enough. My patients don’t talk about feeling a grain better; they are pounds better. Tons better, — that’s the way to put it; grains are too small.”

“I’ll put it worlds better, when I can without lying; but these fellows have told their stories without a single blush, and they all sounded like whoppers.”

“They can prove every one, can’t ye, ’Squire? Prove it so that any court in the country would bring in a verdict of cured, — cured by the waters of the New Bethesda. You just believe, and do, and you’ll be saved. Doubters are damned, so the Bible says. I would n’t run any risks if I was you.”

In this way had Dr. Rossville and his friends tried to encourage the hopeless invalid, and their united efforts had not been wholly in vain. He had ventured to the dinner-table, one of the notable adjuncts of the miracle pool, and whatever his faith in the Spring, he had unmistakable evidence that the table was doing its best to strengthen the weak and restore the ill, — “a table fit for a king,” he said to Mrs. Cutter.

Maud went to her mother’s room and waited quietly until the restful sleep had spent itself, and as she saw signs of awakening thought, she determined to turn it, if possible, to other channels. She could see how this recall of the past had been too sorrowful for her mother’s tired nerves, and the need of some new outlook not wholly connected with the life of her school-mate at St. Stephen. Maud was always bright and cheerful, a real tower of strength to her weary mother.

“I am learning new things every day, mother dear.”

“That is the way to wisdom, my child.”

“Oh, I don't mean wise things, or book-learning, but about the people here. Mr. Rossville says one of the chambermaids is an artist, a first-class portrait-painter. She grew tired with long application, and came here for rest and change. Princes in disguise! It is like fairy-land. Mr. Gaston himself may be a prince. And one of the table-girls, mother, speaks French and German, and at off hours is reading Greek and Latin. Mr. Rossville says there are ever so many school-teachers among them. They like to come here. It feeds the mind to live three months on these wonderful hills, and tones them in every way for the work of the coming year.”

“Do you know the artist, Maud? Is she on our floor?”

“She is on the floor below. I am going to find her, and ask her to paint my picture. It would be just splendid to have a waiter-girl at the New Bethesda House do such a piece of work.”

“Perhaps her time is all engaged. You had better ask Mr. Rossville about it first.”

“Mr. Rossville is thoroughly kind. I know he won't care. I can help her make beds so as to gain time.”

“It takes a good many hours to paint a portrait, my daughter.”

“I shall be glad to help her. Susie and Helen are busy with dressmakers. They are getting ready for school, and I shall have plenty of time to make beds with Miss Russ. I know we can gain the time. And, mother, three of the waiter-boys besides Mr. Gaston are to be ministers; one of them a Catholic.”

“And who are the others?”

“Your dark-eyed boys, to be sure,—Flint and Paul.”

“Have those young boys decided on the ministry?”

“How much younger are they than I was, mother dear, when I entered the valley of decision?”

“They seem to me not more than fifteen or sixteen years old.”

“Years are old deceivers. They may be eighteen. The daughter, you say, is sixteen. Perhaps one is older, and the other younger than she. And, mother, ministers are often called by the inner voice before even that age is reached. There have been many Samuels. I presume these boys have been inspired by their uncle.”

“Rather by their mother, whose life was withdrawn from the world like Samuel’s in the Temple service.”

“Will you come downstairs this evening, mother? Mr. Rossville is going to exhibit his new fire-escape. It will be very amusing to watch the shooting phantoms. He told us about its working.”

Maud had unconsciously, in telling her bits of news, run right into the heart of her mother’s interest, and she flew to the fire-escape to keep her from settling and brooding there.

It was indeed very amusing to see the volunteers one after another come down to the ground through the canvas tunnel. All the house was out to watch this new exhibition, Mrs. Raynor among the rest. But she soon tired of the sameness, and went to the piazza for a brisk promenade; or perhaps she felt a creeping chill from long standing on the dewy grass. Just before her as she walked was Mrs. Winters, arm

in arm with Mabel Wentworth, and she had a good opportunity to observe the gait, the pose of the head, the trim figure. Yes; here again were suggestions of the poet of St. Stephen, and all the more impressive because of the womanly presence. She had not walked the length of the New Bethesda House before 'Squire Raynor and Mr. Winters came, tired from a long tramp in the woods. Then the march ended, and Mabel turned to meet her mother's early friend. Maud was called from her interest in the latest invention, and all went in together to supper.

CHAPTER XXI.

NOT LOVE, BUT A BARGAIN.

“KATY, you have been so absorbed in your romance, you have given little thought to the other interesting people here.”

“I could n’t, Charles, until the mystery of my thrills was in a measure revealed.”

“Mr. Winters told me an interesting story about the Boltons. You will never forget how we gathered around the debaters when Mrs. Bolton tried to convert him three years ago. He told me the sequel. She went home and found that her church had so changed she could no longer sit in peace among its worshippers, and she withdrew, with her husband, and joined the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood. The minister and people gathered around them with argument and appeal, but all to no purpose. They must follow the great awakening which had come to them, and make their home with the people of like precious faith. A new house of worship was under construction, and the Boltons had subscribed a thousand dollars. This they conscientiously paid before leaving. A large class of young men whom Mrs. Bolton had taught in the Sunday-school followed her to the new church. Such a story as that will set Maud’s heart on fire.”

“How true it is that ‘the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord’! Those debates helped others besides Mrs. Bolton. Yes, Maud will be doing that very work soon; and what a glorious work it is, to open blind eyes!”

“You know the Boltons were suddenly called home; That was what brought their case to Mr. Winters’s remembrance. They left yesterday. Sickness of her mother, I believe.”

“No, Charles, I confess I knew nothing about it; but you cannot wonder. I have had an absorbing experience, which has kept me deaf to every other interest ever since I came here.”

“But you will come to yourself now, Katy. The time is growing short. Our Adirondack boys will be going home soon, and Fred must be in school too. Let us enjoy these days. We may never come here again.”

“There has been something deeper than what the world calls enjoyment in these passing days, — something which has impressed me anew with the mysterious kinship of certain souls, a kinship which the change of worlds cannot alter. Arena Remington lives in her children as few mothers do, or can. It seems as though she herself brooded over these hills, and daily glimpses of her spiritual face were granted me.”

“I do not want you drawn away by spirit faces, Katy dear. You have seemed strange ever since Alex was married.”

“I shall be all right when we are at home once more. I have not rested as I should; and, Charles, I have forgotten my regular walks to the Spring. I

will try to do better, and think of these events as natural."

"I ran across Mr. Stapleton this morning. He is stopping for a few days at the Old Stage Tavern. You remember how suddenly he disappeared three years ago. He has had terrible experiences. George turned out badly, and the old man's heart is almost broken. He was called home then to help him out of some trouble. He talks about it like a child, or one whose mind is in chaos."

"How thankful we ought to be for good children!"

"Yes, Katy, even if they do get married young."

"I thought Maud was going to take an independent course, and the Marshall talks have not troubled me at all; but last night I heard Mr. Marshall ask Maud for an hour, and there was more than friendly feeling in his voice. He said, 'I go to-morrow: will you give me an hour?' and she walked with him to the end of the piazza, where they sat and talked until almost ten o'clock. He takes the morning stage, I believe, and — there they are coming up from the Spring now!"

"Marshall is a young man of excellent talents; but I confess I want to banish any young man who would tempt our only daughter from us. Maud is the very apple of my eye."

"He has come round to her ways of thinking, and that, of course, is a compliment to Maud. There have been no discussions this time that could ruffle the temper."

"It may be only the interest of congenial minds in the great topics of the day that attracts them. I sel-

dom see Marshall speaking to any one else. He does not seem to be a genuine lover of his race."

Mr. Marshall and Miss Raynor stop on the croquet ground and take a turn at the balls. Maud is a skilful player, and her movements are the embodiment of grace. They play until the coach is seen coming from the Old Stage Tavern. The young man has done his packing, and his room is ready for another. Mrs. Raynor watches the adieus. They seem careless and easy, and as Mr. Marshall turns away, Maud hails a young girl who has just tripped down the steps, a water-bottle in her hand.

"Come and play awhile, Miss Wentworth?"

"I must go to the Spring after fresh water for Aunty. She is not well this morning. Then if she can spare me I shall be glad to play."

Maud drops her mallet, and running to the side of the young girl they walk down the planks arm in arm. The coach passes. Mrs. Raynor sees everything. Yes, it is Mr. Marshall on the outside. He lifts his hat, and turning looks back, — at the hotel? No; Mrs. Raynor plainly sees that his eyes rest on no massive pile of wood and stone. Two young girls in pretty morning-dresses and wide sun-hats hold the blue eyes until the coach is hidden by the hindering woods. On returning, the girls play awhile. Aunty wants to sleep, and Mabel can play as well as not. Then, as Maud discovers her father and mother carrying the hammock to the pines, she excuses herself with a promise to meet her new friend later, and follows them. Mabel gets a minute occasionally to talk to her brothers. She trips down the walk with Flint as he

goes to the Old Stage Tavern after the mail. Time can never hang heavily on the hands of a helpful girl like Mabel.

As Maud nears her parents she asks if they want her, or if they are going into the woods for a real lovers' sit-down by themselves. She is welcomed right heartily in a single breath by Mr. and Mrs. Raynor, and taking a chair she sits near them. It is evident that she wishes to confide some weighty secret. They make it easy for her by opening the way.

"People are beginning to leave. The coach was full this morning. Could n't Marshall wait a few days longer?"

"He goes to a new parish and needs time to get settled before the work opens."

"He ought to have asked until October, as you did."

"These old established places never break their original order. Vacation ends with the last Sunday of August."

"Marshall has quite captivated the House by his preaching this summer. I have heard it talked of in comparison with Mr. Winters's. Of course, nobody can ever fill the place of young Rossville's friend; but Marshall has given excellent discourses."

"Don't you think he has improved since he was here before?"

"Yes; he is less nervous, more self-contained."

"I mean, in spirit. He seems to have been refined and softened by the discipline of the years. Taking to himself the larger views of life and Providence, he has been moulded in a measure by their spirit."

"I suppose you have had no debates this summer?"

“There has been nothing to debate about. We think alike now.”

“He does not accept the faith of the Ancient Brotherhood?”

“There is no difference between his philosophy of religion and mine.”

“How then can he stay in the old fellowship?”

“He is quite at home there. All the young men are with him, and many of the older ones.”

“But is it honest to subscribe to a creed which you do not believe?”

“He tells me they put their own interpretation into the words, — believe with such mental reservations as enlightened reason makes necessary.”

“He would be wiser and more saintly to enter a church where he would not be troubled by a creed requiring mental reservations.”

“Old associations hold him, — the ties of family, and the prestige of historic names; it is a great change to make, for one who is wedded to an established order.”

“A change needed by the inner revolution. You can't raise magnolias in Iceland. The tree and the climate must correspond.”

“When the climate has so modified that the warmth of summer is enjoyed, it is congenial, no matter by what name it is called. And, father, you are doing the same thing which you count dishonest in Mr. Marshall.”

“I am not a leader, but a simple layman. And Meadowville has no church to which I could go if I left the fold in which I was born.”

“Let us drop the question of churches. I want to talk about something else. Mr. Marshall has, in an intellectual and business-like fashion, talked with me about the establishment of a partnership; but I can see no way in which it can be effected unless he comes into my church. Women preachers are not welcomed in his. I should have everything to give up for which I have toiled and to which I have aspired.”

“Maud, dear,” said her mother, “did you say Mr. Marshall had talked about a partnership, without the only possible cohesion of such a partnership,—love?”

“I did not say that, mother; but we are both educated for professional life. He has already won his laurels. Of course there is much to be thought of, that does not come into an ordinary marriage. We must first see if the conditions can be satisfactorily adjusted. As I have not yet begun the work of my profession, he thinks I can find an outflow for my religious desire by pouring it through him,—by entering all the avenues of his work in which a woman can serve without breaking denominational rules or incurring censure. I can exhort in the devotional meetings and speak in the woman’s missions and the young people’s societies. So far as he is concerned he believes that a woman ought to do what she is fitted for. He would like to share the pulpit with me.”

“Let him leave the narrow fold and join the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood, and he can. Tell him about the Tracys in England. They went there for study, but must make their way, and so Mr. Tracy

took a church. He preached morning and evening. On a certain day, for some reason he was unable to preach in the evening. The wardens had heard that Mrs. Tracy sometimes preached in America, and they ventured to invite her to conduct the evening service. She was so sweet and gracious and persuasive, she moved their hearts in such Christian fashion, that they invited her to take the evening service during the remainder of their stay. She took it a year, and her hands sparkle with the diamonds they gave her on parting, in every gleam of which she can see the loving eyes of her devoted people."

"Oh, mother, Mr. Marshall would not like to be eclipsed in that way. He is a man; and for so many centuries man has been the head, it would be hard to see a woman rise above him, even though she were his wife."

"There should be no thought of above or below. I do not understand that Mrs. Tracy rose above her husband. She supplied the power which he lacked. Man is not whole until his life is rounded by woman's grace and love; and nobody needs this enlargement so much as the minister. The churches would thrive tenfold better if they were fed from woman's heart and brain as well as man's. I would see Mr. Marshall in the moon before I would give up my profession!"

"Mother dear, you are emphatic!"

"When Mr. Marshall's heart is ploughed to its lowest deeps by the share of a great love, he will not premise and potter and arrange in this way. He will give the woman who stirs his devotion her full half of

life. In his abandon he will be ready to surrender all, not reckoning his own earthly gains."

"But if the woman has something of man's judgment because of education and discipline, she may desire to fill the roll of surrender and overflow."

"In that way, Maud, education simply deepens the ruts of her world-old service. She has always surrendered, and been meek and yielding. She deserves a chance for the use of her faculties. She is something more than man's appendage."

"We have been balancing this matter. Nothing is settled. It may all end in talk."

"It should end in talk, my daughter, unless he can prove a nobler love."

"Some of the happiest marriages are those which are prefaced by a little sensible planning. Your sense of right, dear mother, would not be satisfied if father was unjust in any way. You believe alike on the property question, and so all the little money arrangements run smoothly. When the new house was built, the deed was made out in your name. I remember how gallantly father declared you had helped him earn it. Mr. Marshall and I have talked that question over. He had some experiences while in college which convinced him that an independent purse is needed by everybody, young or old, man or woman; and he says his wife shall never have to ask him for money. A certain sum shall be sacredly set apart to her, to use in her own independent way."

"That is all very well. But while Mr. Marshall promises to furnish the money, the very terms of a union between you would cut off your professional

income. You have put thousands into your education, besides the heart's love and desire, and it is asking a most unreasonable condescension when Mr. Marshall even hints merging your personality in his, so that your years of preparation shall be of no use to the world."

"But I want you to see, mother dear, how large he is in some directions where men are small—or is it only thoughtlessness? Half the husbands, and more, dole out money to their wives as though they had no claim upon the family purse. I think the woman who keeps her house is as much a producer as though she had a professional income. How soon this is found out when the busy hands are folded, and hirelings come to take her place and do her tasks, without the love with which she consecrated them!"

"I am glad of all the growth of thought which Mr. Marshall demonstrates; but when he asks a young lady to give up a profession and pour her personality through him, she should turn the tables. Ask him how he would like to give up his profession and content himself with speaking in the devotional meetings, the missions, and at the young people's society; and when he is ready to yield his life-work for love of her, she can afford to believe in his honesty."

"Why, mother dear, you have not lived with a lawyer, 'lo, these many years,' without absorbing his profession. There ought to be a partnership at once. What shall we name it?"

"The Raynor Family!" exclaimed Maud's father. "Alex comes in by virtue of regular study, and mother and daughter win their titles by sheer brill-

iance of intellect. We'll have the sign up at once. Instead of 'Raynor & Son,' it shall be 'The Raynor Family.'"

"There comes Fred, with a hurt of some sort. I can't bear to hear a boy cry," said Maud.

"I jammed my finger, helping Dennis."

"Which one of the partners shall put on the bandage?" said 'Squire Raynor.

Already the mother's fine linen handkerchief was shorn of one of its hems, and Fred's finger was done up while a less dexterous hand would have been dimly feeling after a rag.

"Just so much more deftly will she handle the symbolic implements, — the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the sandals of peace. Do not surrender your armor, my daughter. No other can wear it for you."

"I have no idea of surrender, dear father. I prize too highly the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free. Thank you both for speaking plainly. Now I will find Mabel Wentworth, and spin the balls until they will look like things of life. We shall work out the problem according to eternal laws. Do not have a particle of fear. We are thoroughly sensible, and as cold as the stars."

"Not much like our love affair, is it, Katy?"

"There is no love affair about it. It is a piece of cool calculation; an attempt to make a bargain with the advantages all on one side."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HUSH OF DEATH.

THERE was hurrying to and fro, and guest and helper were talking in bated breath as Mrs. Raynor began early in the morning to redeem her promise of regular walks to the Spring. A shadow lay across the sunrise glow, and the faces about her wore an ominous gloom. She hastened through the long hall, seeking the open air, in fear of some sorrowful tidings. Young Mr. Rossville rushed by, not knowing whom he passed or what apprehensive heart-beats followed him down the way to the Old Stage Tavern. The Spring seemed in the wrong direction, while unseen forces were attracting the heart of sympathy, as Kate essayed to keep her word and seek the refreshing draught. Half-way down the walk she met Mr. Winters.

“There is a shadow over the very grass at our feet, Mr. Winters! I dread the revelation, and yet I must know. Indeed, I do know already. Mrs. Rossville is dead.”

“Yes; they found her sleeping the restful sleep this morning.”

“‘Found dead, — dead and alone!
Nobody near! nobody near’?”

“Yes, she was alone; but she needed no one. Her face wore the peace of a quiet sleeper. Evidently the angel came without shock or pain.”

“I have feared this for years. She had heart trouble. I saw her once when a return to life seemed doubtful; and only a few days ago we met at the Spring, and I went through the wood-path with her, to learn that she needed to sit down occasionally, although she looked so strong. Climbing the hill was an effort which gave her short breath. We talked about her state of health, and she expressed great joy that she had been spared to see her daughters enter the borderland of womanhood, where they would be able to do without a mother. Their education, too, was well advanced, and they would go on without her stimulus, knowing her great desire to see them true and accomplished women.”

“Mrs. Hart, being so much older than Susie and Helen, can give them motherly counsel. She is a woman of good judgment, much like her mother.”

“How soon we begin to fill the places of our departed with the heart and toil of others!”

“It is life, Mrs. Raynor. Some one must take up the fallen sceptre, even though it is inadequately borne. My wife is no such motherly soul as her sister was; and yet she does what she can to supply the missing mother-love to the Wentworth children.”

“She is not like Arena, and yet she constantly suggests her. I have lived apart with my friend of St. Stephen until Mr. Raynor has great fear for my health. He thinks the land of dreams holds altogether too much of me for human comfort.”

As Mrs. Raynor and Mr. Winters talked, they were walking toward the Spring. That he had taken his pint from the sparkling water was no hindrance to this swift return. He would be ready for another draught by the time he had spanned the descending planks. They sit a moment under the balcony, and the ominous shadow seems brooding there also. Looking across the meadow, they descry the figure of a man sitting on a low stone near the dense copse bordering the lake. His head is bowed, and his whole aspect forlorn and dejected. There is immovable silence about him. Mrs. Raynor adjusts her pocket-glass, and discovers Dr. Rossville. She had divined that it was he, gone away alone to think about this awful mystery of death. Her desire to hear him some word of comfort was so intense that she started to her feet. "I will go to him," she said. "He needs the help of some heart that has suffered."

Mr. Winters, living so much of his life among sickness and bereavement, knew better the soul's first need of solitude.

"His own thought with God will be best for him now. When the shock has spent itself a little, human sympathy can be of some avail."

"Oh, it is so hard to bear it alone! and yet I know we must. I myself have hidden away, refusing to see my best friends until I could gain possession of myself; and yet I never see a soul in trouble that I do not want to bear the cup of consolation."

"Human sympathy, so deep and strong, is not always wise. Much of the consolation offered at funerals is like water spilled on the ground. Grief must have

its way before the soul can appropriate the heavenly helps."

"See! the old Doctor has risen, and is staggering along like a blind man. He is coming this way. I *will* go and meet him; he needs help *now*."

Mrs. Raynor trips across the dewy aftermath, forgetful of herself in her absorbing sympathy. She makes the larger portion of the dividing distance, when she meets the owner of these delightful hills.

"Folks are pretty much all gone," says the Doctor, absently. "It will be silent as death here in a few days. Have you been to the Spring? I'm going there; I'm faint."

Mrs. Raynor turned and walked silently beside the tottering old man, who seemed to have aged ten years since she last saw him. Mr. Winters had waited, in the dim hope that his office of comforter might not be unavailing even now.

"You're out early, Mr. Winters; I hope you are not faint."

Mr. Winters drew the refreshing draught, while Dr. Rossville submitted to be waited on like a helpless child.

"That's reviving. There's something in the Bible about living water. Can you say it, minister?"

"'Whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.'"

"I don't know so much about that water as I do about the New Bethesda, and I guess I need it. She died last night."

“Yes, Doctor; we all need to drink from the fountain of immortal life when we see ‘the life that now is’ slipping away from us.”

“I always thought I should go first, Mary was so much younger. I’m not prepared for this.”

“None of us are prepared for these separations, even though we may have thought of their possibility many times. They come upon us like the shock of fate. There is only one help; that is a firm trust in Him who is the resurrection and the life, and who has said, ‘Because I live, ye shall live also.’”

“You think she’s alive? She looks cold and dead.”

“The body, which is only the house the spirit lives in, or rather the machine which it uses in the work of life, is dead; but the spirit never dies. That lives right on in the midst of new conditions and improved opportunities.”

“Do you believe that of everybody, good and bad?”

“Yes; of everybody. Even the dead heathen have a chance to see the Christ and learn the lessons of his redeeming grace.”

“She was a remarkably good woman. I guess the Lord will find a pleasant place for her. But I wanted her to live and see prosperous days. She’s had too much hard work.”

“No prosperous days of earth can equal the glory and satisfaction of the heavenly inheritance.”

“Do you think so too, Mrs. Raynor?”

“Oh, Doctor, ‘eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the glory’ of the immortal country. I believe with all my heart; and I have hosts of beloved ones over

there. It is not far, — just a step across the narrow stream.”

“No, it is not far for an old man like me, I know that; but it is hardest for them that stay behind.”

They prevail upon the Doctor to return to the New Bethesda, where Mrs. Raynor sees that he has breakfast in a quiet room alone. The guests feel the shadow, and there is a hush over everything. Maud and Mabel Wentworth have already been down to the Old Stage Tavern to see if any offer of help can make the way easier for Susie and Helen. They come in with the soft step of thoughtful sympathy, and while none care for breakfast, they go to the dining-hall, knowing that the demands of the hour will require strength and an even pulse. Mr. Gaston moves the chairs with more than his usual quiet, and the waiters talk in bated breath as they gather in little groups about the hall. It is the old and yet ever awesome visitation whose frequency takes no sharpness from the arrow, and no sting from the hearts it pierces.

The Raynors and Winterses repair to a quiet corner of the piazza, as is the custom of many of the guests after the breakfast-hour.

“This is the first time these hills have been overshadowed by death during my summer visits among them,” said Mr. Raynor.

“We are not removed from the invasion of the old conqueror even here,” said Mr. Winters. “It seems a happy holiday prolonged; but more than once we have had sudden reminders that the laws of life and death hold us all, even among these invigorating hills and close by the life-giving Spring. The daughter of

one of the literary women of New York died here. She came an invalid, but would have been helped and probably restored, had she taken care of herself. But she would not conform to the needs of her own weakness. She took long walks, engaged in all the pastimes, the dances, the theatrical performances, necessitating late hours, and the water had no chance to exert its healing properties. She was a bright girl, thoroughly alive to every interest, and it seemed impossible for her to give up to the demands of sickness. Another, a young lady from Boston, came too late and lived but four days. These events shadow the house for a day or two, but the wheels go on again as before. In Mrs. Rossville's case it will be different. She was one of the centres of interest here, — one of the forces making this place prosperous and popular. Her children will not spring up at once from this blow. They loved and honored their mother."

"The Old Stage Tavern can scarcely run without her. She has had her steady hand on everything there for many years," remarked Mrs. Raynor.

"I suppose Susie will take the head; or perhaps they will have a housekeeper. It was fortunate for young Mr. Rossville that he could have his aunt at the head of the New Bethesda. A young, vigorous and fashionable woman, interested in the house and all who come to it, — she has been of immense help to him," said Mrs. Winters.

"Mother, Susie and Helen are going to wear mourning. They have that to think about now, in the midst of their trouble. Mabel and I are going to Batesville to do the shopping for them."

“Many people think that mourning is a shield to them. If they wear it people have respect for their sorrow, and they are not expected to go to places of amusement or entertainment, but can have time for their grief. It certainly has an advantage in this way.”

“But, mother, it is such a trouble, when you are too much crushed to think of dress.”

“I know it, my daughter; and for that reason, and because it is an example very hard for the poor to follow, our family never puts it on.”

“I have never worn crape,” remarked Mrs. Winters, “and the simple black which I put on when my mother went away I have never changed. One after another of my family followed her in such quick succession that my shadow stayed.”

“That team is for us, Mabel,” said Maud; and the two young ladies went away on their helpful errand. There was little that the kindness of friends could do. What was once the sole office of neighborly affection, now belonged to the paid professional. Mrs. Raynor and Mrs. Winters walked down to the Old Stage Tavern, but it was only that they might weep with Susie and Helen. However great their desire, they could furnish no assistance.

A few days later there was a new grave in the Rossville family burying-ground, near the Old Stage Tavern. The granite shaft would bear another name, but time could not efface the influence or the memory of the serene woman who had filled her home with rare faithfulness and an uncomplaining service.

“How deceptive are appearances, Katy,” said 'Squire

Raynor, as he turned homeward after the burial of Mrs. Rossville. On the way he had encountered Mr. Cutter, who came to the Spring but a little while before because his wife and her minister insisted on his coming. He had looked like a ghost, while Mrs. Rossville seemed in perfect health. Now, he was walking along the planks with a vigorous step, while his face seemed altogether changed. The pale, pinched look was gone. A fresh color overspread it; and had Mr. Raynor seen him for the first time, he would have said, "That man is in perfect health." The improvement was the more noticeable, as Mr. Cutter had removed to the Old Stage Tavern, and for several days had not been seen by the friends who tried to invest him with a degree of their faith in the New Bethesda.

"What a change!" said Mr. Raynor, looking Mr. Cutter in the face, as though to assure himself that Dr. Rossville's infidel stood before him.

"Yes, I do look better; that's so."

"What do you think now of the virtues of the New Bethesda?"

"Well, — I've been under the influence of the old man, and he's enough to make a stone believe. I don't know but it's faith cure, instead of water cure. He talks in such a way, as though he knew all about it, that before you know it you are thinking just as he does. I own up: the Spring is a marvel. I've heard Mr. Winters tell his story, but it slipped off me without striking in. I didn't half believe him; and now the water has done for me bigger things than the minister ever claimed for himself. Yes, I'm a con-

vert. I shall blow for the New Bethesda. Just look at me. I can blow. Positively, I feel so well I'm tempted to run races, or climb the trees, or something, just to get rid of superfluous strength."

Mr. Cutter walked rapidly on, as though to prove his boastful assertion. The young ladies, Maud and Mabel, who had lingered reading the inscriptions on the old gravestones, now overtook Mr. and Mrs. Raynor.

"You ought to have stayed too, dear mother. It is interesting to linger among old family graves and read the records. The Rossville fathers for several generations sleep in that small enclosure. Mabel says her ancestors have a family lot in Rhode Island, on the farm where they settled one hundred and fifty years ago. Their negro servants sleep at their feet."

"Yes, it is interesting to linger among old family graves; but the custom of private burying-grounds is not a safe custom. The land may pass into other hands, and strangers will care little for the graves. I have seen marble head-stones broken down by herds of cattle pasturing among the sacred relics. It is better to keep up the community of interest so necessary to our life when the outer vestments of that life are laid down. Where a whole town or city is interested in the place of graves, it will be carefully guarded."

"Our own private ground is likely to be despoiled in the near future," said Mabel. The farm, still in the family name, is owned by a woman. There are no sons in the immediate line, and the dear old place may yet be ploughed by strangers."

“There is no near prospect of change in the Ross-ville grounds,” remarked Mr. Raynor. “Hugh’s sturdy young son gives promise of bearing on the name; and Mr. Ellison and Mr. Albert may come to reflect upon the future now. The loss of their mother will give them serious thoughts. It is very sad to see an old home pass into the hands of strangers, either through loss of property or death. It would be a blessed thing if something could be done to perpetuate human homes. They are often quite unnecessarily broken at the death of the head. Failure to make a will that shall secure the home to the family has scattered many a happy group of children.”

“Ambition to shine as a benefactor has made many an unwise will. Some hungry institution has swallowed at a gulp what would have been shelter and bread to the prudent mother and her brood,” said Mrs. Raynor.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FORETHOUGHT.

“I AM lonesome, mother, now Mabel Wentworth has gone.”

“And so are we lonesome without Mr. and Mrs. Winters. Perhaps you can take a sister’s part with the Wentworth boys. They will be lonesome too.”

“Small chance for that. They are running with water-pitchers nearly all the time. It is amazing, the amount of water required in the private rooms. Mabel says the boys almost carry a pitcher on each finger, and even then they have to climb the stairs innumerable times. People are so thoughtless of the weariness of those who serve them.”

“Not all, Maud. The other night I was talking with that beautiful Mrs. Hill, from Chicago, when Paul Wentworth passed, bearing a pitcher. ‘Take one to my room, Paul,’ said she, ‘and that will save a run over the stairs.’”

“She is one of a thousand. I heard the lady next door to us scold Flint because he did not come quicker after the ring of her bell. ‘There were several calls almost at once,’ said Flint. ‘I answered them in order, coming as soon as I could.’ He was so calm, she quieted down.”

“Some people forget all Christian rules in the treatment of those who serve them. If they only stopped to reflect, they would see that a domineering course is not the one to insure faithful and happy service. Flint Wentworth will not go gladly to Mrs. Dingham’s room, now he has heard her scold. He will fly to help me. Your father and I made it the rule of our home, and of our treatment of those who toil for us, ‘to put yourself in his place;’ ‘do as you would be done by,’ were the circumstances reversed.”

“And just see how our girls love us! Dinah would lay down her life for us.”

“Yes; ever since we nursed her in sickness, and you took her place to save it for her, she has not been able to do enough for us. ‘Powerful kindness,’ she said to me one day, ‘takin’ care ob poor ole black Dinah.’ I told her black Dinah had taken care of us for many years, and we were only paying a debt. Oh, will the world ever learn to rule by love!”

“When woman becomes the teacher of religion, mother, and not until then.”

“I am greatly interested in those boys serving so graciously here, and if we are prospered, mean to help them in their education.”

“They seem so far removed from the class which we usually assist that I should not dare offer them money.”

“Worthy young men seeking to educate themselves will not repel kindness, however independent they may be in spirit. The student is one whom all true Christians desire to aid. He should be kept free from annoying care of how he shall be fed and clothed, and

be able, unembarrassed, to devote his thought to the work in hand. My heart has been almost broken in hearing the stories of starvation and self-denial which some students have to tell. In the midst of exhaustive mental work, and when the waste of the system is very great, they board themselves, — live on crackers and milk, or mush and molasses. Many a young man has aged before his time, because of this starvation process. It has taken years from his useful life. Oh, I want all the students well cared for, especially those who are to help the world's deepest need! You and Alex had the comforts of your own home, and an easy way. We will remember those who lack these blessings."

"Yes, mother dear, we will remember them. Only show me how, and I will devote my salary to the education of the Wentworth boys. They belong to the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood."

"They belong to a secret order of union which holds certain persons living in the same 'sphere,' as the Spiritualists would phrase it. You confess to being drawn to Mabel as you are not to other young ladies here. It is a union of souls. Those so attracted are on the same plane of life. It is the fellowship of approval."

"There comes father with a pile of letters. Read them all, quick, father dear."

"Alex has settled down to work, but the new grooves are a little too deep for him. He wants his father's counsel; and from his description it is altogether too intricate a case for a young lawyer to handle."

“That means home. We cannot stay until the middle of September, can we?”

“No; the case comes up for trial too soon for that. I shall need a little time on it.”

“We were just saying we were lonely without the Winterses and Miss Wentworth. We shall be ready to go at any time now. What else have you?”

“Oh, Willie and Richmond are keeping house with Dinah. They had a ‘jolly camp,’ but are glad of the comforts of home, and ‘windows with mosquito bars.’ Poor fellows! they have been sweet food for insects. The others are business letters, except this one;” and he tosses it in Mrs. Raynor’s lap.

“California! It must be from brother Jo’s big boy. We have no other correspondents in California.”

She tears open the envelope and looks for the name. “It is from Gertrude! It is signed simply with her Christian name.”

Mrs. Raynor reads the letter, and her color comes and goes with the swift emotions that stir her heart. Maud busies herself with newspapers, and Mr. Raynor wisely refrains from interrupting questions. After the reading, Katy leans her head against the protecting chair-back and closes her eyes. Charles knows she will speak in her own good time, though he is so eager to hear from Gertrude Ingalls, that it is hard to keep silent.

“Good news, Katy?” he has to ask.

“Yes, — in one sense good. Gertrude is coming North, and wants to see us in Meadowville on her way. She asks for directions, and says she wants to confide a case in ‘Squire Raynor.’ She does not mention

Robert, nor say whether she was ever married to him. She says she has passed eventful years since we parted in Boston. There is an undertone of mystery about the letter. Of course she will tell us everything when she comes. I must answer her at once. She wishes to make the journey in September if possible. This letter, coming by way of Meadowville, has been delayed."

"I think we had better start home in a day or two. A case from Gertrude Ingalls is somewhat provocative of interest. Beautiful Gertrude in the hands of the law!"

"What do you suppose it means, father?" said Maud.

"Very likely, that the adorable Robert Nickerson has proved as fickle after marriage as before."

"Oh, Charles, I cannot think that, after his penitential letter," said Mrs. Raynor.

"From what you told me, I judge his letter was altogether too oratorical."

"It seemed genuine penitence. I believed him sincere."

"Doubtless he meant to be sincere, and was, until some artful Minnie took possession of him. There are plenty of men, Katy, who are just like weather-cocks, — turned by the wind that happens to be strongest for the time."

"I hope Minnie Swan did not follow him to California."

"Minnie Swan did go to California; Mr. Stapleton told me so. She went there to settle after her marriage. But California is a big State. Plenty of room in it for her and Robert Nickerson to keep apart."

"If she went to the State, she would go to the town if it was a possible thing. If she did not draw him into her net by her eyelids, she would flood him with letters if she found out his address."

"You don't seem to have much faith in little Minnie."

"I have seen Gertrude Ingalls's tears, Charles, and the girl who caused them does not live in my world."

"I looked upon the girl as silly rather than sinful. Nickerson should have had poise enough to keep the even tenor of his way though beset by a dozen Minnie Swans."

"They don't grow by the dozen, Charles. You may sweep a whole State and not find another such girl as Minnie. She had no womanly reserve. Gertrude told me she poured out confidences to Robert which were simply amazing."

"Robert should have told her to seek her mother."

"But you know Robert was yielding and easy, afraid to offend."

"And so he let offence fall upon the girl he loved and was engaged to!"

"Yes, it was all wrong and awful! But I did believe in his penitence; and I hope now the case is a property case, and not anything between her and Robert."

"Perhaps she has a claim on a gold mine, or a thousand acres of vintage."

"Let us go and pack the trunks, said Maud. Start to-morrow, I say. Oh, mother, how shall I pack my —"

"Your what, Maud?"

"My portrait, to be sure. I did get her to crayon

me, — the chamber-girl, I mean. Have n't you missed me? I can make a bed like an artist; I've made hundreds of them, and gained all the time we wanted for the portrait."

"I hope you paid Miss Russ well for teaching you to make beds."

"We are both satisfied, mother, and we've had real good times together. One does not know how long the mornings are until he tries to capture an artist's time. There is time enough in this world for everything when we learn how to use it. Miss Russ is an interesting lady. Her father was a minister in the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood. We have talked whole histories, — in very sweet low tones, mother, for perhaps the next room held a late sleeper."

"You will have to carry the crayon in your hand."

"No, indeed. It is glassed and framed. I will get Mr. Rossville to pack it for me in excelsior, and a box near enough like a trunk to be checked."

"Don't ask Mr. Rossville. He is too busy a man to pack pictures for his lady guests."

"I may ask him for the materials, may I not? He is always accommodating."

"I will pack the portrait, Maud," said her father. "I am glad you were enterprising enough to obtain it. You are your mother's own child for successful planning."

"And before we go I want to ask Susie and Helen to visit us. It will be hard for them to go back to school so soon after their great sorrow. I think it would do them good to pass a few weeks in Meadowville this fall. If they can go when we do, all the better."

“Suppose you run down to the Old Stage Tavern now, and if they can go with us we will wait a few days longer, or until they are ready.”

“They will be all ready. They have been making dresses a long time, father.”

“They will need time to pack them; as much time as we have.”

“You forget the portrait, which must be put up with care.”

“I shall not forget anything that belongs to my daughter.”

“You are both quite willing, then, and I will go and ask them.”

“More than willing, Maud. I remember my promise to their mother; and though the girls do not need the guidance which would have been necessary had she left them then, my interest in them has deepened with the years, and I will do anything to make their sorrow lighter.”

Maud went out with a light heart, thinking the lines had fallen to her in pleasant places, and she had a goodly heritage, — an ample home, and parents who were always kind and considerate. She saw Helen in a hammock under the pines, and running to her divulged her errand in a girl's effusive way.

“I should be so glad to go,” said Helen; “but I do not see how we can. Susie is to stay with sister Mary the coming winter and attend school, and you know I must keep up my regular course in Boston, or fall behind. Mrs. Hart needs Susie; she takes mother's death very hard.”

“Let us go down to the house and talk it over with

Susie; maybe she will see a way to make the visit and do the school work too. You can go with us now, stay a few weeks, and make up the lessons."

"I fear I am not student enough for that."

"Helen, you are just as bright as a star; I know you can."

They talk with Susie. Maud urges and tries to overcome objections, but all to no purpose. Susie had one argument which Helen had not observed.

"Father is very poorly; we must not leave him for a long journey. I shall be anxious about him, and must keep within call. But some time, Miss Raynor, I do hope we can see you in your own home. I know it is a true home and a reliable friendship that invites us."

Maud had to return without the consent which she hoped for. The Rossville girls had such a deep and wholesome sense of duty, that personal pleasure could find no excuse for invading the sacred realm.

"We can take our own time; the girls will not go this year."

"This is the very year they need the change," said Mr. Raynor.

"It would seem so; but they follow strict lines of duty, and let personal pleasure stand aside."

"That is the stuff the true woman is made of."

"It is the kind of woman you are best acquainted with, is it not, father?"

For answer, 'Squire Raynor placed an arm around mother and daughter, and leading them to their rooms, helped about the packing in such a sensible way that the weariness, thus divided, was scarcely felt by either.

“I want to give Flint Wentworth some keepsake, Charles, for taking such good care of me during the sleepy days. Do you care if I let him have my watch?”

“You had better give him money, Katy. The boys have a long course before them.”

“I will do that, indeed; but money he would spend in his education. I want him to have some token from the woman who knew and loved his mother.”

“Yes; give him the watch, and have a new one. You have carried it so long it will be like giving a part of your very life.”

“That is what I want to do, — give him something so closely associated with me that it shall be a kind of talisman to the boy.”

“Flint took care of you, I know, mother dear,” said Maud; “and you think he is most like his mother; but the boy at the Spring is as bright as the water he dips. I shall give my remembrance to him.”

“And I,” said Squire Raynor, “shall give mine to Paul. He is a silent, introspective boy; but there are deep wells in his nature, and if I am not mistaken in my reading we shall hear from him yet. Who knows but the voice of the mother, repressed because of her womanly care of her children, will find the speech in them which was denied to her individual lips?”

“I believe that is sometimes true. You know how earnestly Mark Staples desired to be a minister; there were insurmountable obstacles in the way. But the desire blossomed in his son, and Everett Staples has the homage of all who listen to his voice. I hope the poet may find speech in some of Arena’s children.”

“What matters it whether the truth is uttered in numbers or in homely prose, if the world receives the needed help?”

“The world of letters ought to feel Arena’s power, if the natural order is sustained, and each tree produces after its kind.”

“I make no doubt it will, Katy; but we must wait for the fruit to ripen.— This is quite a speaking likeness, Maud. We will tell people it was painted by one of the chamber-maids at the New Bethesda House; and when we add a word about the students and Prince Gaston, they will think we have summered on Mount Olympus instead of a green hill away down East.”

“Kingdom Station suggests the gods, does it not, father?”

“Yes; and the name of the Spring has deeper meanings than are ever connected with masquerading heathen deities. The old Doctor gets his history a little mixed, but it is all the more interesting for that. ‘An angel came down at times and troubled the water.’ The sick man whom Christ healed said he had no *man*, when the water was troubled, to put him in.”

“Angels are ministers. I think it was a mighty angel who led you to the pool and made you drink and live. The Doctor is all right, if he does talk about the angel putting the sick folks in. There are other angels than the winged ones in heaven. We meet a good many of them in our rambles about this green and swinging world. We have met them here, more than we can name, have we not, mother?”

“For a time I thought the whole hill alive with voices and radiant with angel wings.”

“You needed holding fast, then. But, mother, are you not just dying to see the boys? I am; I can hardly wait. If we take the first train,—and we will,—in two days more those blessed tramps will feel the strength of their sister’s arms. Fred is as eager to see them as I am. He whimpered when I mentioned the near departure. He had been over everything a hundred times, he said, and Rich and Will not here to help him. Shall it be the first train in the morning, father?”

“You have said so. I suppose it would be ungracious to oppose the oracle.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

EVENTFUL YEARS.

IT is not easy to wait four years for the solution of a problem or the revelation of a mystery. But Providence never hurries. The inexorable law is fulfilled in its own time and way. The thing done in secret comes to light, the sin we thought covered by some adroit sentence confronts us in its naked deformity, darker for the long delay. Our untruths and half-truths are the scorpion whips whose sting strikes home in the day of reckoning. There is sometimes error in the court of human justice; the Divine court never makes mistakes. The sophist is unmasked, the buried wrong laid bare. No false premise helps to change darkness into light. The excuses framed in the midst of the crooked way have no power to turn it into the highway cast up for the redeemed. Only that penitence which means a forsaken sin is accepted in the court of Heaven's justice. Plausible words are the soul's alluring tempters to deeper and darker crimes.

Gertrude Ingalls writing to her friend Mrs. Catharine Raynor that she had passed eventful years since last they met, speaks not only of herself but for the experience of the world. All years are eventful years in larger or lesser degree, and often most event-

ful when we least reckon them so. That year when your truth, which should be the vertical column without the swaying of a single hair, took on the character of the leaning tower of Pisa, much that you thought unrelated to the path you would cover was thereby overshadowed, buried beyond resurrection, utterly lost. Life is a network of related possibilities; and of the characteristics of man, as truly as of the union of the race, it may be said, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." Only the high levels of absolute right are God's accepted levels. To these he is perpetually calling His children by all the voices of experience, entreaty, and rebuke. If His voice were heeded and followed, what oceans of tears would be assuaged, what menacing heart-aches healed!

Maud Raynor, taking on the office of the minister, finds herself in the midst of relations of which her pure home-life had given her no key. She is alarmed as she watches the course of her young people, so volatile, so given to the pursuit of pleasure, with small evidence of that serious undertone which swayed and fashioned her own youth. She sees the future of religion in perilous hands, and at once centres the efforts of her Christian womanhood upon the young. She is amazed that the Sunday-school takes on the air of a holiday party, with scarcely a sign of the reverence suggested by the place and the work it is set to do. She reorganizes, but tries most of all to put the living spirit into the wheels. To impress the young with some sense of relationship with God and each other which shall stir emotions deeper than a

laugh, is her first essay. It is a serious and prolonged task. When she sees signs of root in the more thoughtful, she takes them apart, and by instructions and persuasions sealed by the witness of prayer strives to make of them a leavening centre for the larger company. Year after year she pours out her soul, and the fruitage is not yet. Signs of improvement indeed encourage her, — here and there a really converted life doing daily Christian work; but oh, she thought the truth was such an open book that the world waited only to read it, to believe and live! She had invested her enthusiasm in the small church in Edenville, as many another hopeful young servant has done before and will do again, to feel a degree of disappointment in the slow results. Giving herself wholly to the work, she could not understand the lack of consecration among her people. Maud was learning a lesson in heredity. Not every life is naturally set in the grooves of right as hers had been. She was born out of the very heart of love and honor; and of few of her people could that be said. They needed making over again before Divine grace could find unoccupied ground where to lodge. Sitting under the vines of home at the close of her fourth year of service, she gives voice to a little dejected sigh, and to the question, "What is it, my daughter?" answers, "I cannot convert my world fast enough to suit me, father."

"That is the experience of all reformatory workers. We have to learn God's patience. I sometimes think it must pain His great heart to wait so long."

"Why cannot the young see that there is no real

satisfaction in pleasure, — that only the everlasting truth and righteousness can yield sure happiness?"

"Because they are young. Thought and judgment are immature."

"I have tried to instruct, — to enlighten them."

"And there lies one of the most discouraging obstacles in the way of the moral teacher. Line upon line and precept upon precept may not have a feather's weight. Stern experience comes, and its lash strikes home conviction. When the young begin to reap the bitter fruits of their follies they see the meaning of the lessons that have been kindly set for them to learn."

"Is my office then meaningless, and my work of no avail?"

"Not that; experience seems to be the needed plough, striking down to primitive rock, that the great lessons may take root. When experience speaks, we remember how plainly we had been told all that we are now learning through bitterness and pain."

"I am becoming discouraged with myself, fearing that there is some lack in my fitness or my methods, that the fruits grow so slowly."

"You have carried your work too closely. You ought to have a radical change for a time. Vacations passed year after year within call of all the troubles of your people have not rested you sufficiently. Suppose you take an ocean voyage, — go to Europe for a few months; or, if you do not care for the extensive travel, go across and settle down in the atmosphere of the Scottish lakes."

"I do not want the big sea between me and all whom I love."

"It need not be. Your mother and I will go with you, and perhaps one of the boys. Richmond seems used up with his college studies. We will take him."

"I think I should find more refreshing in one look at the New Bethesda than all the Scottish lakes, with Europe thrown in."

"My daughter! are you so hungry for the old haunts? I have had the hardest work to stay at home four years, and have done so because you were so loyal to duty. I wish now, I had insisted on a break in the long strain. I see plainly it has been too long and too severe."

"If it were not wrong for me to go so far from my people, I would start to-morrow. Some of them would sicken and die, and what would they do without me?"

"What would they do if you should sicken and die? Duty to your people demands the best care of yourself."

"Do you think mother would like to go to the New Bethesda?"

"She never cares to go anywhere else. Willie and Fred teased her right gallantly to go to Chautauqua for the summer, and you saw how calmly she let the baby go off without her."

"How greatly we are influenced by association. Chautauqua is the fashion with Will's friends and Fred's, and they must go to Chautauqua. Rich did not want to go."

"Richmond got tired of the crowds, the rush, and the

hurry. I think he needs to rest in a place less like a school. The professors speak very highly of Richmond, — his mental gifts and scholarly tastes and application.”

“The best brain in the family, — I have always thought.”

“And the tenderest muscle. He needs physical training.”

“That is a delightful picture, is it not, father — mother leaning on Richmond’s arm?”

“Yes; there is but one more delightful, and that is a daughter walking with her father. I shall never forget my joy when you became tall enough to take my arm as we walked part of the way together in your school-days. I turned into my office with a stronger and happier heart, feeling the clinging touch of your hand.”

“Thank you, dear father. Let us go down the garden walk and settle this momentous question.”

“Perhaps they have some confidences we ought not to interrupt.”

“They have been walking, and reclining in the summer-house, for an hour; and if they have any more confidences they may share them with us.”

Mr. Raynor and Maud passed across the velvety lawn into the flower-garden. Richmond hailed them, —

“We have it all settled. Mother and I start for Kingdom Station to-morrow, if we can get ready so soon!”

“And we have it all settled, Mr. Capital of the Southern Confederacy. Father and I start for Kingdom Station to-morrow, and no ‘if’ about it. If you

want peace and union now and forever, hurry and get ready to go with us. Don't think you are going to steal off without us and take half the union with you."

"Honor bright, Maud? Are you really going?"

"As sure as the river flows."

"It does n't flow. It just trickles over pebbles and wet sand."

"Oh, Richmond, there are inner rivers which no August heats diminish! I wish you were not such a realist."

"This is a real question, and demands the plainest answer. Are you going, father?"

"Yes! That is what we came to tell you."

"There is not a single lion in the way, is there, mother?"

"Good! Rich is turning poet. Certainly he forgot his realism when he put in the lion."

"We feared you would be the lion, Maud, with your unflinching devotion to duty."

"I am going to turn duty into another channel, and see how the stream will flow."

"The New Bethesda will give you clear sight. Even our eyes are touched by strabismus when we are surrounded for too long a period by the same scenes. I have been trying to show Maud that she owes a duty to herself."

"If you have made her see it, father," said Richmond, "you can be set down as a miracle-worker. I wanted her with me in Chautauqua last summer, but she was as firm as the hills. Old lady Welch was likely to die, and Maud must crucify herself all summer, out of a mistaken sense of duty."

“I see, dear brother, because I must. In fact, I am alarmed at my condition, — not my health, that is stable, but my sight. Oh, Rich, I mean the vision of thought and feeling!”

“Look here, Sis. If you ride Pegasus in your sermons at the speed you are going this evening, I don't wonder those Edenville folks stick to their own whims. They can't understand you. Go afoot awhile, and I should n't be surprised if even some of those heedless young people would follow right after and maybe catch up with you.”

“I do go afoot. There was never a humbler disciple of the Nazarene. My whole soul is aflame with desire to follow him.”

“Get a ‘whole soul aflame’ and it will burn up. That is what ails you. You have agonized and desired, and dug up your beans hunting for the sprouts, until you're more a ghost than a live woman. It takes time to make a saint out of common material. It won't do to set up your double-refined Raynor conscience for a pattern for everybody.”

“Oh, Rich, a greater than the Raynor conscience has been set for our pattern! I go to the great head of the Church for the true example. I hide myself in him.”

“All right. But just now you need to hide in the woods around the New Bethesda. I'm glad you are going. I'll turn you into a first-class tramp before school-time again.”

“Oh, Richmond!”

“Yes; we'll climb the hills to Shaker-town without fatigue, reinforced by the New Bethesda. That's the

kind of tramp I mean. Oh, no, you need not sleep in the woods, or beg cold food. Though I'm not sure but it would do you good to sleep in the woods. A bed of spruce and all out-of-doors for breathing-room will do wonders in making tired students over new."

In this gay mood the Raynors make ready for the early train. But little preparation is required. Their housekeeping is orderly, and all have seasonable and abundant clothing.

They go by the way of Chautauqua, and see the boys, who are so full of the interesting life there that they are not tempted by the invitation to take the longer journey.

"The same, and yet not the same," says Mrs. Raynor. "Here is the Spring, but the band does not startle the echoes in its welcome to each home-coming coach. And that is not Ralph Wentworth. Oh, yes; of course the water is just as refreshing whether it is mixed with sentiment or common fact. Ralph has gone into business; I knew that. I did not expect to see Arena's boys. I have kept up the secret telegraphy. Paul and Flint are allowed to preach now; only think of it! They seemed half-grown boys four years ago. But here are the stable old faces, — Mr. Rossville unchanged, and Mrs. Lincoln not a day older. And here is Richard guarding the elevator; not a happier face anywhere. 'Always room for the Raynors.' I knew there would be. What a swarming hive the New Bethesda House is!"

"Did you see the improvements, mother?"

"I saw nothing but rushing waves of people. I'm

going down to see. This is a charming room; morning sunshine. I shall like it."

The large fireplaces with their ornamental tiles seem an unnecessary piece of decoration on this hot August night; but they have a purpose. The New Bethesda House is to be kept open as an autumn resort. One can make a long season now, from June until November; and the Old Stage Tavern keeps up its name and character by affording rest and shelter the year round.

"Oh, where are the familiar faces?" says Mrs. Raynor, as the four pass from office to Music Hall. A fine orchestra has taken the place of the brass band. Exquisite music—music to satisfy the artist—vibrates through the spacious hall each day. It is not Mr. Marshall at the piano; no, a stranger,—one of the orchestra. "How elegantly everybody is attired! Diamonds sparkle like rain-drops on an April day."

The guests seem to be pleasure-seekers,—the rich and care-free, who seek the springs and the mountains in summer. There is a large sprinkling of young people and children. Evidently families come together, without the special propelling need which sent 'Squire Raynor to the Old Stage Tavern twelve years before. If any are ill, the angel-haunted pool and the refreshing fare of the New Bethesda House have obliterated all outward signs. Portly and well-kept men, and care-free women who are clothed like queens, jostle the Raynors in the halls and about the wide piazzas. They look up occasionally for the recognition of a familiar face; but most of these perpetual motions are the figures of people whom they

know not. Looking down the tree-shaded way toward the Old Stage Tavern, Maud sees two young ladies walking briskly, and at once is sure they are Susie and Helen. The difference in height and the vigorous gait cannot be mistaken. She breaks away from the marching column, dropping Richmond's arm, and hastens to meet them.

"Well, I should think this was deserting a fellow in a strange crowd! Has Maud started for Shaker Village?"

"She sees the Rossville young ladies, and has gone down the walk to meet them."

"Take my arm, mother, and shelter me. I'm afraid of—all these people. Have n't you and father spoken of Miss Helen's beauty?"

"Yes, she is a very noticeable girl, — statuesque, father calls her, — with dreamy eyes and a pleasant face."

"I suppose Maud will bring her right here."

"Don't be afraid, Richmond. There are lovely girls in Meadowville."

"I won't look at them for ten years yet, mother."

"I thought you were looking quite approvingly on the little wood-nymph from Harrisville."

"Oh, I glory in her persistence. She is determined to have an education, and she works for it in ways that would frighten most young ladies. She and her brother drive eight or ten miles before most of us are out of bed, keep their places in the class, — near the very first scholars, too, — then drive home again at evening."

"That is noble, Richmond, — a perseverance that

wins in the march of life. I am glad you appreciate Flossie Whitney. There are not many like her. I have learned to love the girls through Maud's interest in Bessie."

"She is not a beauty as the world reckons beauty, but she is true and strong. They are almost here. How Maud chatters! She is getting the cobwebs off her sight already."

Maud brings the young ladies to greet her father and mother, and as Richmond has grown from boyhood to the stature of a man, she introduces him. He does not seem embarrassed, but talks easily, like one accustomed to society. The young Misses Rossville have come to see their father, who makes his home now at the New Bethesda House. They soon excuse themselves, and go to seek him. The Raynors pass in to supper. Here they see familiar faces among the waiter-girls, many of whom come year after year to this spot, where the toil is earnest and exacting, but where there are large opportunities. To the observing, it is a school for character study, and many a lesson in Christian ethics is unconsciously given here. Mr. Gaston fills the large hall with his ubiquitous serenity, and even the rattle of the china is softened by looking upon his face. He remembers old visitors, and gives the Raynors a favorable place for observation. Susie and Helen come in presently, and sit at the family table. Mrs. Raynor sees a figure far down the hall strikingly like Mr. Marshall, whom she had thought summering in Europe.

"Maud, did n't you tell me Mr. Marshall was going abroad this year?"

“Yes, mother; that was my last word from him. A rich parishioner wished him to accompany his young son.”

“He is in this hall, or I am greatly mistaken.”

“Perhaps he is.

‘The best laid plans o’ mice and men
Gang aft a-gley.’

Let us go down to the Spring just as soon as we leave the table. You will come with me quickly, won’t you, Rich?”

“Lunch-baskets and railway eating-rooms have not prepared me to leave this table quickly, Maud.”

“I shall go alone, then; and I am ready now. Meet me there, please.” And Maud hastens away.

“I hope Mr. Marshall’s presence is not going to wreck Maud’s summer,” says Mrs. Raynor, as they follow her down the walk.

“Why does not Maud make an end of the Marshall romance?” said Mr. Raynor. “She says she does not love him. They have been corresponding at long intervals these four years.”

“He interests her. It is the kind of coquetry going on between the two denominations which they represent. They have many things in common, and there is great mutual attraction, but no sign of coalescence.”

“The relations between them are a study in psychology!”

“Why not call it friendship? Can a man and woman have no friendly relations?” said Richmond.

“We might call it friendship, Richmond, if he had not talked of marriage.”

“The marriage failed to come to time, and the interest continues. I think it never was anything but friendship.”

“Yes ; the interest continues and the solution waits.”

“I am glad it waits,” said 'Squire Raynor. “Let us forget it.”

“How can we, with the parties in such proximity as a summer hotel affords ?”

“Find our interest in other directions, Katy.”

“I don't see but we must find our interest in each other. The Wentworths and Winterses are not here.”

“New people will dawn upon us, and maybe old ones return. I am sorry about Mr. Winters.”

“He may be well enough to come later in the season.”

“Mr. Rossville says the news from him is very discouraging. He has not seen a moment free from pain, and he was taken sick in May. The only respite he has is through the effect of anodynes.”

“What a story of suffering that tells, — not of him alone, but of poor Cornelia.”

“She impressed me as a woman who had suffered about enough.”

“God knows how many stripes each child of His can bear, and how many he needs.”

“You don't think Mrs. Winters a marked candidate for Divine discipline, do you, Katy ?”

“‘Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’ Cornelia has some work to do for which all these vales of Baca are preparing her.”

"I should like to see her have a little rest."

"You never will, Charles, until the hands are folded in the last rest. It is the lot of some people to be care-bearers in one way or another. She has never had children; but you can see that she gives Mr. Winters more care than some mothers give to a whole family."

"That comes naturally. Winters has been sick a great deal. He has told me how many times his wings had been clipped by sudden attacks of sickness in various forms. All through his early years he was trembling on the verge of consumption. Then came the trouble which these waters healed, and the last time we met him here he was yellow with malaria. Now, Rossville tells me, he is whittled down to a skeleton by sheer pain, and likely to be a cripple if he lives."

"He will have plenty of canes to lean on; he was always whittling canes. And one day when we laughed at him about it, Mrs. Winters said he could not see a pretty stick without wanting to make a cane of it. He finishes them with fancy heads and the brightest varnish when he gets home. And then all his friends are giving him canes, too. She said he had one made of a whale's tooth and ornamented with the black bone; one of the bread-tree, with ivory head; one of wood grown on Mt. Olivet; one of the window-sill of the old Hancock house, headed with gold; and one of Perry's flag-ship which was sunk on Lake Erie. A famous nephew of his sawed the wood under water when he was but fourteen years old, and before divers' apparatus was known."

“If we should see this propensity in a child, we should call it an indicator of destiny.”

“I suppose that is what it means in Mr. Winters. He is going to be lame and need the canes. Oh, Charles, don't you whittle another cane as long as you live! To see you limping on a crutch or a cane would break my heart!”

“I suppose Mrs. Winters has said that very thing. Women are always breaking their hearts. But she will have to live and bear it; and so would you, Katy, if such a misfortune should come to me.”

“It will be hard for Cornelia. She is proud of the fine physique and erect carriage of her husband. I have heard her say she always looked after him with admiration when he went down the street, and there was no gentleman so fine as to eclipse him.”

“What worship we receive! I wish I could believe we always deserve it.”

“How did Mr. Marshall pass us? There he is under the oaks, talking with Maud!”

“He must have gone through the woods at Jehu speed to reach the Spring before us. I know we left him in the dining-hall.”

“We have loitered, Charles, talking of our interesting friends. He might have gone through the short wood-path without running.”

“Maud belongs to me during this vacation,” said Richmond, “and I am going straight to her. Let us all go;” and the Raynors seat themselves under the shadowy oaks. The water-boy has gone to supper, and Mr. Marshall, with a grace altogether winning, brings the shining glass in the silver receiver. They

talk of many things while caressing the delicate tumblers."

"Charles, these pretty shells are made to order; see! There is some kind of design on them." Mrs. Raynor tries to decipher the faint tracery in the gathering twilight. Mr. Marshall has seen them before, and comes to her assistance.

"The face is that of Dr. Rossville, the man whose faith is centred in the New Bethesda; and on the reverse side is the Spring house, with the trees about it.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT A SPECTACLE FOR CRITICISM.

FROM her sunny window Mrs. Raynor saw Dr. Rossville creeping feebly along, and was startled at his changed aspect. The years had written indelible lines on face and form. He seemed like one whom some great sorrow had aged prematurely, and Kate remembered the bowed form down by the lake on the morning when the shadow settled over all the hill, from the sudden death of Mrs. Rossville. That vision of the strong man stricken by grief had become the abiding presence. The vigor of past years had departed, and henceforth he must lean on his staff as he passed toward the sunset. Mrs. Raynor went down to the piazza, sure she should meet him there. He had walked to the Spring, and was wearily resting in a shady corner. The morning was warm, and it was not altogether the weakness of age that had overcome him.

“I know you,” he said, as she drew near, — “the 'Squire's wife, from Pennsylvania. You find it changed here. Ellison has put up new buildings, so as to get more chambers, and places for play-rooms. The barns, too, are all made over; and nobody can say the office is small now. Do you like the fire-places? Everybody does who was brought up in the country.”

“Yes; we think it grows more and more charming here.”

“It’s a great place,—a great place! We can’t begin to keep all the folks who come.”

“You have an elegant company now. The women look like queens.”

“There are bankers here, so rich they can’t reckon their money,—folks from New York that you read about in the newspapers.”

“I don’t see any sick people this year.”

“They mostly stay down to the old house; but some of ’em here are sick enough, only they don’t show it. You see they flesh right up as soon as they begin to drink the water.”

“Anything new in your family, Doctor?”

“Albert’s married. That’s the best news I can tell ye. But Ellison,—well, he seems friendly to everybody, but he don’t fall in love.”

“He has too much care of this great house full of strangers, to give any time to love.”

“No, he has time enough. It ain’t that. But I half suspect there’s so many girls settin’ their caps for him, he’s got kind of sick of women. I suppose, between you and me, Sicily did court Ellison right smart. I reckon I’m to blame for it. I liked Sicily. I should n’t wonder if she tries it again. She’s lost her husband. He was an awful dig. He worked himself to death trying to get rich farming. I’ve asked Sicily to come and rest here awhile. She’s had a hard time.”

“Has she any children?”

“No; both of ’em died. Too much hard work.”

“She has seen trouble in her short married life.”

“Yes. Did you bring your children this time?”

“Our daughter, and our son Richmond.”

“Maud learned to be a minister, if I remember rightly. How does she get on?”

“As bravely as a man. She is a faithful and conscientious worker.”

“It’s a little too hard for a woman, — too pesterin’.”

“Do you think it a more severe life than Sicily’s?”

“Not such slavin’; but more folks to please.”

“The true minister tries to do the pleasure of his Master, and expects his people to conform their pleasure to the high standards.”

“Yes; but they won’t. They’ll get crossways and find fault if he don’t come to see ’em every time they’re sick, whether he knows it or not. Why, there’s the ’Squire! You look well. Been well ever since you was here the first time?”

“Yes; the New Bethesda has touched me with enduring vigor. I was never better. Katy, will you come with me and read the letters? Maud and Richmond have gone off on a tramp, perhaps to Shaker Village.”

“The day is too warm for so long a walk.”

“Maybe they’ll find an ox-team on the way. They won’t run any risks. Don’t worry, Katy.”

Mr. and Mrs. Raynor seek the coolness of the pines, where easy chairs are placed at convenient intervals, and a high-backed rocker and swaying hammock furnish them comfortable resting-places in

which to read the Western mail. The boys are having a delightful time at Chautauqua, and Alex and his family an outing at the Thousand Islands. There is no near occasion for an anxious thought. They read on, laughing and commenting over the boyish expressions from Willie and Fred, and the longing love of old friends who miss them in absence.

“You are keeping something back, Charles. What is it?”

“I suspect a letter from Gertrude. It was mailed in San Francisco.”

“How she has hidden herself away! Not a word since the visit at Meadowville, except the little letter announcing her safe arrival home.”

“She has been busy working out her salvation, I presume.”

“Oh, Charles, I hope it is calm seas at last! Gertrude’s buffetings have been beyond reason.”

“A strange network of circumstances enclosing an innocent person! A shadow over so bright a life, — it is, indeed, hard to understand.”

“Read the letter, Charles, or pass it to me. We have been with her in the valley; God grant she may have found the safe hills ere this.”

It is a brief letter: —

“We are coming East to stay. Our affairs are fast being settled, and then Boston or some other Eastern city must make a place for us. I hope to see you before the season ends, in our beechen chair close to the long path, that I may tell you the sequel where I had to reveal the beginnings. California friends have telegraphed me that you are summering at the New Bethesda.”

“Then there are California people here. Let us look over the books, find them out, and make their acquaintance. I can hardly wait for Gertrude to tell me the sequel.”

“You don’t suppose anything has been made public, do you, Katy?”

“Well, — no, of course not, now I think of it. Gertrude would keep her trouble to herself, and certainly Robert would not care to tell. I presume she has never spoken to any one on the face of the earth but me. She could hardly help speaking. We saw everything, and poor Gerty needed a friend.”

“I am glad we counselled forbearance and patient waiting when she came to us four years ago determined to seek a divorce.”

“But oh, Charles, we needed reinforcement from the heavenly forbearance to give her such counsel! Her provocation was unparalleled. She believed Robert had thoroughly repented and was all her own when she went that long journey and made her home with him among strangers. You know she said she must slay her last doubt before she could marry him. That she married him proves her utter confidence. How she lingered over the sweet first year of their wedded life! She could not bear to leave it and tell us of what followed. How she must have felt when she read Minnie Swan’s letter, and found she had settled right there in the city, not two miles off!”

“Pretty tough place for a wife. I can fancy how my Katy would feel if in clearing up my desk she came across sentimental letters from some girl, — letters, too, adroitly phrased to call out an answer.”

“Minnie was a wife, and her sin the greater. She was kindling fires for her own head, and that is what people always do who do wrong. ‘With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.’ I think the hardest place for Gertrude was not when she found the letters and knew that Robert was keeping up a correspondence with Minnie, but when the servant was too ill to go and she had to rush out after a doctor for her baby, and met them riding. I don’t see how she ever got home; and I don’t wonder the baby died. The shock she received was communicated to the poor little life in some mysterious way, I have no doubt. And when she spoke to Robert and he excused it in such a humanitarian way, half dulling the arrow of her distrust, — ‘Minnie was having a hard time; they were very poor; young French found it impossible to obtain a support in his business; she had no recreation, and she had always had such a care-free life, he took her to ride out of pity, and he wrote to her occasionally to brace her up, — encourage her to be brave, and better days would surely come!’”

“It did not take a bright woman like Gertrude very long to understand that humanitarian service did not require sentimental letters, nor the cost of a carriage while she stayed at home with a sick baby. ‘The arrow of her distrust,’ as you call it, dulled for the moment, returned with a sharper thrust after a time of sensible reflection.”

“That Robert Nickerson did these things under cover was rather a condemning commentary on his humanitarian designs. When the seventh wave rolled

over Gertrude, it is not at all surprising that she started East like a wounded thing, to seek the law's redress at the hand of an old friend. She thought she had buried her trust beyond resurrection. Oh, the very thought of what she suffered before she reached this extremity of pain breaks my heart!"

"Suffering breeds suffering, Katy. If there could be some way by which the sinners could be shut up with the consequences of their own misdeeds without dragging innocent people into the net, I should be glad."

"Yes, Charles, suffering breeds suffering, — and that poor Nickerson found out when his house was left unto him desolate. What a shock it must have been to him! Gertrude gone, he knew not where; but he knew why. Don't you think that shock did more to bring him to himself than anything else?"

"Yes, doubtless, provided he has come to himself."

"They are living together and coming East together. Gertrude would never have endured another year of torture. That they are living together, proves that he has come to himself."

"It is quite time he carried on his humanitarian work in ways where Gertrude can go hand in hand with him."

"See how the people are gathering on the piazza! A photographer! Let us be of the number who tell the world of this restful and invigorating place. We were in such haste to read our letters that we left Dr. Rossville somewhat suddenly."

"He would understand it; though I suppose he never learned by experience what it is to be seven hun-

dred miles away from home. All the people here are eager for their letters. They watch the delivery very closely, and seem to count the moments to mail-time."

"Mr. Rossville is having views taken of the place from every locality, outside and in; is he not?"

"Yes. People hear about the Spring, but have no idea of this beautiful setting of lakes and hills. Mr. Winters told me he brought a brother minister here to pass his vacation. He was a lover of charming natural scenery, and when he reached the height on which the New Bethesda stands he was quite overwhelmed by the unexpected view. 'Why did n't you tell me, Raynold?' he exclaimed; 'I did n't dream of such an enchanting panorama! Those circling hills rising tier on tier above the sparkling lakes, — it is an amphitheatre unsurpassed on this continent! You ought to have prepared me. The surprise is too great for tired nerves!' Winters said all the loiterers about the piazzas were attracted by his exclamations, and at once he was a marked man, — the man of the eloquent tongue."

"Let us stand at the very front, Charles; I want to be distinguishable."

"You will be. There is good light this morning. Did you observe Richmond and Maud on the upper balcony? They, too, will be of the number who speak praises."

"Yes; and I observed Mr. Marshall pressing forward, evidently to stand with them."

"Richmond will keep his word. He will take care of Maud. I have heard him say he had seen only one man whom he would be willing to have Maud marry."

"I suppose that is dear old Professor Wright. Richmond thinks him a perfect man."

"Why 'old Professor'? He is scarcely thirty."

"He seems so wise, and has had his honored chair so long, one naturally counts him old."

"He was there during Maud's course, and Richmond says they are never alone that he does not speak of her in some appreciative way. He has made interested inquiries about her success in her profession; and when Rich told him that great crowds followed her, that the church was full to the door, but she was discouraged because she could not convert them all in a year, he said, 'Miss Maud is so much an angel she will be disappointed in all common people.'"

"That is interesting, Charles. Why did you not tell me before?"

"I thought you knew, — that Rich had told you."

"He never told me that. He has praised the Professor to the skies, and I know they pass all their leisure together, and that Maud comes in now and then as an object of interest; but the 'angel' estimate is quite new to me."

"It is your own estimate, Katy."

"Yes, Maud is an angel in sweetness of temper. Not many young ladies have such perfect self-control. I have not seen her ruffled or heard an unpleasant word from her lips since she was fourteen years old."

"What peaceful paths she will make for her feet because of this spiritual victory! When we think of the hurts and aches that come from ungoverned temper, of how a home is overshadowed by even one soul

out of tune, we have reason to think the angel estimate rightly applied in Maud's case."

As Mr. and Mrs. Raynor leave the multitude for that communion apart so needed for the reinforcement of inward strength, Maud and Richmond follow them.

"Richmond and I cannot settle an important question, and I come for advice. Mrs. Bolton and others of the Church of the Ancient Brotherhood are urging me to conduct the service in the Music Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. Winters is not here, and there seems to be a dearth of ministers. Mrs. Lincoln also urges me strongly. Shall I consent?"

"It seems such a company of pleasure-seekers, my daughter, I fear you would not have the sympathetic attention needed to make the service helpful in the highest degree."

"I do not know as one could expect that, father, in an audience of every faith and no faith, and from all parts of the country, too."

"Would any but the really religious, those desiring the spiritual influence of the service, go into the hall?" said Mrs. Raynor.

"Judging from my brief experience and observation, many would attend out of curiosity. In this fact lies one of the advantages of a woman ministry. The people come and hear. Various motives attract them. But if the truth is presented in winning fashion, some who come to scoff will go away to pray."

"I tell Maud I want Marshall to hear her. He will then be able to see how much of a bird he tried to crowd back into its shell; but I recoil from seeing my sister the target for all these critical eyes."

“One who takes up the Master’s work must not think of critical eyes. The work, and how to do it acceptably to him, should absorb every thought. His blessing cannot descend in its fulness while we are thinking what people will say about us. I doubt if we ought ever to discuss the width of the open door, as we are now discussing it. The call, ‘Go work to-day in my vineyard,’ should receive hearty answer, without fear of the faces of men.”

“The faces of men are not the ones to be afraid of. Woman is woman’s severest critic,” said Richmond. “We learned that in our co-education college.”

“I do not think of it as a spectacle for criticism, but an opportunity for service,” said Maud. “We remember how all the hotel toiled as with one heart when we wanted to help Lily Tarleton. There was no adverse criticism.”

“It has outgrown the family ideal now ; and such a union of sentiment would hardly be possible.”

“You forget how the money was poured out last Sunday evening for the poor student. Oh, father, there are hearts under all these elegant vestments ! ”

“Well, my daughter, your own judgment should decide. You will have hearty sympathy from a few, perhaps enough to create the uplifting wave which makes a religious service helpful in the highest ways.”

“I must not expect even the reward of sympathy. The office of servant is sufficient satisfaction when we consider whom we serve. Our adorable King is the love-centre of all worlds. In doing his bidding we pour our little all into the redemptive currents which alone can unify and satisfy the race.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

TO EACH HIS PORTION.

ONE of the attractive features of the New Bethesda House to such humanitarians as the Raynors, is the evident interest in those who help the revolution of all the wheels of service both great and small. Week-evening pastimes and Sunday meetings are not provided for the guests alone.

They were glad to hear that Mr. Gaston was taking on the office of minister, for which his long course of study had prepared him. The services in the helps' dining-room were free to all, and many of the guests attended them. It was a source of spiritual refreshing to sing the Gospel Hymns, and listen to the carefully-prepared sermons of the young minister. Some of the waiter-girls had delightful voices, and the quality of the singing was an attraction. Often ministerial guests assisted Mr. Gaston, so that he was able to keep up the services with great regularity both afternoon and evening.

The Music Hall, and the dining-room converted for the time into a chapel, afforded opportunity for religious worship, ample and varied enough to meet the needs of all. If the bulletin board on Sunday morning contained the name of a speaker whom any num-

ber of the guests declined to hear, Mr. Gaston was always interesting, and a welcome awaited them in the improvised chapel. The Raynors had attended the afternoon services in this chapel several times, and Richmond had said, in his talk with Maud, —

“Nobody need go hungry if you do preside at the gospel feast, and there is solemn objection at being served by a woman. The familiar face at the other table will give everybody a home-feeling; and Mr. Gaston is as gracious and as much at ease as in the great dining-hall feeding ordinary hunger. There is plenty of room, and the guests can choose for themselves.”

In this way he had helped Maud to see that she would not be a stumbling-block to even the weakest soul; and she had no other fear.

The fine orchestra and commodious Music Hall were to be at the disposal of the help on a certain evening, and many of the guests were present to see them come in. And though only the dance-loving portion availed themselves of this opportunity, leaving Mr. Gaston's audience out altogether, there seemed an army of them, sufficient to take possession of a much larger place.

Mr. Rossville looked after everything, determined to make the occasion pleasant to his many helpers. It was a surprise to those who never look behind the scenes, that so many busy hands are needed in ministering to the daily wants in one summer home. As the young men and maidens marched around the hall, all eyes followed them, trying to indentify faces that had become familiar; and if many such were absent, it was understood that the religious interest awakened by

Mr. Gaston's meetings had made them look upon their Sunday privilege as sufficient.

Passing from the hall after a few minutes' observation, the Raynors find an opportunity of speaking with busy Mr. Rossville. Through him they hear that Mr. Winters is better, and has written for a room.

"I hate to send him word that we are full; but all the side offices have been converted into chambers, and we put up cots by the dozen in the halls every night."

"Charles, can't we double up in some way so as to accommodate them? They have had an awful summer. Cornelia must be worn out by this time."

"Any arrangement you can make will suit me."

"Some of this crowd must leave soon," says Mr. Rossville; "there will be a thinning out the first of September."

"But that is two weeks ahead," says Mrs. Raynor. "The Winters need the change as they never needed it before. Flint Wentworth has written me that his uncle is reduced to a skeleton by sheer pain. We all want to help him, I know."

"That is true," said Mr. Rossville, "but I cannot. I have already given up my room."

"We will give up one of ours," says Mrs. Raynor.

"Yes, mother; if Mr. Rossville will give me a cot for the little alcove in your room, we can improvise curtains, and the Winters shall have my room."

"Then I see nothing to hinder me from sending them favorable word."

"Yes, telegraph, Mr. Rossville. We want to see

them, and more, we want to do something to smooth their way after the anguish they have endured. For their own sake, — ah, yes; and in memory of Arena Remington,” said Mrs. Raynor, as she turned away.

When Richmond was brought into the counsel, he said the minister of Edenville should not sleep on a cot while he had a bed; and the best way to arrange for their friends and for themselves was for Maud and mother to occupy one room, while such capital chums as he and father could take the other, without the faintest danger of a quarrel.

“Oh, to be unselfish and sweet and gracious is to possess a large room in the kingdom of heaven!” exclaimed Maud.

“This is a cool, clear day for walking, and we ought to finish our long pedestrian excursions before the Winters come.”

“Why before the Winters come, Katy?”

“We want to pass as much time as we can with them before other urgent needs press upon us; and, Charles, Mr. Winters is lame.”

“I cannot realize it. Of course he will be weak, and unable to make much exertion. Where shall we go?”

“I want to see the heart that sends its pulses through the iron pipes in such audible beats that it seems to be an omniscient heart. You said it was a mile or two away. It always seems to be at my very feet as I go down to the Spring. One lady was frightened as she heard the beats for the first time, and looked about her for some live thing, breathing and

panting. She never dreamed that the throb was only an echo from the engine down by the lake."

"The suggestion of the telephone is in those iron water-pipes. What tuns of water are pressed daily into the New Bethesda House, — lake water, besides the New Bethesda itself, carefully hoarded in tank and 'Moses'!"

The Raynors had been a little clannish, and Maud began to realize it. To explore every corner of forest, lake, and copse with Richmond had given her the rest she needed, and now her wide sympathies were beginning to assert themselves.

"There are real interesting people at our table, and I would like to ask them. They are great walkers, and will be glad to go with us," she said to her parents, who responded heartily, remembering how closely they had clung together, without the usual overflow of cordial fellowship. So the Marcys and Pears were invited to take the long path down to Fountain Head, as they chose to call the lake which supplied the hotel.

As soon as the dew dried off the grass, equipped with alpenstocks, like mountain climbers, they started. Richmond led; and where the low limbs interlocked across the narrow way, he held them apart with great ceremony for each pedestrian to pass. There was nearly a mile of woods in this roundabout way, and a most delightful seclusion. The shadows were so dense from the interlacing trees, that scarcely a ray of sunlight could penetrate them. Mrs. Raynor stopped often to gather some familiar plant or vine which had charmed the days of her youthful

rambles in old Pennsylvania, glad to note the similarity, while she rejoiced in the greater luxuriance of the warmer latitude. The New York friends proved able to wrestle with the undergrowth, and trip from rock to rock when they arrived at the stony portions of the old road.

"This is the road over which we jolted, Katy, twelve years ago. It is a bed of jagged rocks. How utterly impassable it looks, now that the storms of years have washed away the soil, and rent and gullied it!"

"Did you ever see telegraph-posts set in that way, Charles? They seem to stand on the ground supported by mounds of rocks."

"A good way to utilize the rocks. New England is rock-ribbed and rock-bound. If the West had been settled first, who would ever have been brave enough to attempt to dig a living out of this soil?"

"The Yankee has other ways of living," said Mrs. Marcy. "He has the sea and its commerce, and the gains of his genius and enterprise, Mr. Raynor."

"Yes, I realize that, Mrs. Marcy; but the soil is terribly forbidding. Though of course I know it is not all so sterile as this rocky old road."

They pass the new highway from Kingdom Station to the New Bethesda, over which thousands of tourists are transported in the old stage-coach, and along a grassy field skirted by pines. Then, entering a pine forest, they soon come to the border of the lake which supplies the hotel. Mrs. Raynor satisfies her curiosity by looking at the engine from the embankment. The many steps down to the plane of the lake are formi-

dable after so long a walk. After resting on convenient benches under the pines, they prolong their walk to the lake where the steamer plies for the pleasure of the guests. This lake is bordered by trees, in picturesque fashion, and Maud is sure no lakes made famous by Sir Walter were ever more entrancing.

"I have had Europe and the New Bethesda too, dear father. Here are my Scottish lakes; I can people the hills about them with Roderick's clan if I covet the element of terror. And, what is better, the grim old ocean does not lie between me and my little flock, — between me and my home."

"If we follow loving desire we find all places peopled according to our wish. What young lady could conjure up Scottish chiefs for company or terror, who has been guarded by a Knight of the Round Table?"

"Thank you, Richmond. You have kept your promise, and the end is not yet. I expect the attendance of Sir Knight until I am in the world of work once more."

"I desire nothing better, especially as you can fly the balls with the bravest in the bowling-alley or on the croquet and tennis grounds. It is a grand thing for a girl to cultivate her muscle."

"Now that I am rested, Richmond, I want to see more of the Rossville girls. I have always passed much of my time with them."

"Then we shall have to part. You know I'm afraid of girls; and — Miss Helen reminds me of Flossie Whitney. And — my mother shall not have to sleep three weeks of her summer vacation again, just because one of her boys has left her."

“Oh, Rich, are you really so susceptible? We had a young minister here once who was just like that; but he did not avoid the girls for fear he should fall in love with them. By the way, mother, Mrs. Lincoln told me Mr. Hammond is married and has two children. He forgot the blond lady, and married the black eyes which he said he preferred.”

“He knew well enough the blond lady’s heart was not her own, even though the clouds frowned above her sunny head.”

“We ought to have visited this spot by moonlight, Katy, to enjoy its extreme witchery. I wish you liked the water well enough to take a voyage on this awaiting steamer.”

“I can imagine the moonlight sail, the music of the band, and the delight of the company. I wanted to see Dr. Rossville’s fulfilled prophecy; that is pleasure enough, without tempting the heart of these placid waters into frothy rebellion at the wound of the steamer’s keel for my sake.”

“We will sit awhile and dream if you prefer it, while Maud and Richmond try a hand at the oars.”

“What realized dreams flit before us as we remember then and now! Did ever an unknown locality grow into such world-wide fame in so short a time? Dr. Rossville’s prophecies seemed baseless visions until you were cured, Charley; and then we could understand the root of his enthusiasm. But the fulfilment has come sooner even than he dreamed.”

“I think there is no parallel in history. We call it the miracle Spring, and sure enough it is, in the

swiftness of its growth as well as in the power of its healing waters."

"Watch the boats, Charley! I did not know Richmond could pull so bravely. He is far ahead of the Pears! Chautauqua, last year, gave him fine practice."

"Maud has a strong and graceful stroke too. She has really improved her privilege in the ponds about Meadowville."

"The circuit of this lake is quite an undertaking for an oarsman. Oh, they are coming about! The children will deem it a selfish pleasure while we sit on the shore."

"The children know their mother prefers sitting on the shore, and they understand that the man whom the world calls Lawyer Raynor is happiest where their mother is. They are coming about because time is short. The charms of the New Bethesda must soon be to us a thing of memory."

"Rather a vision forever present in the strength and successful work which have built our happy home."

The rowers come to land at length, and the pedestrians turn homeward, stopping to rest under the balcony of the Spring and receive the refreshing always awaiting them there; then through the short wood-path, which was to Mrs. Raynor like a dream of the fairyland where she played in childhood.

Through some unaccountable freak of the wires the telegram did not reach Mr. Winters. Day after day the Raynors watched the in-coming coaches only to be disappointed. Maud's and Richmond's sweet self-forgetting was likely to be unavailing. The first of

September was fast drawing nigh, and many would then be obliged to seek their homes because of the opening of the public schools.

"We cannot go until we meet the Winters and Nickersons, Charles, if we have to wait until October!"

"No waiting until October for me, this year, mother dear," exclaims Maud. "I can hear the bleating of my lambs now, 'away on the mountains wild and bare'! Richmond and I must go without you, if your precious romance must be read to the very end."

"Not to the very end. Life is a romance; the real life of many who pass us daily."

"More like a tragedy to such people as the Winters."

"No, my daughter. A romance with tragic touches, like the painful summer fast ending."

"You and father can stay until winter and be comfortable. The big fireplaces will warm the office; your own snug room with its open glow, and the steam heat about the halls and parlors, will make you forget you are not in the Raynor mansion at Meadowville. And then, you two have reached life's pleasant afternoon, when you have a right to take it easy."

"I must stay until these expected friends appear. To deny Gertrude the confidence she promised me, would be a cruelty disgraceful to the Raynor name. I don't see but you and Richmond will have to go without us, unless you can remain until the middle of September."

"Let us start next week, Maud, and see something of rock-ribbed New England on the way. Mt. Wash-

ington, that we have looked at night after night in the shine of the sunset, is not slightly attractive to a young fellow. I should not in the least object to seeing it at short range. Let us go round by the White Mountains!"

"Yes, children; you shall do that. It will be a grand succession of views, but I doubt if any of them equal this."

"Is n't father a trifle enthusiastic, for a man brought up in Quaker-land?"

"Maud, I am sorry you let that grim minister have the Sunday the ladies had set apart to you. Things have gone so far, — I mean there has been so much talk about it, — you cannot well leave now without conducting the service."

"There is one more Sunday, if we do go round by the mountains."

"And you will not give your opportunity to some one else again?"

"I hope to be able to keep my promise."

"I wonder if that is Sicily talking with Dr. Rossville."

Mrs. Raynor walks along the piazza to meet, not the rosy, sunny-faced girl who had attracted her attention twelve years before at the Old Stage Tavern, but a drawn face with sorrowful eyes, and a figure draped in widow's weeds. She had toiled hard in narrow ways, and taken her bereavement heavily.

"I am glad to meet Miss Vinton once more," said Mrs. Raynor, in her nervous flurry at the vision of the changed face.

"Not Miss Vinton, but the Widow Parks," said

Sicily; "not enough of the former Miss Vinton for identification."

"She's tired," said Dr. Rossville. "We shall chirk her up, and the red cheeks will come back again."

"Oh, Mrs. Raynor," exclaimed the Widow Parks, "how do you retain the freshness of youth during so many years?"

"My life has been made easy and pleasant for me, dear old friend! I know I am incomparably blessed!" and Mrs. Raynor walked swiftly toward the pines, that her tears might escape notice. To see such signs of toil and pain and sorrow, when the Lord had been so good to her, was a severe strain upon the sympathies of her tender heart.

Looking down the road in the direction of the Old Stage Tavern, a singular vehicle was seen moving toward the New Bethesda House. One after another caught sight of it, and soon the piazzas swarmed with observers. A carryall with fringed canopy and shining upholstery, drawn by a huge pair of oxen, soon stood in front of the hotel. The driver, equipped in the latest Brother Jonathan style, his tall white hat much battered, his overalls turned up at the bottom and partially caught in the tops of his boots, his general attitude a mixture of meekness and drollery, stood patiently holding his ox-goad.

The guests began to whisper, "What is it? What does it all mean?" and presently this story came out. On the day previous a gay party, some of them Southerners, had been to ride behind one of Mr. Rossville's spans. On returning, the question was asked, "Will you want the team to-morrow?"

“Yes,” answered one of the gentlemen, “bring out your oxen to-morrow at ten.”

Punctual to the hour, Mr. Rossville, who though he enjoyed the joke saw an opportunity of turning it upon the perpetrators, had the oxen in waiting. Not to be outdone, the gay party climbed into the carry-all and had their ride behind real oxen. They did not go far, nor inflict a long absence upon the watching multitude, doubtless finding the difference between the speed of the black span of yesterday and the red ones of to-day. This little episode brought Sicily from her corner, and something of the old vivacity touched her speech and lighted her care-worn face.

On the following Monday, as the trunks of the young Raynors were receiving their finishing touches preparatory to the mountain passage, Richmond said, —

“You did not seem at all flurried, Maud, and I saw any number of glasses levelled at you last evening.”

“I waited alone for my girding, and no mortal eyes could flurry me then.”

“Miss Vinton — I mean the Widow Parks — was greatly moved,” said Mrs. Raynor; “and she said it did not seem out of place at all. She had always thought it would.”

“The words of that serene-faced lady from Portland would outweigh all the levelled glasses, and the curiosity behind them,” observed Mr. Raynor. “When one has power to help life’s deepest need, he can afford to be unconscious of the sneer of the worldling and the scrutiny of the curious.”

“Let us not talk about the service. It was a gift upon His altar, and He will take care of it. If it is used as a burnt-offering, the smoke of the incense may revive some faint heart who will go on with its load making no outward sign,” said the young minister.

“Have you seen Marshall to-day?”

“Oh, yes. He asked my pardon for suggesting that I content myself with the prayer-meetings and the missions. He said God had as evidently called me as him. I stopped him. I could not listen to all he wanted to say. How he has grown since we first heard him sing ‘My Ain Countrie’!”

“Have you made all your farewells, children?”

“I have none to make, except to Mr. Rossville and the housekeeper,” said Richmond.

“I parted with Susie and Helen last evening,” said Maud. “I felt a trifle solemn, dear mother. It seemed to me I was making my last farewells to the dear old place.”

“You are young, and may come many times; I want you to go off cheerfully.”

“Cheerfully, mother, whether it be life or death.”

“Look here, Maud! you are altogether too pathetic. You will have to stay another month, and take my tramp and athletic lessons all over again,” said Richmond.

Miss Raynor tried to get possession of her usual light-heartedness, with poor success. The service had evidently been a strain upon her nerves which she had not measured; and then Mr. Marshall’s surrender of all he had ever stipulated, throwing all responsi-

bility upon her decision, had weighed down her spirits unexpectedly.

But the farewells about the office were lightly made, and a smiling face looked back from the departing coach. Mr. Marshall was not among the observers. Just where he was only a clairvoyant could see. No terror of dewy bushes or water-soaked pine-needles stood in the way of a plunge into the darkest heart of the woods. If he berated himself for taking the air of a bargain into his relations with Maud Raynor, only the invisible Spirit ever knew.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE UPPER CALM.

TOWARD the end of the week Mr. and Mrs. Winters were seen at the breakfast-table. They had come on the late coach and gone right to their room, suffering such weariness as only the prolonged strain of sickness and watching can occasion.

Dr. Rossville met them with his assuring promise of the invigorating water; and hope, which had gained some little vantage-ground on account of the improved conditions, plumed its wings for still farther flights. It was painful to all the old friends to see Raynold Winters depending on his wife's arm and a cane. His had been the erect carriage along these familiar paths, and the strength that bore burdens for others. He crept slowly, and Cornelia waited his time. No forlorn female imposed the weight of her "Moses" upon him now. He would have felt the additional weight of a feather. As he met his former summer companions and fell into chats about the many who had come to this height trembling on the verge of despair and were now doing life's work as restored and vigorous men, Mrs. Winters found her opportunity to pour out her heart to Mrs. Raynor. She told her of the dead summer when sleep forsook the room which imprisoned them,

driven thence by unconquerable pain and a deathless sympathy; of the first pitiful essay upon crutches, when the limb hung as a useless member, and there was no hope that it would ever be otherwise; of the strong help which came determined to overcome the menacing weakness, and the joy which made the whole house like vibrating bells when the prophecy was fulfilled, "The crooked shall be made straight."

"Oh, the days which followed! they were like a new heaven and a new earth, Mrs. Raynor. Joy overflowed in thanksgiving for the restoration. He could walk without the crutches, and hope said strength would heal the limp. For two whole weeks we were alone. Everybody thought we had come here, and we were utterly alone. He could not walk out without me, and we were constantly together; and oh, Mrs. Raynor, he said they were the happiest days of his whole life! Every day he would ask me if it was very hard to take all the steps about the house, and I would answer no; and my joy was so great I thought I could endure it forever. Daily we waited for the telegram, and walked or rode or read together, wishing the days a thousand hours long; but I seemed to fail. I became utterly brain-weary; and then I said our people would think he had wasted his opportunity if we failed to visit the New Bethesda. I concealed my own condition, making no personal plea, and we started at once. He seemed to see everything as I did, but the journey tired him fearfully. And I, — why, I could sleep forever if he did not need me in his walks."

There was a handwriting on Cornelia's face which had never been there before. Mrs. Raynor read it

with great heart-throbs of pity, and yet glad that the pen was broken which had made the painful scars. They talked about Arena's children. It was well with them. Paul was doing successful missionary work at the West, and the others rested in a cottage by the sea. Mabel had her plans, and had entered the opening way. It was a severe way, a rugged hill she had set herself to climb; but she was resolute, sustained by the strength of youth.

Day after day these friends, drawn close to each other by a sacred memory, met in the haunts of the New Bethesda. The minister was improving; he always gained strength and power on these everlasting hills. And as he grew in power and faith the lines on Cornelia's face were less noticeable.

And then, one day Robert and Gertrude came. From San Francisco to Kingdom Station seemed a weary way to Kate, who thought Meadowville far enough off, now that she was separated from all her children. She expected Gertrude would need days of rest before she could seek the beechen chair to tell her friend the sequel where she had told the beginnings. What was her surprise when Mrs. Nickerson came to her the very next day after her arrival, equipped for a walk.

"Come, Mrs. Raynor," said she, "I cannot meet you on terms of ease with myself until we have had our talk."

"I know it is well with you, Gerty, by the peace on your face and Robert's. It is deeper than any heart-sign ever visible before."

"How we conquered the peace I want you to know,

you who were such wise counsellors when I stood on the verge of wreck. We will talk alone, but you must tell your lawyer all about it."

Mrs. Raynor excused herself to her husband, who would find enough to do in bracing up the invalids whom he was forever seeking out, and walked away with her friend.

"I left Robert sleeping. He had such tiresome days settling our affairs for a final leave-taking, that he is quite worn out. We can rest now. We can afford to rest. Robert has been dealing in real estate, and the gains have been beyond expectation. We shall stay in one of the Boston suburbs, not in the brick-walled city. We know a hill at the Highlands, where we hope to build our home. Do you care about weaving the chair? I can hardly wait."

"These rocks will furnish us seats. They are moss-grown."

"I suppose they will not be quite so comfortable as the clinging limbs which held us lang syne."

"A divergence from the path anywhere will give us the seclusion we desire. Here are young beeches. We need not go farther."

They part the tangles and make their way a few rods from the path, and soon white lithe fingers are weaving the supple branches after the fashion of the time of tears. It is swift work, and a repaying task. Like children in a swing they look, as they sit together holding the live ropes.

"We will not say anything about Robert's feelings, or the terror which almost paralyzed him when I went to you with my heavy heart and he found his home

left unto him desolate. You remember the letter which I read to you years ago. That letter painted accurately the real Robert. He is kindness itself; but he is so made up that he cannot see both sides of the shield. I think I understand him fully now. Minnie Swan, the wife of a poor man in a strange city, appealing to him as the only one whom she knew, struck the bed-rock of his pity. Her father's case was lost through him. He blamed himself as in a measure culpable for Minnie's forlorn condition. So he answered her flattering letters, and 'braced her up,' as he called it, in every way possible. Minnie was but a poor housekeeper, and her husband had everything to discourage him. They were living beyond their means, and when I met them riding, Robert was taking her to the outskirts of the city to show her cheaper tenements.

"I had been hurt by a past which had been condoned, and he hoped to keep Minnie's presence in the city a secret.

"Poor Robert knows little about keeping secrets. It is his nature to be open as the day. Had he burned the silly letters instead of leaving them about for me to destroy, he might have kept it from me longer. But wrong is its own destroyer. Honest Sammy French, ransacking his wife's bureau for a clean collar, came across a bundle of letters tied with ribbon and marked, 'I prize them.' He put them in his pocket and started down town, forgetting about the needed linen. He read them every one. They were the 'bracing' letters of Robert Nickerson. They revealed the past acquaintance, and maddened him with jeal-

ousy. When he reached home at evening he was in a white heat, and Minnie had to cringe and quail under his condemnation and his threats. Nothing but a separation should answer for the wife who had invited such a correspondence, and it should come as quickly as California laws would allow! Poor Minnie, face to face with herself as interpreted by an enraged husband, was in mortal terror. She fled from the house and came to us for succor. This occurred just after my return from Meadowville four years ago. She told her story, crouching at my feet and begging my intercession on her behalf. She seemed so weak and pitiable, as she trembled in fear of her husband's just indignation, that the Strength Invincible girded me, and I bade her rise, and I would go with her to her home. Robert had not returned from his office, and I left a note for him with the servants.

"Mr. French was raving from room to room when we entered. As he saw me he stopped with a look of inquiry. 'I have come to talk with you,' I said. 'I am the wife of Robert Nickerson.'

"'I pity you!' said he; and the tense nerves gave way, and he wept like a child. Then he unfolded the letters, reading them one after another to me, and emphasizing the praiseful passages. 'How do you bear it and keep so calm?' said he. Then I took the lawyer's stand and pleaded for Robert. In that exalted mood I could do it. I said that Mr. Nickerson, though a lawyer, was a humanitarian, and a very kind-hearted man. He had been so much in the habit of pleading at the bar that he was doubtless one-sided in his views and extravagant in the use of terms. Then, he never

liked to be outdone. If he answered a letter, his own expressions must be as emphatic as those he had received.

“‘There’s the curse of it!’ said French, his rage asserting itself. ‘She has been writing to him! She wrote first, I dare swear!’ I tried to cool him down by showing him the intimacy brought about by the lost lawsuit. Minnie had seen a great deal of Robert. She was in a strange city, without friends, and I suppose needed somebody. ‘She had her husband. She did not need letters from some other woman’s husband!’ he exclaimed, clenching his fists. Through all this scene Minnie sat trembling and sobbing. At this point Robert came in, apprehending some outburst from my hurried note. Mr. French flew at him like a tiger. I slipped between them, and told Robert the situation.

“‘Look here, young man,’ said he, ‘your wife can sue for divorce from such a tigerish temper, and I’ll help her win her case; but you have no case against her.’

“The presence of a masculine equal though it was the man whose kind attentions had wrought his rage, calmed him somewhat; then I went on: ‘Suppose it is all wrong, this correspondence,— and I am not one to call it right,— is it not better to forgive, than to walk the way of ruin the rest of our days?’ Then poor Minnie crept to my feet and said, ‘You will forgive me, will you not? I did not know I was doing wrong.’ ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,’ I said in answer.

“‘Can you forgive all this underhanded business’?

said Mr. French. 'Now that my forgiveness is craved, I can. No one should dare refuse the plea of a penitent.'

"'Oh, Sammy, if Mrs. Nickerson can forgive, you can! It was worse for her, because it began years ago.'

"'Swear to me that you will never write another sentimental letter to a man, married or single!" said the not softened husband. 'Nickerson will let you alone if you mind your own business. He does not want to be bothered with you.'

"'I promise I will never write another letter to Robert Nickerson. And now, dear Sammy, will you take away your disgraceful threat of a divorce?'

"Sammy promised he would. We had paved the way for a reconciliation, and thought it best to leave them to themselves. The next day a note came saying they should leave the city at once, and we should never see them or hear from them again.

"How they are working out their salvation I know not. Probably the bitter draught was not yet quaffed to the very dregs, and days of pain yet remained for them. They were small-souled and untaught; the Christian joy of pardon far off; the peaceful seas awaiting the lull of repeated tempests.

"Robert's cases have been such as he could plead in open court since that terrific night when his wife attempted to save him from the rage of jealousy, and he has been a model of affectionate faithfulness."

"Oh, Gertrude, the sunlit hills at last! I knew you would reach them, for you deserve the upper calm, and the light of stormless skies."

"But I suppose the mystery will be about us life-long, why the innocent must forever suffer with and for the guilty. I have inflicted my pain upon you."

"And you have lent me your conquered peace."

"The battle has been long, and the victory slow of coming. Such painful misunderstandings menace us! We see with such differing eyes!"

The great world of thought and emotion represented by the New Bethesda House revolved in its regular orbit as before, none knowing through what fiery seas the calmest souls of all the company had passed into peace. Gertrude was still beautiful Gertrude to the many and the few; but by what different standards was this verdict reached! They who saw her in the great halls or about the grounds noted her wealth of soft hair, her pure complexion, her sky-lit eyes. Mr. and Mrs. Raynor were not blind to external beauty, but to them had been given the vision that sees behind the veil. The grace of loving pardon overflowing from a heart taught to judge by the Christian standards shone in her serene face and glorified the coils of her abundant hair. She had taught Robert the frailty of human reliance, and his later vows recognized the Omnipotent Helper, through whom he hoped to stand without spot and unblamable. As they strolled about the old haunts, there were voices in the pines above them, and the dead needles beneath their feet inspiring anew each chastened purpose to build after the high ideals "as the swift seasons roll." The days were wrought of unseen elements, shaping and guiding these lives so slow in finding

love's supreme adjustment ; and not the halcyon dawn so sweet as these hours which saw the high noon pressing near.

Influence radiates from every realm, and the sensitive spirit feels its humblest touch ; but when lives press ours which have followed closely the Christ ideal, though they may feel no virtue go out of them, we feel an increase of power to arise and follow over the same shining ways. Mr. and Mrs. Raynor were a tower of reviving strength to Robert Nickerson ; and Gertrude looked upon them as privileged beings whom God had spared the shame of great lapses from righteousness. They were much together, and when the Winters could be once more among the restored and happy, the three pairs might have been seen walking and talking together, or waiting the angel's help by the side of the New Bethesda.

The summer warmth was being chilled by early frosts, and the hammock became a thing of yesterday. As the Raynors packed away this little net of comfort, remembering how it had swayed in the soft winds of four happy summers, just a shiver of pain accompanied the thought that perhaps never again would the pines about the New Bethesda whisper lullabies to them. Uncertainty broods over the outlook of all mortals, and after life's high noon comes its declining sun. But the great wood-fires made amends for the loss of summer warmth, and groups of friends talked as confidently in the ear of the flames as under the whispering pines. Here the prophets sat and told the story of the miracle Spring, past, present, and to come.

“Only one third of the people who have asked to come here this season have been accommodated,” said the young landlord to Mr. Winters.

“Cover the hill with hotels and cottages, and they will all be full,” was the confident answer.

No change of season can obliterate the handwriting of Providence on these helpful hills. Forever the Eternal Voice is calling His children to come up higher, and the elixir in rarefied air proves the value of obedience to this call, even in its earthly meanings. And who that has passed from the low places of sin into the heights of righteousness, but has learned the greatness of Divine leadership, and been ready to acknowledge its redemptive power?

Beauty will brood above the heights, healing will flow from the New Bethesda, whether the old lovers look again toward the sunset from this tower of strength, or tarry in the vales of Meadowville.

God's good work will go on, though His ministers faint and fail amid the exactions of a critical age.

The ideal home, which the Raynors come nearest to realizing, shall rear its enduring walls where now so many crumbling huts of untruth and doubt disfigure the smiling earth. For God is God, and man was created in His image; and Kingdom Station shall at length unlock the gates of the Kingdom of Peace.

THE END.

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