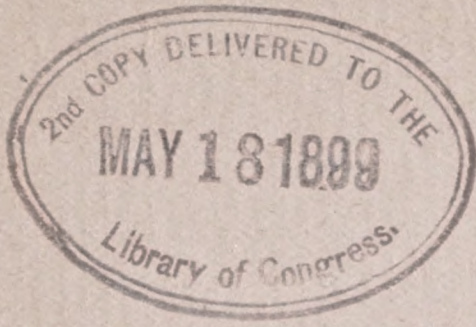


— THAT —
OTHER WOMAN

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THAT

OTHER WOMAN.

BY
AMELIA APPLETON, *pseud. of*

Hawes, Mrs. Amelia Appleton (Prendergast)



F. TENNYSON NEELY,
PUBLISHER,

LONDON.

NEW YORK.

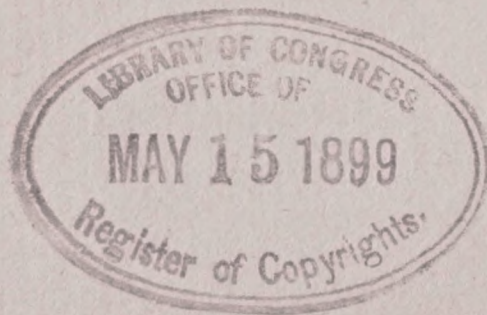
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THAT OTHER WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.

“ALAS! I have fallen captive to a woman’s charms for the first time in my life,” thought Carl Clayton, as he suddenly dropped his paper and looked out over the deep blue of the sea in silence for many moments.

“Mrs. Knickerbocker has had all her diamonds stolen, and such a destructive fire, so much loss of life, such distressing news,” said his mother, who was reclining in a luxurious easy-chair in their handsome parlor, eagerly reading the news, while M. La Bau was seated near her.

Carl was so lost in thought that he had not noticed his mother’s remarks but leaning his arms on the sill of the open window, continued to gaze out into empty space.

Mrs. Clayton, glancing up from her reading at Carl, and seeing his paper lying idly under his arm, said in surprise: “Why! you have not even read your paper, though you are always waiting so anxiously for it to come; so unusual. Give us a little benefit of your thoughts, my dear!”

“I was thinking of the *soirée* you gave last evening;

a great success, a brilliant affair, as all your entertainments are, and so many beautiful women were present."

"Beautiful women!" she echoed, laughing lightly. "I am well pleased if you took the trouble to notice them, as I have been led to think that you were very indifferent and hard to please."

"You think me critical; it may be so. I think I was more impressed last evening than ever before. Mother, how did Miss Boynton please you?"

"I was charmed with her; she is exceedingly pretty, and has very simple, sweet manners and a beautiful voice."

His mother's answer was very gratifying to him.

"By Jove, Clayton, remarkably pretty girl, but I do not think there is much money there," exclaimed M. La Bau.

"Bah! money is a Frenchman's idol. You talk lightly. I am not looking for gold; sometimes one's own happiness is to be taken into consideration."

"How foolishly you talk, Carl. I should think you were a lovesick lad," said Mrs. Clayton.

"I think I am, mother."

"What do you mean?" inquired she, as a perplexed look passed over her face.

"I mean that I shall marry Beatrix Boynton."

"The deuce you will, Clayton."

"Yes; the deuce I will, La Bau."

"Why, Carl, I do not understand you," said his mother, looking at him with utter amazement and wide-open eyes. "I never heard you talk so absurdly.

Do not joke on such serious subjects. Explain yourself."

"I mean just what I have said. I repeat it. I intend to marry Beatrix Boynton," answered he, with his head bent and his eyes drooped, looking thoughtfully on the floor.

"Why, you must be insane, growing stark mad, to talk in that way."

"No, I am not insane, neither am I mad. I never was more rational in my life. Why not? I think she has a very lovely face, and she is very refined; you have admitted that. It is so refreshing to see a young girl so unassuming and innocent of any art. She is so perfectly natural, and so unlike the young girls I have been accustomed to meeting. I suppose it is the unlikeness, the freshness that pleases me so much. I think I have made a very wise selection."

"But there is one other to be consulted; it takes two hearts to make a tie, Clayton," said M. La Bau.

Carl did not make any response to this last remark, as the thought of a refusal had never crossed his mind.

"How very foolishly you talk, Carl, about a girl you have not seen more than half a dozen times in your life, and concerning whom you can know but little. I admit she has a very pretty face, and is refined, but that is not all in choosing a wife! You do not and cannot know anything about the family. It would be well to make some inquiries," his mother said indignantly.

"I am not going to marry all the family. I only single out one," said Carl.

"I surely think it would be wise to know something about her antecedents before rushing headlong into a marriage you must regret at leisure. It seems unlike you. It is unmanly."

"Is it unmanly?" Carl echoed.

"I understand that she is devoted to her mother, and I do not think she would discard any one of her family, however strong her affections were for any one else," said M. La Bau.

"You must have heard much. I would not request or expect her to make any such sacrifice for me."

"Since Carl has taken so much interest in this stranger, I must find out as much as possible. It would be very embarrassing not to be able to answer any questions concerning her family. You have been about this place so much, you must have been able to glean a great deal of news about people living here. What do you know about them, M. La Bau?" inquired Mrs. Clayton.

"There is a great mystery about her father, I believe. There are several rumors afloat, but no one seems to know the exact truth, nor to know where he is. I understand that he has never been seen here and the family never mention his name, although it is well known that he is still living."

"Great heavens! did you hear what M. La Bau said, Carl? Mysterious father, things that cannot be explained; how very dreadful it is. My son to be a mystery too, I suppose. I never had a mystery in the family. I detest them. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" she moaned, taking a very fine lace handkerchief and press-

ing it to her eyes. "There has never been a blemish on our family name, and you, my own, my only son, who could make one of the best alliances in the country, rich, handsome and thoroughly educated, to throw yourself away on a shoddy of a nobody! The pretentious impostor! I knew by her looks there was something wrong about her. I did not like her from the first time I saw her. Her father may have been a pirate, a bandit, a highway robber, a murderer, an outlaw, an escaped convict, a madman, an idiot, or something more frightful still than the things I have mentioned; heaven only knows what. What will people say? I never thought you would do such a shocking thing as that. It is disgraceful. How artful she must be, and seemingly so innocent; it must have been all assumed. Oh! I entreat you, Carl, consider before you go any further. Do not do any rash act for a pretty face. I thought and expected you would marry Miss——" stopping without mentioning the name, and again burying her face in her much-embroidered handkerchief.

Carl listened quietly, with his head bowed, not making any effort to speak during all this tirade. Slowly raising his head and walking toward M. La Bau and looking him full in the face, he addressed him in a calm, firm, deliberate manner: "You are unjust, ungenerous. You are simply stating idle rumor, which is always uncharitable. It does not matter so much who you are as what you are. Miss Boynton's face speaks what she is. It is a fair, pure, lovely reflection of her character. She is yet young, too young to

shoulder the sins of others. She may have been sinned against. You know the common proverb," a slight sneer passing over his face, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*"

"You are severe. Your mother inquired if I knew anything of the family, and I simply told what I had heard. It is only justice to you, as well as your mother, that you should know something of her parents' history," answered M. La Bau.

"I have only known you a short time. I do not know anything of your family, and shall not take the trouble to make any inquiries—my time can be more agreeably occupied; but every one has a history, such as it is. Back of every human being there is a past," Carl replied sarcastically.

"I beg your pardon, Clayton, but I only made a response to Mrs. Clayton's questions. I am exceedingly sorry if I have given offense."

Carl's lips curled scornfully as he replied: "You have given my mother needless unhappiness. And I cannot understand how any gentleman could indulge in repeating hearsay rumors that might injure a young girl. Such stories are often wholly unfounded. If she has had the misfortune to have a wayward father, then she has claim to our sympathy."

"What a dreadful girl she must be. I am out of patience with you, Carl. You should be grateful to M. La Bau for telling you the truth. It is well you should know all before linking yourself for life to one who has such a disreputable parent. You are so infatuated with

her pretty face that you are completely blinded to her faults. A very strange infatuation, it seems to me. I am the last person on earth to find fault with any one. I am exceedingly obliged to you, M. La Bau, for the information you have given me. I do hope you will be able to find out more about her and tell me all you hear. I should consider it a great kindness. I feel as though I ought to apologize for my son's rudeness. She is just what I pictured her, an artful vixen. It is an imposition on my hospitality. Do be a little reasonable, Carl; not throw your life away on one you know so little about."

Carl coolly takes a cigar, pulls vigorously at it, thrusts his hands into his pockets, and paces up and down the room, without replying.

Maud Baxter, a visitor of Mrs. Clayton's, hurriedly enters, equipped in a pink and white gingham, trimmed prettily with narrow pink and white ribbons and white lace, and wearing a wide-brimmed leghorn hat turned up on one side, which made her look very piquant.

"I am all ready for a walk," said she with a smile. "How do I look?"

Then hesitating and looking around, she exclaimed:

"Why, what is it? what is the trouble with all of you? Can you not tell me, Carl? What is it all about, Mrs. Clayton? Do tell me, M. La Bau. I never saw such serious faces. Is any one dead or are you anticipating something very terrible to happen? I do hope we are not going to be shaken all to pieces with another earthquake," looking anxiously at Mrs. Clay-

ton, who was still sitting with her handkerchief closely pressed over her eyes as if to shut out a horrible vision.

No one made any reply to any of these questions, but M. La Bau immediately arose, extended his hand to Carl, and said: "I will bid you good-morning. I am very sorry if I have made any disturbance."

Carl took the cigar from his lips, looked at him disdainfully without accepting his proffered hand, and simply said "Good-by."

"M. La Bau, I do hope you will come and see us very often," said Mrs. Clayton. "It is very unfortunate to have so much trouble, all for that cunning nobody, who cannot have any conscience at all. I ought to have known that Carl would make a fool of himself some day. It is often the way with men who have seen the most of the world; they are hoodwinked in the end by some artful girl. I sincerely wish I had never come to this horrid place."

Maud Baxter stood looking inquiringly from one to the other, not having heard the previous remarks.

"I should think by your looks that you had all lost your last dollar and last friend. If you are distressed about Carl, Mrs. Clayton, I think it needless, for all the girls are just crazy about him, and he takes no notice of them whatever."

"I wish you could have seen him this morning, dear. He stared over at Miss Boynton's house like an idiot, and not a word in the papers did he read. You know how he torments the servants every morning until he gets them."

"Oh! she is like a beautiful dream! Such a sweet expression! I think she must be lovely. I do wish I could know her better," said Maud, with candor, as she walked out of the house with M. La Bau.

Mrs. Clayton looked at Carl as though still in doubt. "Carl, I cannot now be led to think, that you actually mean what you say. Are you really serious?"

"I am quite serious."

"I really think you have lost your senses. Sit down and calmly think awhile. I had set my heart on your marrying Maud. She is such a dear, good girl. I am so fond of her. I do hope you will change your mind," Mrs. Clayton said with a sigh.

"Never, never shall I change my mind on that subject," he answered with decision. "You must try, mother, and get reconciled and receive her cordially when she again visits us."

"No, I shall never again receive her; she has taken advantage of my kindness," with a scornful look.

"I am sure you have misjudged her greatly. If you remember, we gave her a very urgent invitation to come, which she at first refused, and did not consent to accept until her brother insisted, and she delighted us with her sweet voice."

"I do hope you will yet see your mistake and retract at once, if it is not too late."

"It is too late for my own happiness," answered he.

"I should think you were a boy of nineteen instead of twenty-eight. I regret very much having invited her here. I do not care to have the responsibility

of thrusting such characters on respectable society," said she, with growing wrath.

Carl made no reply, but walked out of the room, out upon the grounds and seated himself in a rustic inclosure to commune with his own thoughts. "Did ever a man please himself in regard to choosing a wife without displeasing some member of his family? My mother speaks as though the heart could be heated at will, like a bath tub, with a little flow of hot water. Our hearts are not telegraph wires that we can set in motion at our pleasure and guide their beating with a touch of the finger. The forces of emotion are beyond our own command.

"I have not the desire to check this passion, if I could. I am too happy in the thought of possessing her, for she is beautiful, good and true, and her face is ever before me in the daytime as well as in my dreams. As for her father, I care not. Of course, I should be better pleased if there was not any stain on the name. I wonder what it is? Gossip mongers will circulate all sorts of disagreeable stories, no doubt, but I will take her away from here to some foreign land; we can live for each other alone. What greater happiness can a man want? She evidently is bored by society, and I find little pleasure in it myself. I will wait awhile and then go to the beach. I shall surely find her there, as I often see her sitting all alone, watching the waves or reading a book."

Minutes, hours went by, and still he sat there regardless of time, so deep in thought was he. Dusk came

on, yet he was still there with his head resting on his hands.

“Carl, Carl!”

Looking up as the sound of his name echoed through the air, he saw Maud running toward him, with her hat in her hand, swinging it to and fro as she went.

“Oh, dear! I am all out of breath and nearly dead, Carl, running around to find you,” she cried, as she stopped to take a long breath.

“Your mother is nearly crazy, hysterical and in great distress. She said she had not seen you since morning, you went off in such a bad humor and acted so strangely toward M. La Bau; she did not know but that you had gone suddenly insane and drowned yourself.”

Carl laughed heartily. “No, I have not any notion of drowning myself. I never was happier in my life.”

Maud looked at him curiously. “Why did you treat Pierre so badly? He would not tell me the conversation that passed between you, but he said you were very much angered, and he is very fond of you. Pierre is such a perfect gentleman, and so thoughtfully kind.”

“You speak of him in a very familiar way, calling him by his first name,” said Carl, a little puzzled.

“That is true, I forgot,” she said, with a restless movement.

“M. La Bau made assertions that I thought reflected on the innocent, and I took him to task; but we will let that pass. I am too happy to be long angry with any one.”

“Happy!” exclaimed she. “Why do you hide your-

self here all day as though you were an escaped lunatic?"

"I wanted to be alone with my thoughts."

"Are you never going to eat anything again? You cannot always exist on a little salt air. Civilized people must eat sometimes. Your mother is very anxious about you, and don't you know that it is nearly dinner-time. It is now after 6 o'clock, so do come, Carl, and let your mother know you are still living and a happy, obedient son as ever. Come, come, now, Carl," said she impatiently, taking hold of the sleeve of his coat and tapping her neat little foot on the ground.

CHAPTER II.

CLOISTER, a two-storied villa, was a short distance from Mrs. Clayton's. It was in a beautiful seaside resort in New England. It stood on an abrupt ground overlooking the ocean. Green vines, intertwined with honeysuckles, ran along the sides of a veranda, where stood a young girl of not over eighteen summers, dressed in a simple white flannel. A silver brooch fastened it at the neck, a silver chain encircled it at the waist. Each hand rested on the railing, as she stood in the bright warm sunlight looking thoughtfully, dreamily, out into the far ocean. She was a very beautiful girl, tall, lithe, and very graceful. Her skin was exquisitely fair; her magnificent eyes, of a deep violet, shaded by long dark lashes; her nose well shaped, and mouth perfect, whether smiling or in repose; her teeth, white and even, and hair of a brownish hue.

Hearing her brother's familiar laugh, "Ha, ha, ha," she turned quickly, and saw him in earnest conversation with a young man of not over twenty-four. He took a piece of paper from his pocket, lifted it high in the air; it fluttered in the breeze and fell at the young man's feet like a tired bird. He eagerly picked it up, and hastily stowed it away in his inner pocket. Joe

took another piece from his vest, waved it to and fro before him, and ran laughing into the house.

“Wait, wait, remember your promise,” the young man cried excitedly, and hastily followed, but the fleetness of Joe carried him swiftly onward, and the door he quickly closed after him, leaving the stranger alone, looking anxiously at the house. Looking through the vines, unseen by him, she saw him plainly.

He was jauntily dressed, rather short and slight, with black hair, black mustache and flashing black eyes. He carried a heavy cane, his hat was slightly inclined on one side, one hand was in his pocket, which gave him an air of *sang-froid*. He was handsome, she thought. A young girl who had seen very little of the world, and especially of the society of men, could easily be led to think him handsome.

“Why had he watched and searched for her brother Joe nearly all the previous day? What was his motive?” So Beatrix Boynton mused. She hastened after her brother, as she remembered his having told her that he was having some fun at the expense of this young man, that he would tell her all, and he would have done so the day before, had they not been interrupted by a friend.

“Oh, Joe,” she cried, as she entered the house, “I am so glad you are here. I have been all anxiety to have you come in and tell me all about it.”

“All about what?” inquired he.

“All about that young man; you must remember you commenced to tell me yesterday; you could not

finish as you met a friend, and I have not had an opportunity to ask you about him until now. I am so——”

“Well, Beatrix,” interrupting her, “that was yesterday.”

“But to-day will do as well,” she persisted.

“I cannot tell you any more; many things have happened since yesterday. I was in hopes it would escape your mind.”

“You have just been in close conversation with that same man,” she continued.

He looked eagerly at her, and inquired: “How did you know that?”

“I was standing outside. I saw you through the vines.”

“I have told you all I can. I am not such a fool of a boy as to run and tell everything I know to everybody.”

“I overheard one remark, Joe.”

He looked startled and inquired, “What was it?”

“You do not confide in me; why should I in you?”

“I made a promise to that young man this morning,” he retorted somewhat testily. “I propose to keep my word. Don’t you think a boy can have and keep a secret? Mamma always taught me never to betray a confidence, and always to tell the truth.”

Beatrix felt grieved, pained, for she dearly loved her brother, but knowing his mischievous nature, was in constant dread and anxiety fearing he would get into some very serious trouble.

“You may be right,” she answered dubiously. “I will not force you against the dictates of your own conscience.”

“Then will you tell me, Beatrix, what you heard?” said he, putting his arms caressingly around her neck.

“Assuredly I will,” she answered kindly. “I simply heard the young man say, ‘Wait, wait, remember your promise.’ I did not listen intentionally, but could not avoid hearing that.”

“Are you sure that was all you heard,” inquired he eagerly.

“Yes, that was all I heard,” she answered gravely.

The next day, seeing on Joe’s table an exquisite cream plush box, inlaid with pearls and filled with delicious bon bons, and by its side a small gold key, delicately marked “A secret,” she knew it must have come from the same dark stranger she had so often seen in her brother’s company. All this heightened her curiosity. “What can it all mean?” she repeatedly asked herself. She could only wait until time should disclose all.

Beatrix Boynton’s family consisted of her mother, her brother Joe, and herself. Her father was still living, but as she had not seen him since she was a mere child, her recollection of him was very dim, and she had never known what it was to have a father’s love and protection. As her mother was in delicate health and her brother much younger than herself, she felt the necessity of taking some charge of him.

One day later, as Beatrix was reading aloud to her

mother, she heard the tramping of feet on the pavement below, and heard people talking in loud, excited voices. Looking out of the window, she saw a large man running as fast as his avoirdupois would allow him, and yelling like an Apache Indian on the war-path, with an excited crowd following him. Glancing down the street, she saw Joe driving at breakneck speed a wild-looking horse, half on the sidewalk, half on the street, swaying from curb to curb. Hurriedly snatching her hat, she rushed out of the house just in time to see him turn a sharp corner, dash up against a house, and speed on like the wind. Rushing on and on as fast as she could, she passed the large man, who was shouting at the top of his voice and puffing violently.

“Oh! I am afraid he will get killed,” she cried.

“I am only afraid he won’t get killed, the rascal! The world is better off without such boys,” shouted the man.

Beatrix turned the corner and saw the horse rushing on, foaming at the mouth, and Joe bouncing up in the air and down again in the bottom of the wagon.

At that moment a man rushed out of a store and caught the horse by the bridle and stopped him so suddenly that Joe was thrown to the ground.

Beatrix was almost paralyzed; she thought he must be killed; she could not move; she covered her face with her hands and stood still. She heard the passing to and fro, but could not speak, so great was her fright.

“Miss Boynton,” some one said, in a pleasant voice, “you had better go to your brother as soon as possible.”

"Is he killed?" she almost whispered.

"No, he is only slightly hurt; but you had better get to him before the owner of the horse reaches him, for he is very angry."

Looking up, she saw the same dark stranger she had so often seen in Joe's company. She made him no reply, but rushed on, and had scarcely entered the store where her brother had been taken when the owner of the horse followed her, all out of breath and wiping his face with a very large red handkerchief. He looked at her savagely.

"Wa'al, where's that boy?" he roared.

"I am sure I don't know," she faltered. "I hope you will not do him any harm."

"Wouldn't I? By gum, I would. I'd scalp him," taking out a jack-knife from his pocket and flourishing it in the air, and again replacing it. "You must think I am a blasted idiot, young miss."

"Your horse is not hurt, your wagon is uninjured," she said consolingly.

"Do you know, miss, that hoss is a colt? I wonder that 'ere boy wa'n't kilt; good thing for the town if he had been, I guess. You city folks come down here and think 'tain't no matter how you treat us country folks, but you'll find out; purty how de do when a feller can't leave his hoss for a minute just to take a cool drink. Now I must have some satisfactshun. I mean biz," again taking out his jack-knife and flourishing it high above his head with the shining blade open.

"I am really very sorry. My brother does not mean

to do harm; he is only mischievous, thoughtless," pleaded Beatrix.

"What do you think I looked like, a man nigh onto fifty, running and kicking up his heels like a yearling calf, and the Widder Jones up yonder looking at me, and she 'peared to like me before. Now she will think I am a blamed fool, and it may be the means of my losing her. A good thrashing would do that 'ere boy good. I wish I had the little dare devil now, blast him, I'd make him squeal," said the man angrily.

"You would, would you?" came from Joe, in the inside room.

"Hold your tongue, you green monkey," thundered the man.

There was only a thin partition between the two rooms, and every word could be distinctly heard, but Beatrix, having found out that the door was securely locked, did not feel alarmed.

"That 'ere boy ought to be tied up; think of it, he ran my hoss for nearly a mile."

"Whoopee, whoop! didn't that hoss of a colt go?" again from the inside room.

"You stop your noise, you little darn-cuss, or I'll knock the daylights out of you," roared the man.

"Oh, don't deprive me of my daylights, sir! Please don't," again from Joe.

"Looke here, miss; you just unlock that door and let me at that 'ere monkey of a boy; jest let me git at him for a few minutes and I'll make short work of him," shaking his hands menacingly before her face.

Beatrix tremblingly retreated a few steps, as his hands were of an extra large size, and she did not care to have them come in very close proximity to her face.

"I nearly killed myself to save my hoss. What do you think a big man like me looks like running down street?" again repeated the man.

"Looked as though you'd bust," again from Joe.

"By thunder, I'll be darned if I don't break the door down," said the man.

"You must keep very quiet, Joe, very quiet indeed. Please don't speak another word, please don't," pleaded Beatrix.

"Look at all them nice fruits I brought to market, and only sold half of them; look at 'em all scattered over the ground. Do you think I'm going to lose all them?" said the man angrily.

"I will willingly pay for them. I should consider it a favor if you will allow me. How many have you sold? How much is your loss?" said Beatrix.

"What do you take me for? A natural rememberin' machine? Take a man a week to do so much thinking up," answered he excitedly.

Beatrix looked out over the ground and it seemed to her that his loss was very small. Taking a five-dollar note out of her pocket book, which she knew to a shrewd Yankee was a great consoler, and passing it to him, she said, "Please take that. Will it pay you?"

"Thank you, thank you, miss; you seem to be a decent kind of a gal," shifting his cud of tobacco to one side, and squinting his eyes and looking at her for a

moment. "Bless me, what a purty critter you are. Downright beauty, no mistake about it. How did you happen to have sich a scapegrace of a brother? But that will be all right, I guess. Don't you feel bad or bother any more about it. I didn't mean nothin' by what I said. Good-by, miss," holding out his hand.

"Ta-ta!" came Joe's parting words.

As soon as the man had gone, the keeper of the store unlocked the door of the inside room. Joe came limping out with his face all drawn up, in a sad plight; his hat was lost, his coat was slit all the way up the back, one shoe was broken, and he was covered with dirt and mud.

"Are you much hurt?" inquired Beatrix anxiously, without a reproach or a thought of his mischief as she looked at his distressed face and dilapidated condition.

"Yes, I am. I do not think I can walk, my ankle pains me so badly. What an old idiot that man was to jerk a fellow to the ground without any notice when he was only trying to have a little fun," he whispered to his sister, looking much grieved, as though he was the one transgressed against instead of the transgressor.

"You ought to be very grateful to him for stopping the horse; he endangered his own life and he hid you away from the fruit dealer, who in his anger might have done you much harm. He saved your life, Joe."

"No, he did not. He nearly jerked the life out of me."

The storekeeper was so busy waiting upon a customer that he did not hear these last remarks.

“You must not try to walk. I think you have a sprained ankle,” said Beatrix.

“Oh! dear! it does pain me so,” responded Joe testily. “I wish I had never had any ankle; better be without than to suffer this way.”

“It is your own fault, Joe, you should not interfere with other people’s things. You are always in mischief. I am so sorry to say it.”

“Beatrix, I am going to be good and never make you any more trouble,” answered Joe penitently.

She willingly forgave this generous, impulsive boy, with his luxuriant brown, curly hair and roguish brown eyes, who was always giving her any amount of trouble.

CHAPTER III.

CARL CLAYTON'S fate was surely an enviable one. He was a very intellectual and Saxon-looking person, with grave, earnest, dark-blue eyes, brown hair and reddish brown mustache. He was tall and graceful, and had a charm and ease of manner very fascinating. He inherited from his father brilliant intelligence and a taste for learning and also a very large fortune. He was an only son, and adored by his mother with a selfishness possessing more of worldly ambition than regard for his own happiness. He had been flattered, petted, worshipped and sought after by women, and courted by men, and now for the first time in his life he had fallen desperately in love with the beautiful girl, Beatrix Boynton. Those soft, violet eyes haunted him as he remembered them uplifted innocently to his or drooped thoughtfully to the floor, the evening before at his mother's *soirée*.

Carl followed Maud to the house and found his mother in a great state of excitement. Her maid was bathing her head, and she was groaning as if in great pain, seeing her son, a faint smile passed over her face. "I have been nearly wild about you, Carl. I did not know as ever again I should see you alive. Where have you been this long, weary day?" inquired she solemnly.

He seated himself beside her, taking her hand in his affectionately, and said: "Console yourself, mother. I have been quite near the house all day, all alone. I have not spoken a word to any one but Maud since I left you this morning."

She looked surprised and inquired, "What have you been doing?"

"I have simply been thinking."

"Thoughts alone will not sustain life very long, and if you continue to act in this way, and sit thinking all day, you will surely die in a lunatic asylum."

Carl laughed. "My thoughts were too pleasant to drive me crazy. I find too much pleasure in this life to desire to throw off this mortal coil at present. Fate has been very kind to me so far, mother."

"You seem to be in a very happy state of mind. I think you will find you have made a great mistake."

"I am very happy, indeed. I am sure, mother, you will find that you have been the one that has been mistaken. I am sorry you have given yourself so much uneasiness of mind in regard to this affair, and hope in time you will be more reconciled."

Mrs. Clayton turned her head away, with a long-drawn sigh. She loved her son as she had never loved any one else, as well as she was capable of loving any one. She had married a man twice her age, who was immensely rich, and had borne his name and position with grace. She was naturally cold and selfish, and her only hope centered in her son. He had always consulted her before, and she thought it only a duty on

his part to consider her wishes before his own. He was fond of his mother, and always treated her with the greatest respect, but he was a man of unusual decision, and had a decided will of his own, and in this case was determined to have his own way.

Mrs. Clayton, after seeing her son, regained her composure somewhat, but that one thought was uppermost in her mind. She was humiliated at the idea of her son's giving his name to a mere nobody, as she thought her, and her intention was to break off the attachment if possible. She hoped it was simply the fancy of a day, although this was the first time she ever heard him express any sentiment for any woman. As she sat with her son and Maud in the evening, she again advanced the subject.

"Carl, do you not think you could overcome this foolish fancy?" mildly she said.

"You speak of the heart, mother, as though it were a watch spring, to be set going by a little gold key, or if it were let alone for a day it would cease its motion."

"It is all perfect nonsense, Carl, for a man of your years to have such ridiculous, sentimental, boyish ideas, and you know there must be something very dreadful about the father when they never dare mention his name to any one. Why do you not investigate? You may know at present?" said she, looking inquiringly at him.

"I do not know, nor do I care. She is not responsible for her father's misdeeds. I will not let his misconduct stand in the way. There are many dark

secrets in many families that are never known to the world. Would Miss Boynton choose to confide in me, I should be very glad to know, but marry her I will," said Carl emphatically.

"Allow me to ask you, what you would do with such a wife in your household," she inquired indignantly.

"I would do the same as other men do with wives," laughed Carl. "She is well fitted for any society; she has both education and refinement."

"She would not be received by any of our friends," retorted his mother.

"That would be very little to regret. A happy, peaceful home with loved ones around you is much more to be desired than the gilded hall of wealth or glamour of renown."

"Pshaw!" angrily tapping her foot on the carpet.

"You do not talk with any reason. My patience is exhausted," she exclaimed.

Maud looked up inquiringly from the books she was reading, as she had only caught a few words now and then, and did not know of this little love affair. "What is it, Mrs. Clayton?" she asked. "Carl acts and talks so strangely. I did not know that he ever differed with you."

"We have a lunatic, a madman, in our presence, I think; I hardly know which term to apply to him. I am disgusted with my own son. I really think I ought to consult a physician and have him prescribe some very powerful drug."

"Powerful enough to put me out of the world,"

laughingly replied Carl. "But it cannot be helped now, mother; her beautiful face haunts me. I feel as though life would be miserable without her."

"I have always gratified every wish. You have been indulged even in the merest trifles, and now to act so unwisely, so selfishly, and throw your life away on an impostor, a humdrum. I have brought you up with such delicate care—my time all thrown away. It is exasperating," she said, closing her eyelids and looking very much distressed.

"I am very sorry to displease you, mother, but it is an affair of the heart, and I do not think I am acting unwisely."

"Not even though it cost the misery of others, I suppose."

"I do not understand," said Maud dreamily, looking up again from the book in her hands.

"Let us leave him to rave alone; it is intolerable. Come, dear," said Mrs. Clayton, as she took Maud by the hand and led her from the room.

She was chagrined, disappointed. She had entertained the thought that Carl would marry Maud Baxter. That had been her pet anticipation for nearly two years past. She was in every way his equal, her mother was an old-time friend, who had inherited a large fortune, which Maud and her sister would come into possession of at her death.

Maud was petite, vivacious, and bright, although not considered critically pretty. Her mouth was large; she had full rosy lips, black hair and beautiful large brown eyes, which were her best feature.

Carl, left to himself, paced up and down, until long after midnight, thinking, and the more he thought the more excited and heated his imagination became. "She is the most beautiful girl I have ever seen, and she just suits my fancy. I am determined to marry her," he said a thousand times to himself. Opposition had only stimulated his passion, as is usually the case. "I am sorry to disappoint my mother, but she will love her when she knows her better. I will watch for her to-morrow, as she takes her usual walk on the beach, and tell her all. How happy we shall be? I am impatient for the time to come," Carl murmured to himself, as he ascended the stairs to bed that night.

CHAPTER IV.

“BEATRIX, will you not come with me for a short walk along the beach? It is cruel to keep a boy indoors this beautiful day,” said Joe, standing on one foot looking out the window the day after the accident.

“But you cannot bear your weight on your foot yet. How do you think you can walk?” she replied.

“By your assistance and a cane,” he persisted.

“Very well, I will go,” answered she.

“Dress up in one of your pretty dresses and look very nice.”

Beatrice laughed softly. “I will let you dictate my dress. What shall I wear?”

“Wear that large leghorn hat, lined with dark-blue velvet turned up on one side and trimmed with white daisies and blue velvet, and that blue and white dress, trimmed with white lace and the same colored velvet as your hat—that is very stylish—and your silver girdle,” and he continued enumerating the different articles she should put on.

She dressed to please him, and together they went a short distance and seated themselves on a bench near the ocean. They had been there but a few moments before she saw the same dark stranger coming toward them whom she had often seen in her brother’s company.

“Why, Joe, where did he come from?” inquired she, in astonishment, as he slowly passed and lifted his hat politely. “I should think he was following you around.”

Joe laughed and clapped his hands together joyfully, and said half-aloud: “It is a good joke.” Turning to his sister, he remarked:

“He is French. Is he not handsome? Did you notice what a beautiful mouth and what very white teeth he has?”

“Yes,” she replied thoughtfully, yet a sense of distrust grew up in her heart against him, why she could not explain.

“He is so good,” said Joe with emphasis.

“How do you know that, Joe?”

“He is so generous. Did you not see the nice candies he gave me? A man that will be so good to a boy amounts to something. A man like that would not tell a falsehood. He reminds me of George Washington.”

“Generosity to a boy, in your estimation, constitutes goodness,” said Beatrix, with a little laugh.

“I think he will make a great man some day,” answered Joe, with an earnest nod of the head.

“Why? Because he gave you that beautiful pearl box of candies, with a gold key? When are you going to tell me that secret? I am very anxious to hear it. It seems my destiny to have secrets. I am overburdened with them.”

“I do not see as you have more than one, sister. That is more than most girls can keep.”

"I wish I had only that one," answered she softly. I do not like mysteries; anything is better than suspense."

"I do not like mysteries either, and I won't have any. I will search them all out," Joe replied.

"Should she tell him? No, the time is not far distant when he must know all. What a tempest there will be?" she thought.

"You ought to like that gentleman, Trix. Do you know what he said about you?"

"No. What did he say?" inquired she curiously.

"He asked me who that beautiful, graceful girl was with me one day we met him when we were walking together."

"That was very kind, but no doubt he said that thinking it would please you. There he is, Joe, sitting opposite and looking directly at us so earnestly. It makes me uncomfortable. Do you not think it is time to go home?" she said nervously, as a blush suffused her face.

"I can make him much more uncomfortable than he can make you by simply looking at you," declared Joe, laughing, "but it is growing late, and if you think best we will go."

Darkness came on as Beatrix and her brother walked home in silence, she thinking and wondering what the secret could be between this strange dark man and Joe, who had guarded it so safely from her. Two days went by. There was to be a hop at the most fashionable hotel. Invitations had been sent to all the owners of

cottages at the seaside. Beatrix and Joe were among the invited guests.

"I intend to go this evening," said Joe. "I have sent Michael down to the store to buy a crutch. I do not propose to come to the seaside and sit on my haunches all the season like a poor old cripple. I ought to have some sport after poring over those rusty old studies all winter—Latin, French, German. What good is that going to do a fellow? He gets too much nonsense in his head studying so much. I wonder it did not kill me."

"I cannot understand why you persist in going to the hop with your sprained ankle, Joe. What pleasure can it be? You cannot dance," said Beatrix, a little surprised. "Then poor mamma will be all alone with the servants. I do not think I ought to leave her."

"Mamma said she desired to have us go and have all the pleasure and enjoyment we can, but you, Beatrix, never seem to want me to have any pleasure at all," said Joe, looking as though he was very much abused.

"I sacrifice much for your pleasure, as my inclination would be to remain at home," replied she.

Beatrix's expostulations and entreaties were of no avail. So when evening came she arrayed herself in a light, silvery blue silk, trimmed with blue tulle and besprinkled with silver spangles. A bunch of lilies of the valley was fastened at the waist, and one row of pearls adorned her neck. An exceedingly simple and becoming costume.

It was late when they arrived at the hotel. Beatrix

hesitated as she advanced near the door. "Joe, do not go now," she pleaded. "Every one seems to be looking at us, and it almost terrifies me to walk the long hall before all those people, there being no seats near the entrance."

"Pshaw! I am not afraid. You look as nice as any one. Your dress is lovely, and you look so sweet; that is why you attract so much attention," said he consolingly.

"No, no, I cannot go," as the thought passed through her mind: "They may know something of my father's history," and a deep flush overspread her fair skin.

"Come, Beatrix, the music is fine." Joe began to hum the air in a low tone, and as he took hold of the top of her glove, she could not retreat, but walked timidly down the long room, Joe's crutch going thump, thump, with every step. She could not hear anything but that. It seemed to her that it drowned everything else in the room. Don't, Joe, please don't put that crutch down so hard; put it down a little more softly," pleadingly she said.

"How hard you are on a poor lame boy. You are so timid, Beatrix, I suppose, it must be natural," and he went on talking as fast as he could, as though perfectly unconscious of the presence of any one, and bowing to acquaintances as he passed, as he had made many, while Beatrix scarcely knew any one. A moment later she saw the same dark stranger she had seen many times in conversation with her brother pushing through the crowd toward them. He greeted Joe cordially, and

talked with him in a low tone a few moments. Then Joe, turning to his sister, said: "The young man has requested an introduction."

"Oh, no!" she pleaded. "I do not care to be introduced to any one. I enjoy seeing others dance."

But Joe insisted. "My sister, M. La Bau," introducing her. This was the first time she had ever heard his name spoken.

"I hope I have not intruded," said M. La Bau, in a low monotone. "I am, indeed, pleased to meet you. I have had many pleasant chats with your brother, and have seen you so often I feel as though I ought to know you quite well. May I not have the pleasure of a dance with you?"

He takes her tablet, coolly writes his name for a waltz, with assuring confidence, without giving her an opportunity to decline. "That was a most pleasurable dance, Miss Boynton. I cannot express to you how much I enjoyed it," said he, as he took her back to her seat. "You dance like a fairy, and look like an angel," laying his hand on his heart the while, and looking at her lovingly, in a flirtatious manner sometimes assumed by men.

"I shall again come very soon to claim you; so *au revoir*."

Beatrix opened her dreamy eyes wide, looks up at him in a childlike way as though she did not quite understand his meaning, and slightly bows as he leaves. She had not been seated long before Carl Clayton came to her. He had heard that she was there, and had hur-

ried from his house to the hotel expressly to find her. Carl's face beamed with a happy smile as he addressed her. She looked more lovely, if possible, than the first night he saw her.

"It will give me great pleasure if you will allow me to dance with you," Carl said, in a most courteous manner.

"You are very kind, Mr. Clayton, but I beg to be excused. I enjoy sightseeing. This is all quite new to me. I have never been to so large a ball before. My mother is an invalid; she never goes into society and never receives. We live very quietly, excepting when my brother Joe stirs up the household by his mischief. But mamma is very lovely, very gentle, very kind. I am always happy with her at home," said Beatrix softly, dropping her eyelids and looking to the floor.

"If you do not object I will sit beside you. I am not overfond of dancing myself, and I will do a little sightseeing also. The room is overcrowded, and the weather warm for much exercise. It is a very pretty scene, with the brilliant lights reflecting on many sparkling jewels, is it not?" said Carl.

"And here are exquisitely dressed women and many pretty girls," Beatrix added.

"There are many beautiful girls here I admit, and nearly all from Boston," answered Carl, looking at her admiringly.

Beatrix simply smiles without replying, but thinks how charming and delightful he is as he sits and chats with her awhile.

“Have you not even danced once?” questioned Carl.

“Only once, with M. La Bau,” she replied.

A frown passed over Carl’s face at the mention of M. La Bau’s name. “You must feel fatigued sitting here so long in the heat, let us walk awhile. We may be able to find a cooler spot; a little air would be refreshing,” said he.

She arises reluctantly and accepts his proffered arm. As they walk up and down the long room, every eye is looking at this beautiful girl, who so gracefully paces up and down the room, leaning on the arm of the handsome and wealthy Carl Clayton. Every one from New York knows him, but they are curious to know who his beautiful companion is. All his masculine friends are on the *qui vive*, and you hear a murmur of wonder and admiration as she slowly passes through the room.

Beatrice being conscious that they are attracting attention, the rose color deepens on her cheeks. She uplifts her soft, dreamy eyes to his. “Every one seems to be looking at you, Mr. Clayton, do you not prefer to sit down?” she said.

“You are the attraction,” he answered courteously. “With your consent, we will take a walk outside in the open air. I think it will be much more agreeable to you away from the dazzling lights and crowds of strangers.”

The grounds looked very pretty with their little variegated, soft, fairy lights scattered here and there. They walked slowly around in deep thought for some moments.

Carl broke the silence: "Let us sit down here and talk in quietude."

She made no response, but took a seat on the rustic bench, as he silently pointed for her to be seated, glad to be away from the bustle inside. They sat in silence for many moments, he gazing at her intently, passionately.

The soft moon was shining brightly against the dazzling whiteness of her skin, as her face was uplifted in all its sweetness and purity to the blue of the sky.

"Have you enjoyed the evening?" inquired Carl.

"I enjoyed the music exceedingly. I thought it delightful. I always enjoy music, I am very fond of it, but I sometimes think there is more to be enjoyed in the quietude of your home than in the tumult of society."

There was much sadness in her voice as she spoke these last words. The fear of family exposure was always before Beatrix Boynton, that terrible suspense, fear of what she knew not.

"You speak like an old recluse who has retired from the world in disgust after many seasons of pleasure—you so young, so beautiful, so charming, and your first season out, I imagine. I cannot understand it, when all young people seek society so eagerly. You differ greatly from the young ladies I have met," declared Carl.

"I fear you think me most strange. I do not want to be unlike other girls," she said suddenly, turning her face to his; then quickly added: "I enjoyed seeing the young ladies dance; they were pretty, were they not?"

"I admit the young ladies looked very pretty, this evening, but you were the most lovely of all in my eyes," replied Carl, gallantly dropping his voice to almost a whisper.

Beatrix made no response to the compliments paid her, but after a moment's thought said: "I should have inquired after your mother. I was in hopes to see her here this evening. She is so thoughtful and kind. I think her very charming."

"I am glad you like her," answered Carl.

Beatrix, bending her head slightly, and dropping her glance to the ground, sat in silence.

"Are your thoughts far away, Miss Boynton?" inquired he. Not receiving any answer, he continued. "Will you grant me one request? Will you give me one small flower?" touching a lily of the valley fastened on the bodice of her dress; "just a little souvenir of the most pleasant evening I ever spent?"

She hesitated a moment, then slowly drew a single flower from the bunch and passed it to him without uttering a word.

Carl's face flushed as he took it, and he simply said, "I thank you."

"It is growing late. I am anxious to get home to my mamma; I will go and find my brother," said Beatrix.

"I have been so well entertained that I had no idea of the lateness of the hour. If agreeable I will accompany you home."

"No, thanks. I will not intrude on you, as I have

Joe with me, and it is only a few steps from here," she answered.

"Yes, Mr. Clayton, do come with us," Joe said, as he heard the last remark. "You will be more of a protection than I am, for my sister is so timid I really think she is looking forward to being swallowed up by some unknown object."

"What truants you are," said Mrs. Baxter, as she met them at the door. "The men are all raving about you, dear," giving Beatrix a gentle hug and kiss. "Good-night, come over and see me very often," said she as they parted.

Carl walked with her and her brother Joe to the gate, silent and thoughtful.

CHAPTER V.

JOE had now entirely recovered from his sprain, and was ready for more sport as he termed it. As he was walking home about dark one evening, he saw a goat grazing by the wayside. "Now I'll have a little fun with Biddy, the cook," he said to himself. By caressing, coaxing, and half-carrying, he managed to get it up two flights of stairs to her room, which was but a small one. It was after 11 o'clock when Bridget prepared to go to bed. Everything was still outside; the village was serene, peaceful and quiet, not a sound could be heard. Mrs. Boynton, not being well, had gone to bed early, as was her custom.

"Let me read to you awhile, Trix. I am not sleepy, and do not care to go to bed yet," said Joe, laughing, thinking of the trouble Biddy would have to get the goat downstairs.

"You seem to have something very amusing on your mind, and are in a very entertaining mood for you, considering the lateness of the hour," replied Beatrix, with a little short laugh. She seated herself beside him and listened quietly while he was reading.

As Biddy opened the door of her room, she could not see anything—all was darkness within. The goat sprang at her and butted her directly in the stomach, and

down she went sprawling full length on the floor in the hallway.

"Oh! spare me life, take all me belongin's, but spare me life. Plaze, plaze, Mr. Burglar, let a poor girrl live," humbly pleaded Biddy, as she scrambled to her feet and ran downstairs, screaming at every step at the top of her voice, "murder, police, burglars, robbers in the house, robbers in the house!"

"Don't let them come in here! Don't let them in here!" shrieked Mrs. Boynton, in anguish, as she jumped out of bed quickly to shut and lock the door that Joe had purposely left open, anticipating a very jovial time.

Biddy kept running on her way out into the street, screaming loudly all the time, "Police! police! murder! murder!"

Beatrix bounded up from her chair, suddenly opened her window, thrust her head out and joined her voice with Bridget's in screaming, "Police!"

"Great goodness, don't yell like that, Trix; for heaven's sake, don't," said Joe in terror, pulling her back by the dress; "you'll have all the neighbors here."

"That is just what I want to do. We need all the assistance we can get. Do let my dress alone," said she, pulling her dress away and trembling from head to foot. "I do wish you would shout for me, your voice is so much stronger than mine."

"I don't want to shout. Biddy is a fool to make such a fuss. Let me go after her. I can soon pacify her, I know I can," said Joe anxiously. Everything

was in commotion and confusion in the house as well as out.

“Stop, Joe; you must not go out into the hall, it is not safe; the robber may kill you. I have always heard they are very powerful men,” said Beatrix breathlessly, snatching the key from the door and hiding it. By this time Joe was thoroughly frightened, seeing the fearful excitement in the street. The result was so different from what he had expected that the thought of fun had fully vanished. The voice of the small boy rose simultaneously with that of the men and ruffians. Bidy was in the middle of the street gesticulating wildly.” Go away with yez,” she said to a strange man. “Does yer think the likes of me would lie? Didn’t I tell yer he was a great big man and pounded me right here in the stomach and tried to kill me and gave me a terrible palpitation at me heart?”

“But do you not think you could be mistaken?” said the stranger.

“Indade, no, sor. A girrl that’s traveled around as much as meself knows a robber when he gets at her and tries to thump her to death, I’ll let you know, and didn’t I see the big eyes of him even in the dark,” said Bidy, rolling up her eyes as though she was in a fit, and with a decided nod at the man.

In a few moments two big policemen came running rapidly up to the house with pistols and clubs. They tiptoed up the stairs, softly opened the door, and a loud report of a pistol was heard.

“They have caught the burglar,” said Beatrix ex-

citedly; "they have caught him; how fortunate. I am so glad there was no chance of his escaping, too many people around; we saved our lives by simply making a noise. Hear that; they have shot him twice."

Joe gave a nervous start and winked his eyes at hearing the shot. He felt as though it ought to have hit him, but he was really afraid to make any explanation now, after it had gone so far, while there were so many around.

"They must have wounded him at least," said Beatrix, with a shudder.

"Oh!" groaned Joe. "I hope he is not hurt."

"Do you mean you hope the policemen are not hurt?" inquired Beatrix, still trembling violently.

"No! no! no! he couldn't hurt the policemen," moaned Joe.

"I do not care if the burglar is hurt, prowling around in other people's houses. They may have killed him, I shouldn't wonder if they had," said she.

"I do hope they haven't killed him," said Joe sadly. "Poor little fellow, I am so sorry."

"I do hope you are not in sympathy with horrid robbers. Indeed, you cannot be," said Beatrix, with tears in her eyes. "You say, 'poor little fellow.' I did not think you were so bad; it almost breaks my heart to think of it. I would not let mamma know that for the world. A man that breaks into houses at night, and sometimes murders the inmates."

"He didn't break in," again groaned Joe. "He is a dear, sweet little creature."

“You call a bad, vicious robber a dear, sweet creature. It distresses me to hear you talk. I think you must be crazy to try to make me think a wicked burglar is such a lovable person. Here they are bringing him down. I can hear them. He must be a very heavy man,” said Beatrix, in a quivering voice. “They must have hurt him badly if they didn’t kill him.”

“Oh, dear; oh, dear,” said Joe, at this dismal intelligence, and quietly slipped into his room, quickly removed his clothes, and into his bed he went and covered himself all over with the bedclothes, head and all, and uttered a final dismal, “oh!”

“Here is the burglar,” said the policeman, laughing, as he came downstairs with the goat under his arm, kicking violently, very much frightened, but unhurt. Beatrix went to Joe’s room, looked in and heard him breathing heavily with his head covered. She thought he was sound asleep and would not disturb him, although it was all assumed. The house soon resumed its usual quietude.

“I am tired of the seaside,” said Joe the next day. “A boy cannot have any fun at all without everybody runs and looks at him as though he was a curiosity.”

“It would be delightful to go up to the White Mountains, do you not think so?” said Beatrix.

“No. I will not go up there among those barbarians. You cannot go out on the street without falling over cabbages and almost breaking your neck, and the snakes run all over you at night when you are quietly sleeping.”

“You meet very charming people there. You are mistaken. If you remember, I was there a few years ago,” replied Beatrix.

“There are a lot of wild animals there, too,” said Joe.

“Wild animals?” said Beatrix, looking at him inquiringly.

“Bears, bears. You have to climb the tallest tree and sit there all day for fear a black bear will hug you to death and make a meal out of your young, tender flesh. No, you need not suggest any such place to me.”

“You never have been there, Joe, or you would have a different opinion. The scenery is magnificent; the air is delicious; it seems to be perfumed with new-mown hay; and it would be a nice place to sketch.”

“Sketch? What would you sketch, a lot of angle worms and frogs that croak all night and keep a fellow awake? Perhaps you would like to sketch your brother Joe disappearing down a bear’s throat. No, my cottage by the sea is preferable to that place,” said Joe in disgust.

“You know but little about your early history and have traveled but little if you think that about the beautiful States of New Hampshire and Vermont, and I think mamma ought to have a change, she looks so tired, so weary. I am so distressed about her; the doctor says she has had some terrible mental trouble. What should we do without our dear mamma?” said Beatrix tearfully.

Joe looked at her in wonder as though the thought

had never occurred to him. "He didn't say she was going to die, did he?" inquired he.

"He did not tell me she would die at present, neither did he suggest a change. It occurred to me that it might do her good. The doctor said she must not have the least thing to vex or perplex her, and she was very much frightened last night, and was in a very nervous state."

"I am so sorry, sweet sister, if I distressed her," answered Joe, putting his arms around her neck and kissing her affectionately. "I must be willing to go anywhere if best for mamma, and will try and be good and never make her any more trouble."

CHAPTER VI.

As Beatrix stood in the bay window one morning and saw a fierce storm raging without, dashing, roaring like an infuriated beast, the thought came to her: "Was it more violent than the beating of her own sad heart? But as she saw the glistening, sparkling water in all its splendor and grandeur, how could she doubt that there was a God who ruled our destiny?"

"Are you ready for a drive? Joe said to her two days later. "We will go the fashionable road to see Mrs. Clayton arrayed in her beautiful costumes and in her splendid turnout. They astonish the natives with their elegance. You like her very much, do you not, Trix?"

"Very much, indeed. I think her very charming. She received me with so much ease and grace, and made me feel perfectly at home. and addressed me so kindly when I was so much embarrassed after singing at her house. I suppose that well-bred ease only a woman of society and the world can acquire; but it is delightful to meet with such people, and then she entertains so lavishly."

"Here they come," said Joe, after they had driven a short distance. "I can hear the clanking of the heavy chains," and as they looked they saw her glossy black prancing steeds, collared in white,

approaching, with their heads decorated with purple violets, with livered coachman and footman, and the silver chains glistening, glittering in the sun as they advanced. Mrs. Clayton was alone, and amid the softness of the dark purple cushion of the carriage she was reclining. As she passed, Beatrix smiled and made a low, respectful bow; but Mrs. Clayton moved her head so slightly and looked at her with such a cold, scornful expression she could not tell whether she bowed or not.

“Did you see her bow, Joe? Do you think she intended to slight me? I do not think she responded. I do not understand it. I do hope I have not displeased her,” said Beatrix dubiously.

“I did not notice,” replied Joe carelessly.

“What could I have done? I am at a loss to know. It really makes me unhappy. Perhaps I have made a blunder as to the rule of etiquette. If so I would willingly go and request her pardon.”

“Do not allow that to disturb you, Beatrix. Mrs. Clayton may have been afraid of disarranging her beautiful false curls, so carefully placed in line upon her forehead. It is a matter of indifference to me whether she bows or not. I shall not lose much sleep over it,” declared Joe.

A short distance farther they met Miss Baxter and Mr. Clayton riding together. Carl sat well elevated in a handsome cart, irreproachably dressed as always, driving a pair of splendid bays. They both bowed, Maud smiling pleasantly and waving her hand.

“Clayton has the nobbiest trap out, Trix. Do you not think so?” said Joe.

“Yes,” she replied thoughtfully. She bent her head deep in thought. She felt grieved, disturbed. She must somehow have offended Mrs. Clayton. She wondered and pondered what she could have done. Beatrix Boynton had never given matrimony a thought. Though gifted with great beauty, she was as ignorant of coquetry as a child. She had lived quietly, been educated at home, and had given so much time to her mother and brother that her thoughts were engrossed in them. That was her little world. After returning home, she walked alone to the beach to think of the past few weeks, so vivid and fresh in her mind. It was late in the afternoon; the beach looked quite desolate. There were only a few lone fishermen, toiling away to earn what little they could from day to day. The thought came to her as she seated herself quietly on the rude rough bench: “Are they not happier than I, who have a cloud on my name, not from any misdeed of my own, but through the sin of another who ought to be my guide and protector? Why should I suffer for the sins and follies of others? I have never designedly wronged any one, but think I have done my duty to God and man, at least as far as I know how. Why should the innocent be punished?” She rebelled against the man who so cruelly had wronged her good, kind mother and caused so much suffering. So absorbed in thought was she that minutes, an hour, passed, and still she sat motionless, unconscious of being watched,

Round a curve a yacht was slowly, gliding, and loitered near the ocean side. A man stood gazing long at the figure on the bench. He stepped lightly on shore, and moved softly toward her.

“Miss Boynton.”

She started at the mention of her name as it resounded through the stillness, like a criminal who is being pursued for justice.

“Pardon me. I did not intend to startle you,” Mr. Clayton said. “I have been fully an hour watching you. I cannot tell you how much you interest me. You are so young, and yet you seek solitude. I have been a patient watcher for some days past, hoping to find you here as I have something to say to you.” Seating himself beside her, and taking the little faded lily of the valley from beneath his coat that she had given him nearly two weeks previous, he said: “Do you remember this? I have treasured these few faded leaves as a little memento coming from the fairest of women.”

She uplifted her eyes to his, dropped them, looked at the flower, but still was silent.

“You must be very fond of the ocean. I have often seen you alone here. Have you ever taken a trip abroad?” inquired he kindly.

“Never,” she answered, in a low, musical voice.

“Do you think you would enjoy a trip across?” questioned Carl.

She smiled faintly. “I think I should enjoy it very much if mamma and my brother could go. It might benefit mamma to take a long sail on the ocean. I

should have to consult a physician first before going." Then turning to him, she said: "I have been informed that you go to Europe in the autumn."

"That has been our intention," replied he.

Carl looked silently at her for a few moments. They were all alone, and he had watched and waited for many days for this chance to occur. Only the seagulls could be seen that flew noiselessly above their heads.

"I wish I could divine your thoughts, Beatrix, or share a small portion of them," he said, in a low, pathetic tone as she sat with her head bent, looking thoughtfully on the ground.

"I was thinking how far it was to Europe. I have traveled so little that it appears a very long distance to me to cross the ocean; it almost seems as though it was the emblem of separation," she answered, as she carelessly twisted the silk in the tassel of her cloak.

"True; the ocean separates countries, but it does not kill affection," in a still lower tone he answered. "I have crossed many times in many ways, and I cannot tell which I prefer."

"I may never go," she replied doubtfully.

"Would you regret or miss me should I leave?" inquired Carl.

"Oh! very much. I am sure I should," she said with candor.

"I think of you very often, Beatrix. I think I could be very happy if I could always have you by my side."

Her head was drooped, her face was very thoughtful, but she made him no answer.

“Do you not think you could be happy with me?” inquired he, moving still closer, and gently taking her hand.

A deep blush suffused her face, and she looked up at him in surprise and amazement, as though she did not quite comprehend.

“I have loved you from the first night I saw you. I think I should be wretched without you. You are daily, hourly in my thoughts.”

“Are you not to marry Miss Baxter? I have been told so,” said Beatrix very softly.

“No, Beatrix, I shall never marry any one but you.”

Carl, seeing her embarrassment, continued: “Maud Baxter’s family have been intimate friends of my mother’s for many years; my mother is very fond of her, and she is a very nice girl in her way. Her parents, as well as my mother, are very anxious to make a match for us, but I do not desire any one to select a life companion for me. I shall follow the dictates of my own heart. Maud seems very well contented here, and I am rather surprised, as she had formed an attachment for a young man she met in Paris whom I have never seen. Her parents sent her here hoping to break it off, and I think they have succeeded.”

“I have heard that she was here last year,” said Beatrix endeavoring to draw the conversation from herself.

“She visited some friends here last summer, and liked it so much that she prevailed upon my mother to

come this year, and she has brought pleasure to my life; for if it were not for Maud, I should never have known you, but allow me to talk about you, Beatrix; you do not seem quite contented."

"Contented?" she echoed softly.

"If there is any deep sorrow overhanging your young life, let me lighten the burden by sharing it with you," said Carl, looking with an eager, loving glance down into her sweet face.

Tears started to her eyes, as she turned her head away to avoid his glance, and answered: "Oh! no, no, do not ask me. I do not know as I have any."

"I sincerely hope not, but sometimes our sorrow, our afflictions, can be alleviated by having sympathy. I shall strive to drive away all sorrow and to make your life happy; your pleasure shall be my pleasure," he said, in mild reply, as he still retained possession of her hand. "Although I should consider it a privilege to be let into your confidence," he added, "yet as it seems against your inclination, I shall not insist, but if you will express to me any desire, any wish, it will give me pleasure to grant it. Can you not tell me what you desire most, Beatrix?"

Beatrix was silent a moment; she was half-frightened; it was unexpected. She did not know how to answer.

"Can you not tell me, Beatrix?" he again repeated.

"I can only be a friend," she slowly and sadly answered. Carl looked at her half-smiling, as he thought she could not have understood him.

“You evidently think I am jesting. I am quite in earnest. I love you, Beatrix. This is the first time I have ever made such a declaration to any woman. Do not doubt me. Do you not think I love you?” he questioned in a low, earnest tone.

“I cannot say more. I do not know how I can,” she answered, in an almost inaudible voice. Carl looked at her in amazement, he could not comprehend how any one could reject him. The thought of a refusal had never occurred to him.

“You must think this is mere pretence on my part. I sincerely love you, and will make you my wife. Do you understand me?” looking at her with keen scrutiny.

“I am sure I understand. I cannot marry you,” she softly answered. There were tears in her eyes, in her voice, as she said these words.

“I cannot comprehend what it all means. You must have a good reason. Have you made a former promise that you feel in duty bound to keep?” questioned Carl.

She made him no answer to this question, but sat silently gazing at the ground beneath her.

“There must be some very good cause for your refusal. Does M. La Bau stand in the way?” he inquired.

“I have only seen him a few times, and know him but slightly,” she replied. “You have known him a long time, I believe.”

“No, I have only known him a few months, only since I came here. Maud introduced him into our family. I think she must have become acquainted with

him in New York, as he seems to be an old acquaintance. I do not take interest enough in him to talk about him. Did I hear you aright, Beatrix? I am in no mood to be trifled with," he said gravely, as if in doubt yet.

Beatrix evaded an answer. "It is growing quite late, Mr. Clayton. I fear mamma will be very anxious about me. I must go home at once, as it is nearly 7 o'clock."

"I was not aware it was so late. Darkness is nearly upon us, and you have not had your dinner yet. I was thoughtless. Time has passed very swiftly," Carl said dubiously. They walked silently to the house, Carl looking at her continuously, with a perplexed, puzzled expression on his face. "Must I take no for a final answer?" persisted he, as he took her hand to bid her good-night, still looking intently at her, as if to read her inner thoughts.

"It must be no," she answered, in a tremulous voice, and a long-drawn sigh unconsciously escaped her lips.

"You are greatly agitated. Why so much emotion?" said Carl coldly, as he held her trembling hand. Beatrix broke away from him, ran into the house, stole quietly up to her room, and throwing herself on the bed, burst into tears. Burning, scorching tears rolled down her cheeks. It was a relief to her sad, aching heart. She lay there for hours, and at last fell quietly asleep. When she awoke it was near dawn. She thought it all over, what had passed in those few brief hours, and she had lost him; one whom the world had

courted and flattered, whom mercenary mammas had tried in vain to captivate for their daughters. It all seemed so strange to her. "I will avoid him. I will try and never again see him; for if I should accept him, I should have to tell him all my family history. It would only be a just question for him to ask, but what can I tell? If I should not say anything, then he might think it is worse than it is, and if I tell him there is a mystery about my father he surely would break away and leave me, and that would be so mortifying. No, better as it is. I did not think he would ask me to marry him," she murmured as she walked wearily to the window and looked out.

The sun had just risen, pouring a flood of glorious light over the placid ocean, which was as calm as a river this warm July morning. She sat there for nearly two hours, thinking and watching the peaceful waters. "Oh! how much that was beautiful in life. Why should she fret her young life away? Why did not her mother make a *confidante* of her, and let her share her grief with her? But, no; that was not her mother's nature to tax any one with her afflictions. She would suffer alone in silence. If I could only know about the absent," she almost moaned. She at last slowly arose and descended to the breakfast room with a sad heart.

"Beatrix, dear, you look pale, fatigued," her mother said as she entered the room. "I hope you are not ill."

"No, mamma, dear, I am not ill. I feel slightly tired. I did not rest well last night. My fatigue, I think will soon pass away," she replied languidly.

“My dear, I waited for you a long time last evening. I did not know what had become of you. I went to your room and found you sleeping before undressing long after midnight.”

Beatrice smiled faintly, and simply nodded her head.

“Mrs. Clayton and her handsome son are the talk of the town with their brilliant receptions and gorgeous turnouts. They put our one-horse chaise all in the shade,” remarked Joe.

Mrs. Boynton kept a coachman and one horse, which they used in a *coupé*, and Joe had a village cart which they sometimes drove out in.

“Clayton is one of the most charming, courteous men I have ever met. I admire him greatly, and he is certainly very handsome. Do you not think so, Trix?” said Joe.

“Yes,” she softly murmured.

CHAPTER VII.

CARL CLAYTON went home and thought it all over, and the more he thought the more perplexed he was, and the less he understood it. The possibility of being rejected he had never thought of. He had always thought and been taught that the offer of his hand would be received by any one with the greatest gratification. He was not egotistical, but he had been flattered, adored and idolized by all women, and he knew that he had everything to give in return. He did not think that any living woman would refuse him, and this one particularly, who had little of this world's goods, comparatively, and was leading such a simple life, her parents neither giving her position nor wealth, while he had everything to give her. The only way he could explain it was that there was some one else she loved. "I cannot think of anything else but that lovely girl. Can I have been mistaken in her? Am I merely a toy, a plaything in her hands? If it is affectation, she is the most finished coquette I ever met, but this is the last opportunity she will have to display her art with me. Her visits to the beach may be to meet some one. I will wait and watch for her to-morrow at the time I usually see her there," he said in thought.

He paced up and down the long rooms for many hours, but could not unravel the enigma.

His mother's watchful eye had detected that he was disturbed, displeased. "There is something wrong," she thought, "and I think I can understand it," as a happy look passed over her face. "He has offered himself and is tired of her already, and he does not know how to get disentangled. He is so honorable he will think he must marry her after making her a promise. I knew it would be that way. He ought to have known better in the first instance. No man wants to marry into such a family after serious reflections. I will find a way to help him out. I should not hesitate for one moment to go and tell her to her face just what my opinion is. What right has such an impostor to force my son to keep a promise without his knowing something about the family?"

"You look depressed, sad, Carl. Have you altered your mind? you surely have a perfect right to do so. I am glad if your eyes are opened at last, and you think this fair flower will not suit you. Leave her to me, I will devise a way out of it. A person has the privilege of repenting what is said in haste. A love so hasty soon cools. It is so humiliating to be thrown in with that class of people. When you once get in with them, it is almost impossible to shake them off."

Carl stopped, turned abruptly. "I do not think you understand, mother," he said.

"I was thinking that you did not care so much for this lily of the valley," taking the little faded, dried

flower up from the floor, where he had unconsciously dropped it.

He held his hand out for it. "Yes, I care for it, it is the only little remembrance I have, the only thing she ever gave me," he sadly answered.

"Are you really going to marry her then?" his mother inquired, looking anxiously at him.

"No."

"I am very glad you have so decided. I thought in time that your own sense and discretion would see that it was a foolish infatuation," she answered.

Carl looked earnestly at her for a moment, as though in deep thought, and finally said:

"She has refused me, mother."

"What? refused you—you—refu—" hesitating a moment. "What did you say, Carl?" looking stunned and amazed.

"Yes, she has rejected me."

"What do you mean, Carl, by talking in that manner? Are you in your right mind? I shall soon be convinced that you are a lunatic," said Mrs. Clayton, looking at him with wide-open eyes.

"Yes, mother, Beatrix Boynton positively refused to marry me," he slowly repeated.

"She must be an idiot, Carl. Of all things in the world I should not care to have an idiot brought into the family. I thought she was devoid of any sense. I should have thought you would have known she was a fool to look at her. Her father may be in an idiotic asylum, or he may be a natural-born murderer, and

confined in prison for life. Children inherit their father's propensities often. She might come here and dispose of the whole family. That would almost be an extinction of our race, as you know you are the only Carl Clayton living. Of course, if you had a family, one member of it would inherit your name. Great heavens! how much you have escaped," said Mrs. Clayton indignantly. "I should not be surprised, Carl, at anything I might learn of them. She may not have any more sense than to be in love with a poor fisherman. I often see her strolling down on the beach all alone, as though watching for some one."

"I often see her there myself. It may be she is watching for some one to return from an ocean trip, but I hardly think that. I confess I am completely puzzled. I cannot think it out," replied Carl dubiously.

"You could not expect she would appreciate you. She has never been out of her own secluded chimney corner," said Mrs. Clayton in disgust.

"You have traveled much and have seen many cultivated, accomplished, beautiful women, and to come here in this small, quiet place and take up with such a little simpleton. It is really unaccountable."

"I have seen many great beauties under the suns of many countries in many kinds of society, but I have never met any one who suited my imagination as Beatrix Boynton does, although I have seen many as beautiful; but it was her sweet simplicity, her artlessness, as I thought. Could I have been deceived after my experience? Could it be possible?" said Carl doubtfully.

“There is not a doubt in my mind that you have been deceived in her; those simple, artless ways were all assumed. Do not brood so much over it, Carl. I am afraid you will do something rash, or make yourself sick,” said his mother.

“Do not be alarmed, mother. I shall not get sick nor throw myself into the ocean to drown for any woman. Such a weakness I could not tolerate. I am greatly disappointed, I admit.”

“Now, I suppose you will marry Maud. She is best suited to you in every way; she is of good family, and also is rich, and such a sweet, lovable girl, and we know all about her origin. I detest that sort of people that have a mystery about their birth.”

“No, I shall never marry any one,” replied Carl.

“I think you will soon overcome this unfortunate fancy and forget her when once away from here. See how happy our dear little Maud is, she seems to have forgotten all about her love affair in New York. A change of place, of surroundings, of scene, and in a few weeks she will pass from your mind and you will forget that she ever existed.”

“I do not think I can forget her so readily. I may. I shall try,” answered Carl dubiously.

“You think that now, but I am almost positive you will. I am perfectly disgusted with this forsaken, desolate, lonely place. I am only sorry I was ever persuaded to come here. I have not had anything but trouble since I came. I am going to pack up at once and go to our home in Newport,” said Mrs. Clayton.

Carl was restless, unhappy. He felt the bitter pangs of jealousy; he thought there must be some one else who had supplanted him in her affection. "But who could it be? Could it be M. La Bau? I think it must be. I despise him. I cannot seem to get her out of my mind, however hard I strive to do so," so he mused.

The next day Carl started alone to the beach; he stood for a few moments looking out on the ocean. He could see at a short distance out the trim white sails of the small vessels and yachts sailing with parties of merrymakers or visitors from the heated city, who were enjoying the exhilaration of a sea breeze. He had only stood there a few moments before he saw the figure of a woman emerge from a house. He noiselessly, stealthily, went to a huge tent, and secreted himself behind it. She walked on and on with a quick, elastic step toward the beach, almost touching him with her dress as she passed, which made his heart throb as he stood breathlessly looking at her. He could not mistake her. He had seen her only yesterday in the same garb. She wore the same long, drab cloak hanging gracefully from her shapely shoulders, and she was carelessly twisting around her finger as she walked the tassel that loosely fastened her garment at the neck. She walked to the edge of the water, gazed over the azure blue of the sea for a moment, then dropped her glance and stood for nearly ten minutes almost motionless, looking thoughtfully down at the sand beneath her. She then turned, looked all around, and softly wended her way along the moss-covered walk, and

quietly seating herself on the same seat where he had found her the day previous, rested her hand on her cheek in the same position, and sat there as if in deep thought.

Carl quietly watched her for awhile, then moved a few steps as if to speak, so strong was his desire once more to be near her and clasp her hand. Beatrix jumped to her feet, looked around, listened intently at hearing the sound his movement had made, and walked rapidly back to the house. As she passed him closely, he heard her softly murmur, "Love is true."

"What did she mean? Had Beatrix Boynton waited anxiously for some one who did not come? She must be in love. I do not see how I can doubt it, but with whom I do not know. She certainly looked unhappy, disappointed. I have never seen her in conversation with any gentleman, but I have often seen M. La Bau in close conversation with her brother. There must be some good reason for his choosing him for a companion. I hate the man for intruding on my path. I can well understand it all now. That is why he tried to put a stumbling block in my way by relating to my mother the family afflictions."

All these conflicting emotions passed through Carl's mind as he walked slowly back to the house. He found his mother giving orders preparatory to leaving.

"I shall be ready to leave very soon, Carl," she said to him, "and I know you will be glad to get out of this hateful place. It is very unfortunate that we ever came here. I fear I shall always regret it."

“It is a pleasant little town. I do not know as I shall find any more happiness in any other place,” he replied pettishly.

“There is not anything that seems to please or satisfy you lately. Yet there is not a thing on earth but that you can have if you want it,” said his mother.

“I am not so certain of that. I seem to be unable to gain this last wish,” he answered petulantly.

“I would not think any more about that little idiot. I do not think she is worth a moment’s thought, it only makes you irritable. You treat M. La Bau in the rudest manner. I do not understand why you should. Maud said he felt very much distressed about it. You really seem unlike yourself, Carl.”

“La Bau is a dastardly coward to attack any young lady as he did Miss Boynton, and I should defend any one under like circumstances, and especially one whom I did esteem as highly as I did her.”

“I think she is perfectly heartless and perfectly foolish. The girl doesn’t seem to have sense enough to know when she has a good offer. It is a very fortunate thing for you that she did not appreciate the situation, if you will only take a serious view of it, and think of something else besides her pretty face,” said Mrs. Clayton disdainfully.

“Mother, you are cruel,” he said, almost harshly. “I shall not condemn her because she has rejected me. She may have had a very good reason. We cannot agree in regard to her, and I am in no mood for talking further on the subject.”

“You will go away with me, will you not?” said Mrs. Clayton, as though somewhat in doubt.

“I will go willingly,” he answered calmly.

All was bustle and confusion for a few days at the cottage, and then Mrs. Clayton and family left for their Newport home. All the fashionable people soon followed them, as they had been the leaders of fashion, and had lent gayety to the place during the season, and everything was quiet again in the little seaport town.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUMMER was fast ebbing away, October was near. Mrs. Boynton and family were leaving for their town house. This was a four-story brownstone front, facing the Public Garden, in the beautiful, stately and aristocratic city of Boston. It was tastefully and prettily furnished in red and gold, with a few old paintings of celebrated artists. As Beatrix entered her comfortable and pleasant home in one of the fashionable streets, and saw multitudes of well-dressed people and gorgeous equipages passing to and fro, with gayly dressed ladies laughing and chatting, seemingly so happy, she thought of her own hidden secret, her sorrow, and wondered why she should suffer for the guilt of another. A weight of pain was in her heart; she thought the country so much more soothing, sweeter, more natural. But Joe must return to his studies, his mother had said. Then she fell to thinking of others she had seen on the street that day hurrying hither and thither, who looked so destitute, so poorly clad, as though they had not the necessary things of life, and of her poor, patient, long-suffering mamma.

“Why should I complain?” she murmured. As she went to sleep she offered up a prayer for her who had

suffered so patiently for so many long, weary years. Two months flew speedily by. Christmas was near.

"I will give you money and you can buy your own holiday gifts, then you will be well satisfied," said Mrs. Boynton to Joe.

The day after Joe came upstairs and said: "It did not take me long to select my present, Trix. I have bought it and put it in the backyard below. Won't you take a look at it and tell me what you think of it?"

Beatrice, looking down into the yard, saw a large Irish setter. "What a beautiful dog," she exclaimed. "Have you named it?"

"It was already named Hector. Do you not think that a pretty name enough?"

"Very pretty, indeed. I like it very much," replied Beatrice. "But you will have to send it to the country; it has so little room here."

"That is true, poor dog," said Joe sympathetically. "He does not have room to wag his tail properly. Never mind; we will take him away next summer, for his health to the seaside, and plunge him in the salt water to straighten out his cramped limbs."

At nightfall on Christmas evening a box came by express addressed to Mrs. Boynton. She took it, held it in her hands for some moments, looking thoughtfully at the handwriting before untying the cord that fastened it.

"Who is it for? Please open it, mamma. I am so anxious to see what it contains," cried Joe impatiently.

"In a moment, my dear," she replied, as she drew

her hand gently across her forehead. She slowly untied the string, opened the box and found therein three beautiful red plush boxes of jewelry. In one was a diamond horseshoe-shaped brooch for Mrs. Boynton; in another a pear-shaped ring, with a garnet center surrounded by two rows of small diamonds, having a plain card attached, simply marked, "To Beatrix." The third contained a gold watch and chain for Joe, marked similarly.

Mrs. Boynton hastily tore the card from the brooch, which contained some writing, and shivering it into small pieces, threw it into the grate, and eagerly watched it burn until it was consumed to nothingness. She silently passed the ring to Beatrix. The watch and chain she passed to Joe, without making any comment.

Beatrix took the ring. It just fitted her second finger. "Look at it, mamma. Is it not beautiful?" she exclaimed, as she held her hand up before her, looking earnestly at her mother the while, hoping for some explanation. None came.

Mrs. Boynton sadly, silently looked at the ring and simply nodded her head in reply.

"This is such a beautiful and useful present, just what I needed and wanted," said Joe. "Who sent them, mamma?"

She looked at him with a sorrowful expression, and languidly answered: "I cannot tell you very much to-night, my dear, but hope at some future time to be able to make an explanation."

"Very well, mamma. I am very much pleased with

my watch. It makes but little difference provided I succeed in getting what I want."

"Another mystery," thought Beatrix. "I do wish I could find out where those beautiful gifts came from. I am the only one that mamma can make a confidant of. She has few companions, and never seeks society nor returns calls. I will advance the subject to-night as soon as Joe leaves the room. I cannot endure so much mystery."

Later in the evening, Joe having bid them good-night and gone to bed, Beatrix timorously said: "Mamma, dear, I think you once told me father was kind to you."

"Yes, yes, my darling, but I cannot talk much to-night. I am not feeling quite well enough," she almost whispered, while a look of intense pain stole over her gentle face. "He was good and kind," she added, "and if I die and you ever see him, tell him I loved him to the last."

"Please do not talk any more, mamma," pleaded Beatrix, "you look too much exhausted to exert yourself. Some other time will do when you feel stronger."

Mrs. Boynton made no reply, but closed her eyes, and clasped her hands together as if in silent prayer.

Beatrix stole softly out of the room, closing the door behind her, resolved never to speak his name in her presence again.

"What was it?" she continually asked herself over and over again. She derived some comfort from those two words, "Good and kind." For continual unkind-

ness and indifference will surely turn a woman's love to intense hate. She could remember her mother from her childhood as a sad, gentle, pale, thoughtful person, only brightening up when she could interest or cheer her children. She had had some terrible sorrow she well knew, but what it was she was unable to learn.

One day later, while Beatrix was sitting alone reading, Joe came in from school, sat down in a large arm-chair opposite her, thrust his hands into his pockets and commenced a low, lively whistle, resting his glance on the floor for a moment as if thinking. Looking up suddenly at her, he inquired abruptly: "Trix, where is our dad? Why don't he ever come here?"

She looked at him surprised and hesitated a moment, not knowing how best to answer.

"Eh?"

"It is the first time I ever heard you speak of him," she timidly answered.

"Well, I suppose his business keeps him in Europe, and as long as the governor gives us a good supply of money, which he seems to do, I do not know as I will complain. I never thought much about the old fellow before, but I should think he would like to see his promising son once in awhile. I am somebody to be proud of," said Joe, laughing.

They were then interrupted by a companion of Joe's, who had come in to see the dog, which interfered with their conversation, much to the relief of Beatrix, as she was still pondering in her mind how she should answer. She left the room soon after Joe went out with his friend, to go upstairs to sit with her mother.

She had not been long there before the cook bolted into the room without knocking, all out of breath, and her eyes were staring out of her head.

“There has been a thief rampaging around here, mum,” she said, “and stole me turkey right before me very eyes. Yes, mum, rampaging right before me eyes,” she repeated.

Mrs. Boynton looked at her in astonishment and inquired: “Did you see him, Bridget?”

“No, I did not jist see him becasse I jist turned me eyes the other way to see if me oven was right, and when I turned me eyes back it was gone, mum; yis, gone, mum. It was all ready to roast, mum, and indade it is not safe to trust meself alone there a minute. I niver saw such carryings on in th’ ould country. Och! Och! mum,” she screamed, “Mister Joe has him now hauling him around by the leg of his pants. I can see him out the window. Indade, mum, and don’t you hear him thumping him?”

Beatrix, hearing the noise and disturbance in the yard, also the loud barking of the dog, looked out and saw Joe with his companion rolling over and over on the ground, covered with dirt and snow, clinching, clutching, stratching each other desperately. She rushed downstairs to separate and pacify them if possible. The boy was crying very loudly, bitterly, as though badly hurt. Joe’s face was very red and bleeding from scratches, but there were not any tears to be seen. His lips were compressed and his teeth he was grinding together in anger. The boy started for the

door, as soon as released from Joe, and ran screaming down the steps, Joe after him, dragging him back, saying:

“Stop your noise, you saucy boy. You shall not go out of this house until you can go peaceably without disturbing all the neighborhood. I tell you you shall not go through the streets yelping like a whipped cur. Now stop, or I’ll whip you again and knock you around so you can’t even peep.”

The boy placed both hands hurriedly over his mouth to smother the noise, and meekly answered: “I will, I will, if you will only please let me go. Please do,” cried he.

“Go along then, make tracks for home lively, and don’t you ever come within five miles of this house as long as you live,” screamed Joe, as he parted from his companion.

“I am really afraid you have hurt him. I hope not,” said Beatrix mildly.

“I don’t hope I haven’t hurt him, I only hope I have. I couldn’t find anything in the kitchen to hit him with but a soft, smooth turkey, and I smashed it over that little red-headed monkey, until I smashed it into inch pieces. I only wish I had hurt that little insolent puppy as much as I did the turkey. I wish I had had a cargo of them. If ever I get my hands on that boy again I will give him another thrashing. I should like to thrash his father, his mother and all his family for being any relation to him,” cried Joe angrily, in a loud, excited voice.

“You must try and control your temper and not get angry at trifles. What was the cause of all this trouble?” inquired Beatrix.

“He was angry at something I did or said, and he said he would tell his father. ‘What do I care for your father?’ I replied, ‘I have little fear of him.’ Then he made grimaces at me and said with a sneer: ‘You haven’t any father, and never did have any.’ That made me very angry, Trix. That was a great insult.”

Beatrix sighed. “I admit, Joe, those were very unkind, thoughtless remarks, your companion made, but you should have remembered that he is younger than you by three years, and you should have considered his youth, been charitable, and should not have shown your emotion so quickly. Of course, he ought not to have said it, as a child should be held blameless for his father’s misdeeds. You have a father, of course.”

“Have a father?” Joe angrily retorted. “What kind of a man is that to have for a father that you can never speak his name? And you can never seem to tell me anything about him. There is such a thing as having too much of a father. That seems to be my trouble. I have a little too much. I think I would make away with what I have if I could only once get hold of him, but there is one thing positive, I never will have anything more to do with boys. I hate them, always did hate them. I am going to give up studying and go to work—go into some kind of business. I am old enough.”

“I am sorry to hear you say that. I thought you were preparing for college. You must not let any trifling, childish thing interfere with any of your plans. A boy says many things when in anger that he never thinks of again,” answered Beatrix consolingly.

“But I have decided not to go to college. I have other plans in my head at present,” replied Joe thoughtfully, “which in the future I think will be best for all of us.” After consulting his mother, it was decided that he could act his own pleasure about going to college, but that he must continue his studies for two years longer.

CHAPTER IX.

TIME passed rapidly by. Joe had kept assiduously at his studies for two years. Now his thoughts returned to his purpose of obtaining a place for business, as he had not thought it would be a difficult task to find anything that he wished. One morning, directly after breakfast, he started out and was gone all day looking for some kind of a position, but did not succeed in finding anything that he thought would suit him. He started out the next day, the next, and the next, but without any better success. He had found work for a small boy and work for an experienced man, but many told him as he was inexperienced they could only give him a few dollars per week—a boy's salary, until he should get a little insight into their business. Upon his returning home after many days going backward and forward without procuring anything, Beatrix saw him looking intently at himself from head to foot in one of the long mirrors in the parlor, as she entered the room.

“I am looking at myself, Beatrix, to see if I can discern any great deficiency in my physical make-up,” said Joe, as he turned round and round several times before the mirror.

“Why did you think so? I always flattered myself

that my brother was endowed with considerable physical beauty," answered she smilingly.

"I think you must be under some hallucination in regard to your brother, for every man where I have sought employment has found defects in me. I am too big, too little, too old or too young, or too something else that is quite as ridiculous. It had never occurred to me but that I could secure a place whenever I was ready to take it, and I have not been able to find any work anywhere yet, although I have searched diligently for many days. I have run across a set of old block-heads. I did not seem to suit any one, and have decided to give it up for the present at least. It is too discouraging."

"I think I have heard that every one has the same experience, so do not get discouraged," said Beatrix.

"I think I will make a study of athletics. Do you remember what the clergyman said last Sunday, that every one had a mission on earth? Mine, I think, must be fighting. Yes, fighting for the rights of others," said Joe, doubling up his fists and flourishing them around in a menacing position. "See those, Beatrix. Don't those look powerful? I am going to give Joe Boynton, Sr., the full benefit of those in the not far future, and I am not sure but I shall give him a little taste of gunpowder."

"Gunpowder!" echoed Beatrix in alarm. "Oh! Joe, it is terrible to talk so. Do not commit any rash act; you might be the greatest sufferer of the two. You would not kill him, I hope?"

“Well, no! I would not kill him all at once. I might blow the top of his head off by degrees and place it back and blow it off several times again in small pieces. Instant death would be too good for him. I should prefer to let him linger awhile. Perhaps it would be worse punishment to let him go on living if he has any conscience at all, but I don’t think he has the conscience of an ape.”

“I do hope you would not do anything very hasty or violent, as the punishment might come upon you. Pray, think well before you act,” pleaded Beatrix.

“I fear I should do something very rash should I ever see him, and see him I will. I should like to see his feet touch the floor of the penitentiary, and like to look through the grating and jeer at him,” replied Joe, excited by anger.

“We may be mistaken, he may not be such a bad man as we think,” she answered, trying to quiet and comfort her brother.

“I do not think we can be mistaken. To think of all the trouble he has made, all the mischief he has done, is enough to make a man want to tie a sheet around his neck and hang himself to the nearest bedpost for being any relation to him.”

Beatrix remembered those two words her mother had whispered to her not long before, “Good and kind,” and that she still loved him.

“I do not know as he can be as wicked as we suppose, Joe, since mamma always speaks very kindly of him.”

“Mamma has a very forgiving nature, Beatrix, as well as you. She is always gentle and kind toward the most erring. I have not that gentle disposition. I feel the most bitter, fierce hatred against the man who could cruelly ill-treat my mother, and I will search the world over until I find him, and at a not far distant day either. It will go hard with him when I once get my hands on him,” declared Joe.

“What would you do?” she inquired, somewhat terrified.

“What would I do?” he repeated. “I would brand him with the word ‘murderer’ in letters of blood and ride him up and down the town, and advertise him to the staring multitude.”

“He has not murdered any one, has he, Joe?”

“Yes, it is murder. I consider it as such. My mother is suffering that slow torture of the heart which is the most cruel kind of murder. I will not annoy mamma by asking her any questions in regard to him, but will investigate for myself.”

“He has a very kind, gentle, even mournful expression in his face,” said Beatrix in a low, suppressed tone, as though fearful of being overheard. “I have seen his likeness, and think I can find it to show you.” After a little pause, as if listening, and sure of not being interrupted, she secured a key, softly stole to the bureau drawer that her mother always kept carefully locked, and took from a crimson plush case a locket that contained his picture.

“Look, Joe,” she said, holding it open before his

face. "Is he not handsome? I do not think he has a wicked face, do you?"

Joe looked earnestly at it for a long time and finally said: "Yes, yes, indeed. Of course he has a very bad, wicked face, an evil eye, a sinister expression about the mouth. He is a man you would not care to meet in a dark place, and I am sure it would not be safe for him to meet me in broad daylight."

Beatrice replaced the locket, locked the drawer softly, and went quietly to her room, as she had found little comfort in her brother's remarks. She remembered then how her mother had cautiously entered the room a few days before while she was gazing at the picture, how she turned deadly pale and gently drew it from her hand, saying: "It does not belong to us." What did all that mean? "My brother may be right," thought she.

In the early evening, about a fortnight later, as they were all sitting in the parlor one very bleak, stormy night, when the storm was at its height, there was a fierce, quick ring of the door bell and a strange voice inquired if Mr. Boynton lived there. The servant ushered into the room a small, thin, wiry man, with light hair and mustache, light blue eyes, and wearing glasses. He bowed as he entered, and directing his glance toward Joe, said, "My name is Hazleton. I have understood that you were seeking a position, Mr. Boynton."

"Yes, sir, I have been looking for one," Joe responded.

The stranger bit his lips and his eye wandered round at each one in the room impatiently for a few moments before he replied: "I have a woolen house," said he, looking earnestly at Joe. "I have heard of you, and think you will suit me. I will give you one hundred dollars a month for the present, and shall be able to advance your wages year after year as I can advance you in grade. Do you think that pay will suit you? Do you think you would like that kind of business?" inquired the stranger, still eying Joe intently.

"Suit me!" Joe repeated in astonishment, looking curiously at the strange gentleman. "I hardly expected so much wages at first, I am yet inexperienced. My only anxiety will be to suit you, but I shall endeavor to do my best."

"I am sure you will please me, I have not the least doubt of it. Do not have any anxiety in regard to that," responded Mr. Hazleton pleasantly, pointing his forefinger at Joe.

"When will you need my services?" Joe inquired.

"When it is your pleasure to come. Any time that is the most convenient for you. Do not let me interfere with any other engagement," said the man.

"Let me see," said Joe, thinking. "This is Tuesday. How would it do if I came next Monday? That will give me five days before I buckle down to business. Will that do?"

"Certainly that will do. I want you to suit yourself in regard to the time. Then I shall expect to see you Monday," said Mr. Hazleton, as he rose to leave.

“How strange,” said Joe, after gazing silently at Beatrix for a few moments after Mr. Hazleton had left.

“How strange!” reiterated Beatrix. “It all seems very strange to me. I cannot understand it. How did he know you were looking for a place? Did you go to his office?”

“No, that is, one of the places I did not seek. I cannot understand it myself. It all seems a mystery to me, unless he has seen my honest face somewhere and thought I was just the boy he needed,” answered Joe, with a little laugh.

“Do you not think that a very good salary, since every one else offered you very small wages at first?” said Beatrix thoughtfully.

“I am delighted with it. I seem to be in luck,” replied Joe.

Mrs. Boynton had listened quietly to their conversation without making any comment.

Joe went on the following Monday as he had promised to do, and was very much pleased with his place. He had very little to do, and received better pay than older men who had been there many years. He could not understand why he was treated with so much consideration.

A month passed away. He received his first payment. He took the money home, sat down in a big armchair and counted it over and over again. The more he counted it and the more he looked at it the more puzzled he seemed to be. He would repeatedly roll it up, put it in his pocket, and take it out again, and

again count it. He did not know what he had done to earn it.

“This is the first money I have ever earned, and I like the looks of it, Trix, but I really do not think I deserve it, for I do not think I have done anything to assist my employer. If I had worked hard and given the firm any assistance, then I should appreciate this money greatly. There is to me something very mysterious about it. I saw older men looking at me and whispering, and talking in low tones to themselves, and I overheard a remark that gave me the impression that my father had something to do with my securing the place. If so, I do not care for the money. I do not want it. I feel as though I'd like to kindle a fire with it,” said Joe indignantly.

“I think it must have been through some one's influence,” answered Beatrix, “but I do not know how that is. It may be they give more to young men than older men.”

Joe laughed. “You are very wise in a business way, Trix, but I am going to Mr. Hazleton to-morrow and have a talk with him. I am determined to find out all I can. I will put a direct question to him and I shall expect him to answer it accurately.”

“Oh! I do wish you would, Joe. It would be a relief to find out something about the absent. He may be a friend of my fath—your—father,” she said hesitatingly.

“I will,” he answered emphatically. “I will know all. I have a right to know. I will exercise all the tact

I have to find out. I ought to know," pounding his hand down on the table and shaking his head in a very determined manner.

"What can you ask? What can you say?" she inquired excitedly.

"I shall ask several questions. For one I shall ask him if he is an acquaintance of my father's. Have patience until to-morrow, dear sister. I may be able to find out everything I desire to know; if not I surely shall learn something."

The next day Beatrix was all anxiety. She impatiently waited and watched the long hours away until dark. As she saw Joe coming toward the house, she rushed to the door, hurriedly opened it, and inquired eagerly in a low tone:

"What did you hear, Joe? What is the news? You look actually savage. Has anything terrible happened?"

"I am done with that place. I hate that old Hazleton; he is an old scapegrace," he answered in a low, impatient tone.

"What is it? Did you make any inquiries?" asked she, almost breathlessly.

"Yes; I made many of several men employed at the store, and found that my father has a woolen house in Scotland and has business relations with Mr. Hazleton, also an interest in this house here, as near as I can find out. As soon as I had gleaned that news, I went directly to his office, where I found him reading, and put the pointed question to him: 'Mr. Hazleton, did Joseph Boynton, Sr., procure this position for me?'"

“Oh! what did he say?” Beatrix exclaimed, all excitement.

“The old numbskull did not say anything, but opened wide his eyes and stared at me. So I repeated the question again: ‘Mr. Hazleton, will you kindly answer my question? Did Mr. Boynton obtain this position for me?’ ”

“Did he not reply then?” she said in surprise.

“No; he even then refused to answer me, but opened his mouth and eyes and stared at me like an Egyptian mummy. That was the most disagreeable part. I felt very much angered, so I unlimbered my mouthpiece and told him just what I thought of Joe Boynton, Sr. ‘By your silence I am led to understand that I received this position through the influence of a man who should hold the relation of a father to me. I should go a long distance rather than accept a favor from such a hypocritical, heartless man as he must be, and I desire to have as little to do with him or his friends as possible. Therefore you need not expect to see me here again, as I resign my position,’ and I took the shortest cut out of the store.”

“Did he not say anything to you as you were leaving?” inquired Beatrix dubiously.

“Not one word. He sat quietly, staring at me as though he had been struck dumb. During all my admirable speech, his mouth was closed as tight as an oyster shell. He seemed surprised that I should dare approach the subject. I surely expected he would answer that one question at least.”

“The more inquiries we make the less we seem to know,” said Beatrix, as a look of disappointment passed over her face.

“He was decidedly rude, and if I had not had the disposition of an angel, I should have given that man a few sudden strokes with my fists.”

“I do not know as you can boast of a very angelic disposition,” said Beatrix, smiling, “but a little temper and spirit seem a necessity to success in some enterprises.”

“I admit I do get very angry sometimes, but I think I have a good reason,” replied Joe. “I am sure I shall never enter Mr. Hazleton’s store again, but I intend to go abroad and find Mr. Boynton and learn from his own lips the cause of his cruel treatment toward my mother and the full history of his career.”

CHAPTER X.

“CARL, I will go anywhere and everywhere with you, but you must try and forget the past,” said Mrs. Clayton, some months after, while they were in Germany.

“Beatrice Boynton’s sweet face is constantly before me, mother; I did think I could overcome my love for her, and I must strive to forget her, however vain it seems to me now. Time is the healer of all wounds. Her refusal was unexpected—a great disappointment,” said Carl sadly.

“You will think of her at some future day with indifference and wonder at your foolish infatuation.”

Carl shook his head. “I do not know,” he replied doubtfully.

“Her indifference, her refusal has given you renewed interest in her. Anything that is easily purchased is never appreciated.”

“Did it ever occur to you that Miss Boynton was in love with M. La Bau?” he said, his voice vibrating with jealous and deep emotion.

“I had never thought of it, but I am sure he would never give her a single thought.”

“I am inclined to think he was in love with her. She seemed very lovely, gentle, refined, and she had a

very beautiful face, you will acknowledge that, mother, I am sure," he said with a sigh.

"That may be; that is not the question. Beauty is not the only thing to be thought of; it should be the last when a man is choosing a wife. Her parentage is a mystery. I never could admit a girl into my household with open arms who has a stain on her name, never, never! It is disgraceful. I cannot think of it with any degree of patience," said Mrs. Clayton with indignation.

"But I never listen to whispered slanders."

"You were so much in love that you would not listen to anything against her. It was a well-known fact, and she ought never, never to have intruded into respectable society."

"You are severe, mother. It may have been something over which she had no control. It would be a hard world indeed if the innocent were made to shoulder the sins of the wicked."

"I am not so sure of her innocence. A child having a very wicked parent must naturally inherit some of his propensities. I do not deny but that she had a sweet face, but there is great deal of deception hidden beneath the surface, and she surely puzzled you at her refusal to marry you."

"Yes; she puzzled me," replied Carl thoughtfully.

"And the very fact of her refusal has set you to thinking more earnestly of her, and has strengthened your attachment, as she no doubt very well knew it would. It may simply have been a little trickery on

her part, and I think it a most fortunate thing, your having escaped that intriguing Yankee girl. For myself, I am very glad of it, for I never could have recognized her, and she never would have been recognized by any of your friends.”

“I think she cared little for society. One cannot find much comfort in that alone,” replied Carl dolefully.

“I have no doubt you will meet with some one in your travels who will please your fancy as well, and be better fitted for your position in life.”

And so they traveled o’er land and o’er sea, hurrying from place to place, but still Carl was restless and discontented.

“You must interest yourself in something,” his mother said to him. “You have talents. You have said that you did not like idleness. Get absorbed in public life, you will be far happier. You would soon become renowned.”

“Do you think happiness is to be found in public life? Happiness is not one of the gifts that fame brings. It gives power, which many men crave. I care little for power, less for fame. They do not bring peace of mind. You cannot think in quietude or weep in silence. The tumultuous multitude must know all. Contentment is to be found in a peaceful home, with only loved ones around you, or in the tranquillity of the country, amid the murmur of the babbling brooks, and the songs of the merry birds.”

“Go to Paris then and quietly study art; you know

you were always very fond of it, and every connoisseur has told you that you excelled in all your paintings.”

“I admit, mother, I think I should be happier if my mind was employed on something that interested me. I will take your advice. I am very fond of painting. I will go to Paris at once and devote myself to art.”

“I shall be only too glad to settle down somewhere, for I am completely tired of traveling,” said his mother.

To Paris they went and established themselves in a beautiful apartment on the Champs Elysée. Carl could be seen every morning about 10 o'clock wending his way to the studio of a celebrated artist. In rainstorm or in sunshine he was always there, so interested was he in the one painting he was engaged upon. He had the genius of a true artist. One morning, some months later, he went to his study as usual. There was only one person there, a young lady, who was bending over a picture standing on the floor, looking so intently at it that she had not heard him enter. He stood for a moment transfixed. “That figure, so graceful, I have seen it somewhere. Can it be she? It surely looks like her. I will wait awhile, she will soon turn around.”

But no, she still gazed and gazed on that beautiful face, with large, dreamy, violet eyes, that stood looking out into the far ocean, with one finger outstretched and a tassel hanging loosely over it, with a drab cloak hung gracefully from the shoulders.

Carl stood almost motionless for a few moments in breathless silence, looking earnestly at the bending figure, hoping she would soon turn so he could see her

face. Getting impatient he walked slowly, cautiously up to where she stood. Still she did not move, but stood gazing silently, earnestly at the picture. He impatiently took his cane and softly tapped his boot with it, as he now stood close behind her.

She started like a frightened deer, turned around, looked him full in the face. "I beg pardon," she exclaimed in a low, sweet voice, which is always a great charm in a woman, "I was so interested in this beautiful face that I did not hear any one enter. I am a scholar here and I am very fond of fine paintings."

"I also beg your pardon for having disturbed you," replied he, in a tone of disappointment. Carl's thoughts were always with one, and the slightest resemblance brought vividly to his mind the beautiful girl he had met at Seaview.

"This is a very beautiful picture," she said, turning and glancing at it again. "I thought I had seen the face somewhere, and yet it seems too perfect to be anything but an ideal."

"You think you have seen some one that resembles the face?" he said, becoming very much interested in the stranger. "That is my own production. I am very glad if you like it. I had a face in my mind while painting it—that of a very beautiful young lady I had seen in Massachusetts during my last visit to that State."

"Indeed! It is a very lovely, sweet face, and very skillfully painted; the coloring is so soft, the drapery so graceful. I have come from Massachusetts myself

to study painting; I shall try to perfect myself if possible. If I can succeed as well as you have, I shall be perfectly satisfied."

"She is very pretty," thought Carl, as she stood facing him, blushing deeply, with soft, brown eyes fringed with long lashes and beautiful, fair skin with small, delicate features and golden hair.

"I fear you depreciate your own work. I hope I may have the pleasure of seeing some specimens of your skill—then I can judge for myself. I know they must excel mine," he answered gallantly.

Their teacher soon entered and introduced the young lady to Carl as Miss Child, from Boston. "One of my studious, diligent pupils," he added.

Time went on. Carl became very much interested in this other beautiful American girl. Mrs. Clayton was very much delighted to know that her son could take any interest in any one besides Beatrix Boynton. It was her desire that he should marry, but some one who was his equal socially, as the extinction of the name, she thought, would be a great misfortune. She did all she could to encourage this fancy after learning Miss Child's history. She was very accomplished. She was a daughter of an ex-Governor of Massachusetts. She was not rich, but that Mrs. Clayton did not consider any drawback, since her antecedents were all that could be desired. She was chaperoned by her mother, who had a small income, enough to educate her daughter and keep the wolf from the door, and enable them to live comfortably in foreign lands. Mrs. Clayton

invited her to dine, took her to the theater, to the opera, and out driving with her. She was her constant companion.

“Miss Child is very lovely and very pretty, do you not think so, Carl?” said his mother to him.

“She is quite pretty, and very bright,” was his reply.

“Do you not admire her, Carl?”

“Yes; I admire her very much,” he answered.

“She and her mother will travel with us this summer. I think it will be delightful to have their company, as they are both very charming. Are you not pleased with the idea?”

“Yes, if it is your desire.”

“You are both so interested in art, you ought to be very agreeable companions for each other. I understand she has been very successful with her paintings.”

“She is a very good artist.”

Mrs. Clayton looked at him with searching inquiry to ascertain what his feelings were; she could not discern anything. He was unfathomable. “I understand you have painted a very beautiful picture; you may yet become a celebrity.”

“Celebrity I never thought of. Passion is the most useful aid to artists. Beatrix Boynton is well worthy of an artist’s admiration.”

“Pshaw! I am tired of her name. Do you not think Miss Child much prettier than Miss Boynton?” his mother inquired.

Carl arose, walked slowly to the window, but made her no reply.

CHAPTER XI.

THE month was May, the month of flowers, when Mrs. Boynton and family all started for foreign shores. They went to London, where Joe left them, going to Scotland to search for his father. He had been gone but a few weeks before he returned without seeing him, as he had left for Venice. Hurriedly Joe started for Venice, arriving there just in time to miss him again. Back to London he came. He had succeeded in gaining some information that was valuable to him.

“I have found out, Beatrix, that there is a woman in the case; that he has been or is married to another woman, and that she lives not far from our townhouse in Boston. She rides out in a very showy turnout and passes our house nearly every day.”

“I can understand now, Joe, why poor mamma will never go out riding in the afternoon when we are in Boston. It is even difficult to get her to look out of the front window.”

“We can now understand it all, Beatrix. How painful, offensive it must have been for mamma to have that woman so near her, a near neighbor. Think of it. I should not be surprised if he was married when he made mamma his wife.”

“Oh! no! do not say that,” she said imploringly, in a low, pathetic tone, “as we would be ill—” the word died on her lips; she could not speak it. She hardly dare think it. Her worst fears were confirmed if this were true.

“I do not say that is so. I merely said it may be so; do not misunderstand me, Trix. I intend to investigate more fully and find out every particular, and I will find out all about that other woman, what relation she holds to him. I cannot rest until I have done so. I am determined to ferret it all out.”

“If it should be as you mistrust, then we never had any—” she paused a moment, “fa-th-er,” she faltered with a choking sob.

“Y-e-s, we had a father. We are bipeds, all bipeds have fathers; therefore we must have had one, such as he is.”

“If that should prove to be as you suspect I could never have the courage to hold my head up and look any one in the face again; we should be worse than fatherless,” she sadly replied.

“I should be better content if we had none in fact,” he answered.

With averted face Beatrix sighed heavily and tears poured down her cheeks.

“I saw his partner in Scotland,” Joe continued, “and he treated me with the greatest kindness, was very courteous, invited me to drive with him, to dine with him. The latter invitation I accepted. I questioned him closely, but he would not utter an unkind word of

that man Boynton. If his wife and two beautiful daughters had not been at the table I should have expressed my opinion of him without any hesitation."

"It is very mysterious, Joe. He must know all about that man."

"There is no doubt whatever in my mind that he does, but I suppose he is of the same stamp, regardless of principle or the law or anything else save trickery. I am disgusted with the class of people I have had the misfortune to meet."

"It is unfortunate for the young, particularly, to meet with people of that kind. It gives discontent to life. I sometimes envy the working girls, and no doubt they look at me with envy. Such is life," said Beatrix dolefully.

"I do not meet with anything but a set of old hypocrites. There is no such thing as friendship, sincerity or justice in the world, I believe," said Joe in disgust.

"I do wish you could have found the one you were in search of, then you could have forced a reply."

"I am sure he is running from place to place to avoid me. Some one, I think, must have informed him of my coming—forewarned forearmed. Next time I endeavor to find him he will not know beforehand," determined Joe.

"Did his partner give you the impression that he was a very bad man when you first saw him?"

"Not at all. On the contrary, he had a very mild, pleasant face. He was of light complexion, rather short and stout, with sandy mustache and a very genial,

agreeable manner. He had a convincing way of talking that would make most people think he was their best friend. But looks are very deceptive, and dark deeds are hidden under the surface of seemingly innocent and honorable lives."

"I cannot comprehend it, Joe. Do you think it is fear? They really seem to be afraid to expose this terrible secret."

"I do not know. That question I cannot possibly answer yet, but with patience and perseverance I shall and will know all in time," he answered with an air of resolution.

"It is sometimes thought that ignorance is blissful," said Beatrix dubiously.

"In some instances that may be so, not in this. We could not be more embittered against that man than now. If I could only find some one with generous impulses who knew all the circumstances, and felt kindly disposed toward us enough to frankly tell me all; but I am unable to advance any reason for the reticence of all who know him."

Beatrix retired to her room that night with a sorrowful heart, not to sleep, but to think. Once alone she gave way to hysterical weeping. She bemoaned her fate, cruel, pitiless fate. "I must shut this dark secret closely up in the recesses of my own sad heart. Many others have done the same from the beginning of the world. Every heart knows its own sorrow." She opened the window; the cool soft breeze fanned her heated brow. She sat there long after midnight, mur-

muring against her destiny. "My mother not yet forty, slowly dying of a broken heart."

When she awoke in the morning, London looked gray, gloomy and somber. It was yet early, the streets were alive with people, young and old, hurrying to and fro to their labor, to earn their daily bread.

"Do I envy them?" They seem very happy, while I am unhappy," she mused, as she saw them laughing and talking gayly as they went. She had silently watched them, she knew not how long, when she heard the voice of Joe calling her.

"Are you going to sleep all day, Beatrix? I should think it was time to breakfast," said he impatiently.

"I had no idea it was so late. I am all ready to go with you," answered Beatrix, opening the door, unaware of the surprise she was to meet that morning. "I have been looking out of the window for some time at the passing crowd," she added. "This is such a busy city, so much to be seen, that the time has passed very swiftly."

"I have been waiting for you a long time, as I knew you would not go into the dining room alone. I am nearly dead with hunger. Mamma had her breakfast sent to her room nearly an hour ago."

"I was so interested in the crowd outside that I had forgotten all about my breakfast. I do feel very hungry. I will go with you immediately," she replied, trying to assume a cheerful tone.

Beatrix had attired herself in a dark green traveling costume, which fitted her to perfection. As she started

to accompany her brother, she hastily drew from a bouquet of flowers on a table near a few lilies of the valley and fastened them to the bodice of her dress. Glancing across the breakfast room as she entered with her companion, she saw to her astonishment Carl Clayton, his mother, and two ladies sitting at the same table. She turned pallid, stopped, and looked at Joe with an appealing glance.

“I cannot go in,” she muttered faintly.

“I insist. You must be nearly famished.”

“I implore you not to insist. I cannot go,” she pleadingly said.

“What is the trouble, Trix? I did not hear you complain of illness,” said Joe, looking at her inquiringly.

“I feel a sudden faintness,” she answered feebly.

“You are indeed looking very pale this morning.”

“I know you will excuse me,” she said. “I will go directly to mamma’s room and breakfast quietly there.

An hour later Joe returned. “Who do you think I have seen, Beatrix? It was such a surprise to me. I am sure it will be to you. Some of your friends.”

“I do not think I have any friends here,” she sorrowfully answered.

“I saw Mrs. Clayton and her son. Mrs. Clayton said they had been traveling almost continuously for the past year. She said she was really tired of it, but she traveled simply to please Carl; that he was not contented to remain in any place long at a time. They have just arrived here; will remain about a week. She thought it very hard to amuse him. I suppose he is

blasé, Beatrix, he has seen so much of the world in his younger days. I think he has changed somewhat; he has not that careless, happy look he had when first I met him, but he is just as handsome, as elegant, as *distingué* as ever. He made no inquiries about my family. I wondered at that, he was so kind to and thoughtful of you at Seaview."

"I do not care to meet them again. You know how coldly Mrs. Clayton treated me when last I saw her." Beatrix's voice was very sad as she answered.

"My dear daughter," said Mrs. Boynton gently, "I do not think the London climate agrees with you very well. You look very pale and seem very nervous this morning."

"I inquired for M. La Bau," said Joe. "Mrs. Clayton said they had not seen or heard anything about him since they left Seaview, that Carl had the greatest antipathy to him—would not recognize him when they met. Do you not think that singular? I thought they were the best of friends."

The face of Beatrix looked troubled, perplexed, but she made no reply.

"She said she had the greatest admiration for him still, and thought him charming. She did not think there was any foundation for Carl's bitterness."

"How did Carl reply?" Beatrix inquired with weariness.

"He looked very grave and dignified, but made no response to that remark, and began to talk on other subjects. There is a very pretty young lady traveling

with them. I should not be surprised if it was someone Carl was interested in."

Beatrix sighed deeply. "I do hope we shall go home soon," she murmured.

"You and mamma seem to be very tired of London. I will make arrangements to go away very soon, since I am anxious to see parties in Boston or living near there. My faithful dog Hector, how glad he will be to see me! His affection is sincere," said Joe, smiling at the thought of him.

It was decided that they should leave in two days. Beatrix kept closely concealed in her room all the next day. The following morning they took an early start. She felt a sense of relief when the cars puffed out of the London depot. She could not trust herself to see Carl Clayton again, as she had tried in vain to forget him. "If he only knew the stain on my name, how he would scorn me!" she thought; "and his mother, that money-proud woman, what would she say? How unhappy the thought is to me. This mystery hangs over my head like the sharp point of a sword. I must trample this love in the dust. To think I was under the same roof with him and could not have the pleasure of once seeing or speaking to him, not even for one brief moment." She was sure she was acting wisely to avoid him. "I must be silent. Silence is golden. Nature is silent."

CHAPTER XII.

THEY returned to Boston in September, the month of harvest, after making a flying trip of only a week to the great City of the World, the magnificent, beautiful, gay, glittering Paris. Mrs. Boynton's health would not permit of her traveling farther. Beatrix, as well as her mother, looked depressed and tired after their sea voyage. The Atlantic had been rough and unkind. It often is. They found their faithful coachman with their carriage and dog Hector awaiting them on their arrival at the landing.

"How pleasant, beautiful and bright Boston seems to me after the darkness, gloom and mist of London," said Beatrix, as they were rapidly wending their way home.

"There is no place in the world for refinement and beauty like Boston, and I am glad to get back again," replied Joe.

Beatrix's heart went out to the old home with a love and affectionate welcome as they drew near the entrance and walked up the long stone steps. "It looks so reposeful, so peaceful. I am far happier here than anywhere else, away from the rude gaze of strangers," she thought.

Everything was in readiness for their return; a

bright wood fire was burning brightly in the dining room, but everything was wrapped in silence. The clocks had ceased their ticking, the furniture was robed in its white linen, but this quiet home was refreshing to her after four months' absence.

Joe began to read the past week's news and to look over the mail that had collected during the past two weeks in his absence.

"Here is a letter for you, Beatrix, mailed from New York," said Joe in surprise, as he held it up before him, looking curiously at the handwriting.

"Who can it be from? I do not know of any one that would write to me from New York," she replied in astonishment. As she hastily opened it, a card slipped out and dropped on the floor. The letter read as follows:

"MY DEAREST BEATRIX: I received a letter from Carl Clayton saying you had been in London, and he now thought you were traveling on the Continent. Not knowing your present address, I send this to Boston, hoping it will be remailed and you will receive it before you leave for this country. I have inclosed my card. It will give me the greatest pleasure and happiness if you will make me a visit before you return to your home, as I suppose you will land in New York. I shall be greatly disappointed if you refuse me. I have something to tell you that I cannot or dare not trust myself to write. There are but few one can confide in, but knowing your kindness and goodness of heart, I trust I can rely upon your friendship whatever should happen to me in the future. I shall always be pleased

to hear from you and to learn of any good fortune that may cross your life. I do hope, my dear, sweet girl, you will decide to come and see me as soon as you arrive in this country.

“Ever your friend,
“MAUD A. BAXTER.”

Beatrix looked very much puzzled as she finished reading aloud the letter to Joe. “What a singular letter to come from Maud Baxter. She was always so light-hearted, so gay. I did not think she ever had a serious thought. What can she wish to tell me that she cannot mention to her own family, who love her so fondly?”

“I cannot understand it,” replied Joe thoughtfully. “She evidently wants to confide something in you that she will not trust to many. There must be something on her mind that troubles her much.”

“I always considered her one of fortune’s favorites, surrounded by luxury and everything that wealth can buy. Her home life must be pleasant—father, mother, sister. What else could she ask? What more could she want? I have always loved Maud; she is very warm-hearted, generous and kind. I shall at once answer it, and say to her my friendship she can always rely upon.”

“It may be some little affair of the heart; girls of her age are always falling in love,” said Joe.

“Whatever it is, she can have my sympathy.”

“How is it, Trix, that you have escaped so long? I thought La Bau admired you very much,” said Joe, laughing lightly.

Beatrix looked a little confused, but made no answer.

“You devote a few moments writing to Maud, as from the time you first met she took a decided fancy to you, while I write a letter to Australia. It is a very important one, and must be written and mailed to-night.”

“To Australia?” she retorted, opening wide her eyes and looking at him inquiringly.

“Yes, my letter must start for that country to-night without fail. I must invest you with another mystery,” said Joe smiling, “but I may explain all to you in three months’ time. I am going to send there for a person to come to New York, whom it is very important I should see and converse with. Please do not ask me any questions, nor stare at me in such wonderment, as I will gladly tell you all as soon as I have proof myself.”

Beatrix sat there a few moments absorbed in deep thought. She at last rose slowly, went to the library and answered Maud Baxter’s letter thus:

“MY DEAREST MAUD: Your letter reached me late, owing to my absence. I thank you for your many kind thoughts of me, and feel gratified at the trust you feel disposed to place in me. My mother is very delicate and needs my careful attention. I dare not leave here for any length of time, however strong my desire may be to see you.

“We landed in Boston and were all very glad once more to be at our own quiet, comfortable home. You must not doubt for a moment my sincere friendship. In sunshine or in shadow, my dear Maud, believe me always,
Your friend,
BEATRIX.”

Beatrix's letter written, she walked to and fro many times in the autumnal twilight just softly peeping through the window. The silence was unbroken, except by the monotonous tick, tick, tick, of the clock that she had only a few moments before put in motion. Her thoughts wandered to Seaview. She looked back to the time when she had first met Maud and M. La Bau and Carl Clayton, a few happy moments only, never to return.

"Where is Carl now? What is he doing? Has he transferred his affection to some one else? What else could I expect? Have I not refused him of my own free will? I am sure I have done right. I must try and not think of him. I will not think. It only brings misery upon myself. The first day of my arrival in this pleasant home, surrounded by every comfort, I must think of others with broken hearts and in abject poverty as well, and, alas, of my poor, broken-hearted mother," she sobbed. It was now 6 o'clock; she bathed her eyes, that were red with weeping, and descended the stairs to dinner. The next day Joe went out immediately after breakfast and returned not until dusk. Beatrix, hearing his old-time laugh in the adjoining room, looked in and saw him executing a jig with delight.

"You are having a very enjoyable time all to yourself. You seem very happy. You must have heard some very good news," said she.

"Rather uncertain as yet, Beatrix," he answered, laughing heartily.

"I am sure you will be very glad to tell me any good

news you have been able to glean. I know you will," she said, as a hopeful expression stole over her face.

"I made an unceremonious call on one of our neighbors," he said a little above a whisper, his face beaming all over with a smile. "This morning I went to see that other woman, Mrs. Boynton, as she calls herself."

"Why, Joe!" she exclaimed. "You must not be so reckless; some harm will surely come to you. She may be a woman of violent temper, and plunge a knife into your heart and kill you. Be more cautious."

"I fear her as much as I would a crawling worm under my feet. The fear was in her. She really was much frightened. She acted as though she thought I was loaded with firearms and would shoot her down like a dog. I assured her I only had a small penknife with me, and had too much affection for that to soil it on her. I simply came for information."

"How did you gain admittance? I am surprised that she was willing to see you at all," said Beatrix, looking at him with amazement.

Joe opened the door, looked all around to see if any one was near, then softly closing and locking it, said in a very low tone: "Not a word of this must mamma know, not a syllable. I will tell you all. I deliberately went up the steps of her house, rang the bell, told the attendant that answered my summons that I wished to see Mrs. Boynton, and walked into the parlor unannounced. She was sitting by the window reading the morning paper." Joe threw back his head and laughed softly at the thought of what had transpired.

“I do not understand how you can laugh. It makes me perfectly wretched to think I am any relation to such a wicked man. Do go on. I am so impatient to hear all. How was she dressed? How did she look?”

“She was dressed in a dark blue morning wrapper, with old gold silk in front, and a few large, red roses were fastened at the waist. A blond wig adorned her head.

“How did she act when first she saw you? What did she say? I am all anxiety to hear. You stop so often to laugh, and talk so slowly,” said Beatrix.

“On seeing me she jumped to her feet and said: ‘Whom do you wish to see?’ She apparently knew me much better than I did her. ‘I wish to see a party who calls herself Mrs. Boynton,’ I answered, standing directly in front of her and looking her straight in the face. ‘Will you tell me if that is your name, madam?’ ‘That is my name,’ she said, slowly and emphatically, looking at me and nodding her head the while.”

“Were you not afraid?” inquired Beatrix, in a wondering voice a little above a whisper.

“No, I stood unawed in her presence, as she did not seem to like me well enough to invite me to be seated,” answered Joe, laughing again.

“Was she pleasant in her manner?”

“I can hardly say she was very pleasant. On the contrary, she was freezingly cold, cold enough to cause the mercury to drop a little below zero, and she lacked refinement. I do not think she enjoyed my visit very much.”

“How dreadful it all is,” said Beatrix, sighing.

“I put a few questions to her, which she declined to answer. She was not very complimentary. ‘You young stripling, with that downy slip on your upper lip,’ she said to me in loud, angry tones, ‘what right have you to come into my house and question me? It is preposterous. I never met with such a bold, impertinent youth.’ She then ordered me to leave the house. ‘Get out of my presence this moment,’ she said, stamping her feet. I stood my ground, however, and informed her that I should leave as soon as she had answered the questions I put to her. ‘I may know now more than you would be glad to hear,’ I added. Her black eyes flashed. ‘You know much! I think you know little,’ she answered. ‘I expect to know more. I expect to increase my knowledge, madam, by the information I get from you,’ I replied. ‘Enough. Your time is wasted. You had better go home and attend to your own affairs,’ she cried, loudly and angrily, and rushed into another room, shutting and locking the door behind her. I did not hurry in the least. I took my time and walked slowly around to see what the room contained.” Joe laughed again softly, as though pleased at the discomfort he had given her.

“Tell me more. Tell me all about the house,” his sister inquired excitedly.

“The rooms were very handsomely furnished, with comfortable and large easy chairs of every description, choice bric-à-brac of curious shapes and design. Fine paintings were hanging on the walls, among them being

a life-size picture of Joe Boynton, Sr., in a very conspicuous place, directly opposite the door as you enter. I recognized it at once. You remember you showed me one in a locket of mamma's. I think it must have been a copy from the same proof, as the attitude and dress are similar. He appeared to be a man of about thirty-five when it was taken. He must be a much older man now, and I hardly think I could recognize him from that picture, as he must have changed in the years that have elapsed. I expect to visit that woman again before many weeks have past. I have frequently seen her riding past the house in a very fine equipage. The next time I see her I will call your attention to it."

"I do not care to see her. I think it would make me very unhappy," replied Beatrix sadly.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOE was out nearly all day for weeks, hurrying to and from the house, barely taking time to eat. He was not idle a minute. He was gone day after day. Sometimes he would not return until after midnight. One afternoon he happened home by chance at 5 o'clock.

The atmosphere was balmy and bright. The streets without were full of carriages and gay occupants. As the sun was sinking low behind the clouds, Beatrix and her brother went to the window to gaze at the passing crowd. A moment later Joe exclaimed: "Look! look! There she is. That woman. Do you see her?"

Beatrix, looking out, saw quite a showy carriage passing slowly, with coachman and footman mounted in front and a span of chestnut horses collared in blue. A very much dressed woman reclined languidly amid the dark blue cushions. She leaned forward as she passed, and stared boldly up at the house. As she saw them looking at her, she tossed her head back in an impudent, defiant way, and a sneer passed over her face.

"How contemptuously she looked at us," said Beatrix, as a pained, sad expression stole over her face.

"Bah! I have no fear of her. I may be able to take a little of that contempt, scorn and affectation away from her before long," answered Joe indignantly,

Weeks rolled onward; the month of October had nearly passed away. Joe went out as usual day after day, week after week; not one moment did he lose. He had gained considerable knowledge in the late search, although he would not tell his sister fully what he had learned. He had told her that he had written to his father nearly three weeks previously, but as yet had not received any response.

One morning as Beatrix arose from breakfast, she picked up a New York paper and the first article that met her glance, in large flaming letters was, "Elopement of the Rev. Dr. Baxter's eldest daughter, Maud." There was much said, giving all the details. Her mother was prostrated with grief. The article stated that she had been married to a Frenchman by the name of La Bau. They had traced her to a steamer that had sailed for Europe the day before.

"Joe, you knew all this for so long," she exclaimed. "You have done very wrong to keep that secret for M. La Bau simply because you liked him."

Joe looked at her rather in mingled surprise and amazement. "No, I assure you, I did not. I am innocent of any intentional wrong-doing. I knew Maud was in love with some one, but did not think for once that it was La Bau."

"It must also be a great surprise to Mrs. Clayton and Carl," she said thoughtfully.

"No doubt Mrs. Clayton sincerely thought she was keeping Maud away from the lover her mother so much objected to, not knowing that La Bau was the one.

They probably arranged to meet at Seaview, and Mrs. Clayton could not understand why Maud was so contented there. Instead of breaking off the attachment, she gave them every possible assistance without designing to do so. She will feel very unhappy when she learns the news, I am sure, for she was very fond of Maud, and very anxious for Carl to marry her."

"You had a note, Joe, that M. La Bau was very anxious to obtain. I saw you give it to him one day directly in front of the house," she said, as there passed through her mind all that had occurred previously.

"Yes, I had a note which he requested me to carry to Maud. I took it, intending to do so, but changed my mind and thought I would return it to him. In passing it to him one day later, it slipped from the envelope and the envelope fell at his feet, leaving the note in my hand. He hurriedly picked it up, thinking it was the note. I secreted the letter in my vest pocket and ran into the house, as you remember, and was much amused at his mistake. I was younger then."

"Did you not know what the note contained?" she inquired.

"No, I never read the contents, although he always thought I knew what it contained, since the note was accidentally not sealed, and I never took the trouble to disabuse his mind. That was boyish pleasure. I have outgrown all that. He did not want it to be known that there was any secret between them, not even that he wrote to her. He was always exacting a promise from me not to expose it."

“I am really very sorry to hear this, for I very much liked Maud. She was a trusting, confiding girl, but I did not quite like M. La Bau when first I saw him. I am so afraid he will ill-treat her, unless he can obtain money sufficient for his demands. I fear that was the principal attraction. I can now well account for the letter I have received from her.”

“I very much regret now that I did not open and read the note. But regrets are vain and useless. Maud Baxter may repent at leisure her disobedience to her parents. It usually ends that way. However, we may never know the result. Well, dear Trix, the hours are passing fast. I have no time to lose. I must be away to my detective work. I think I shall make quite an expert.”

“I do hope you will succeed. You surely deserve to. You have made every possible endeavor.”

“I must and shall succeed. I am very much pleased with what I have learned. I have had some assistance from experienced detectives, but have done much myself. I have also written two letters to Joseph Boynton, Sr., which he does not condescend to notice. I have something now to write that I think will bring a prompt reply. If not, I shall write and write again and again. I shall force him to reply,” Joe said.

“It is unjust for him to let those letters go unanswered,” said Beatrix indignantly.

“I am quite sure he will not let this last one go unanswered, as I have written very plainly, severely, harshly.”

“We must watch faithfully for it, Joe, so it shall not fall into mamma’s hands, as she might think best to keep it from us, and it would make her very unhappy, too, while it would be a great disappointment to us if we could not read it after having so much trouble to get it.”

Two weeks went by. Every day for a week after they both watched and waited patiently and scanned the mails closely, but still the expected answer did not come. Two weeks more and still no reply. They did not dare leave their post for fear it would be given to their mother, and she would recognize the handwriting.

“I am perfectly discouraged. I do not think you will ever receive any response,” Beatrix said, with feverish impatience, as the last mail had been distributed for the night. “I think he is unkind. It is humiliating to be treated with so much indifference by one from whom you have a right to demand a share of attention. We seem to be beneath his notice.”

“There is yet time I do not despair of receiving an answer. I shall watch a few days longer. Then, if none comes, I shall write again,” replied Joe resolutely.

They were both at the window the next day watching, at the time the mail usually arrived, but the expected letter still did not come. On the fourth day after they were rewarded for their patient watching. There came a letter mailed in Scotland, written in a plain, bold hand, directed to Joe. Beatrix was overjoyed. She snatched it eagerly from the postman, and

her heart beat violently as she tremulously passed it to her brother, and waited in breathless haste to hear the contents. Joe hastily, nervously tore open the envelope, with eager anxiety and suspense, and sat in silence for a few moments with wide-open eyes in surprise, looking at the first word that met his gaze.

“Read it, read it; do not wait so long. I am so impatient to hear what your—fa-ther has to say,” Beatrix anxiously said.

“I have not read it myself yet,” he slowly answered, his eyes still fixed on the first word, while he sat there almost motionless, staring silently, thoughtfully at it.

“But you must read it at once. I cannot wait longer. I am dying of curiosity,” she said beseechingly.

Joe shook his head.

“It is very unkind to tantalize me so. What is it all about? Is there anything so dreadful in the first lines? You do not seem to move your eyes from them. You do not appear to be very eager to read it yourself now you have received it,” she said in an agony of torture and with tears in her eyes.

Joe’s eyes wandered quickly over the closely written letter in his hand, then in an instant he looked back to the first word and silently turned the open page to her view. She saw only one word written in a clear, large, plain hand, “Confidential.”

“I am very sorry. I regret this exceedingly, Beatrix. I know it is a great disappointment to you to be deprived of hearing it read, but you must have forbear-

ance and patience. You must excuse me from reading it aloud to you, as I am forbidden to do so, and what little I have read, I assure you, it is best you should not know. I must have some respect for the confidence he has placed in me. I cannot betray his trust even if you think you have been severely wronged. Some time I hope to tell all."

He arose and went to his own room to quietly read the letter, closing the door behind him, leaving Beatrix perplexed, and to surmise what she could.

CHAPTER XIV.

“MORE mysteries,” mused she, as she sat there alone where Joe had left her. “I wonder what that letter contained? That letter that I have waited, watched for day after day so anxiously, even for weeks.”

Darkness came on. She walked to the window and looked up at the clear, blue sky. The stars were slowly appearing one by one. She watched long and thought much. “Will everything or even anything ever be clear to me? How cruel it all seems, he to have written so many pages, and I to only know one word, only one, and that one to deepen the mystery.” She heard the merry laughter on the footwalks below, and the soft familiar air of “Home, Sweet Home,” as it wafted faintly through the closed window from a street band. She pondered, she wondered, and the more she thought the less she knew.

“What if I should live many years? There is not a very brilliant future before me. If I had brought this mystery upon myself, I could be more reconciled. It is said that it is always darkest before the dawn. I am yet young. Will the shadows, the clouds, ever be lifted?” As she went to sleep that night, a faint feeling of happiness stole over her at the thought of one member of the family receiving some notice from one who had been silent so many years.

The next morning at the breakfast table she watched her brother's expression closely, hoping to discern something that would enlighten her, but he quietly, silently ate his breakfast without uttering a word. He looked very thoughtful, very serious, and seemed very much saddened in those few hours.

"Joe," she exclaimed, as he came into the library directly after breakfast, "why can you not tell me about the letter? If you cannot tell me much, tell me a little—only a few words," she pleaded.

"No, I cannot."

"He is the same relation to me that he is to you," she persisted.

Joe shook his head sadly. "Do not ask me," he said.

"I have a right to ask. I have a right to know."

He again silently shook his head without replying.

"I cannot endure all this suspense. It really makes me sick. If you would only tell me whether it contained good news or bad I could be more content."

Joe walked to the window, looked out a few moments, as if in thought, then turned to her: "I will tell you as soon as I can gather all the truth and facts," was his reply.

"You had a very long letter from Scotland. I should judge a very important one, very much stamped, enough to tell the life history of any ordinary mortal. One could tell a great deal in so many pages. You could give me a little idea of what was said."

"There was much that was written in that letter. The writer may know more than I do, he may know

less. He may be right. I may be wrong. He may be wrong. In time I shall know more than now. I hardly think the letter writer knows as much about some of his affairs as I now do."

"You talk so mysteriously," said Beatrix, with tears in her eyes.

"I fear I have bewildered you more than ever, but I can only talk as I think. It is better that you should not know at present, dear sister. I will tell you all when with prudence I can do so, but I must not entirely forget the early teaching of my dear mamma. I know she would counsel me to keep this secret if I could only consult with her."

"If I should write to him personally do you think I would receive a response?" inquired she seriously.

"No. Take my advice. Do not write. I am sure your letter would not receive an answer."

Beatrix was silent, but still more puzzled, if possible, than before.

"It is growing late, my time is valuable. I must be off," Joe said, as he started on his mysterious duty.

He had not been gone long before he returned accompanied by two foreign-looking men, with whom he was locked up in the library for some hours. What it meant Beatrix knew not, but from her brother's happy smile she felt it was very satisfactory to him.

Several weeks had passed. Joe was in constant correspondence with his father. He had received several letters from him, but he had kept them closely locked, and would not disclose a word that had been written.

One evening later, as the clock was striking the hour of 8, while they were all quietly reading upstairs in their mother's room, Joe having just lighted a fragrant Havana and prepared to spend a quiet evening at home, it being stormy and disagreeable outside, a servant entered and announced a caller to see Mr. Boynton. Joe descended the stairs with his cigar in his mouth, not knowing whom he was to meet, as he had had business with many strangers during the past two months. A few moments after Beatrix heard a very loud, excited voice coming from the hall below. Opening the door cautiously, and looking over the railing of the stairs, she saw a large, showy woman, very much rouged, with very black eyebrows, and wearing false hair of a light hue; a very objectionable looking person, she thought. She did not have the appearance of being young, however hard she strove to look so. She was very much dressed. She had on a garnet silk, elaborately trimmed with black lace and expensive jet trimmings. A long white opera cloak hung loosely from her shoulders, and a small hat of white plumes and jet adorned her head. Jewels sparkled on her ungloved hands and in her ears.

"I am quick to hear, so it is unnecessary to talk in so loud a tone, madam," Joe was saying to her, fearing his mother would overhear. But she was very much excited, and continued talking very loudly.

"How dare you be so disrespectful to me?" pointing her forefinger at herself to make the "me" more expressive. "Dictate to me how I shall talk!" she continued.

“I repeat it, madam,” Joe coolly replied, “I wish you would lower your voice a dozen or more notes. I could understand you just as well.”

“I shall not consult a boy how I shall talk, neither shall I consult a boy what I shall say,” loudly repeated the woman.

“Boy, eh? Then you think I am a very bad little boy,” he retorted, in a provoking tone. “I am really afraid you will injure my digestion. You may find out to your discomfiture that I have done the work of a man in the past few months.”

“I want to know what you are trying to do, you wretch. Are you trying to stop my remittances?” said the visitor.

“You shall have all that is justly due you,” was his reply.

“I did not have my just dues last month. I do not wish any interference, nor do I require any assistance from a young, bold sprig like you. I can attend to all my own affairs. I want and expect the same share this month as usual,” she said loudly, wrathfully.

“Madam, I think in the past you have had a little more than your share,” he calmly replied.

“I think I have not had even a penny more than I should have had, nor than I deserve to have. I am too thoughtful of others, too good. I should have required more.”

“You have a very good appreciation of yourself,” said Joe quietly, surveying her from head to foot.

“How dare you talk to me in such a rough, rude

manner. I will not allow it, you young rascal," she exclaimed, putting out one jeweled hand to stop his words.

"I cannot choose my words, madam. You have had no consideration for our family."

"Why should I have? I ought not to have allowed you to have one cent, not even one. I suppose you do not know you ought to be grateful to me for all you have had?"

"Indeed!" Joe said, calmly elevating his eyebrows. "That is a piece of information I never heard before. That truth is only known to yourself, if truth it is. I am disposed to think you have been very well cared for considering all the circumstances."

"Considering!" she repeated angrily. "How dare you insult a lady to her face? Your talk is idle, foolish. I did not come here on such a bad night as this to listen to mere senseless prattle from a lad like you."

"I did not seek this interview. I did not desire it. I will repeat what I have already said; perhaps you may be able to answer it, if you will. I must acknowledge the deception is past my comprehension. Can you not truthfully say you have had more done for you than you ought to have expected?" questioned Joe.

"No, indeed, I cannot. My husband is able to give me everything I wish. He is rich; he should supply me with every luxury. It is his duty to see that I do not want for anything to make me comfortable."

"O—h! who is your husband?" inquired Joe, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I had no idea that he was

rich. I should be glad to have you tell me more about him."

"You impudent fool, you know very well who he is," said his visitor.

"No, madam, I assure you I have never had the honor of meeting him. I should be very glad to make his acquaintance," said he sarcastically.

"You are making yourself very odious, hateful, abominable. I advise you to be a little cautious. My husband," emphasizing the word, "ought to rule you with a rod of iron, and keep you in your place. You evidently don't know enough to keep in it yourself or where you belong."

Joe looked at her defiantly. "Your husband rule me!" he repeated scornfully. "You and I must have different opinions regarding the relationship."

"When you are older perhaps you will know more."

"I should be very sorry to know any more regarding some people than I now know, since my faith in humanity has become somewhat shaken even at my early years, I regret to say."

Her dark eyes flashed. "I am not here to talk about your faith in humanity. I am here to talk business. I do not consider it any pleasure to talk to such a disagreeable lad as you are."

"Oh! I thought you enjoyed my company. I had just flattered myself that I was very agreeable to you. Then you are simply here to take a little of the vanity out of me?" he answered with a little, irritating laugh.

"I am here to say that I do not wish you to inter-

meddle with any of my business affairs. It is now nearly a week past the time when my payment was due. I know of no one who would have the audacity to interfere but a young stripling like you, with no other way to occupy his time. It is insupportable. I require the money immediately to support my household."

"You have been supported for a great many years in considerable style. It would be very unfortunate to have your income cut off now," Joe said disdainfully.

"It shall not be cut off. I will not lose my lawful subsistence. I will fight for it in a court of justice. I will have my rights," said the woman.

"Court of justice!" he repeated mockingly. "I fear you misuse that word 'justice.' You have a great sense of honor and justice," pointing his forefinger at her while speaking.

"What do you mean? You do not seem to remember who I am," his visitor said with assumed dignity.

"Yes, madam, I remember too well who you are. I am not at all flattered with the acquaintance. I shall do all in my power to cut off the large allowance you have had for many past years. It was not your just due. You should not have had it. I ought to have investigated long ere this," replied Joe scornfully.

"Oh! you young terror," said she with growing wrath. "I should like to thrash you until you were dead," taking a whip from the folds of her drapery.

"Stop! Drop that, Mrs. Terhune," said Joe hastily, holding his hand up before him to ward off the blow.

"What do you mean?" she gasped, as her hand fell

listless by her side. "That—that—is not so. It is—it is all false," she faltered. She sank down in a chair saying, "How wicked! Oh! how wicked! I cannot bear it. You are making up some false story about me. A deep plot. How can you do such a bad thing as that?" she whined.

"I will give you every opportunity to prove it false," he calmly replied.

"Where did you get that name?" she said faintly. "I do not know what you mean."

"I think you ought to be accustomed to it. You must have heard it often. I should think it would be very familiar to you after so many years. It may not have been so useful as my father's name, Mrs. Ter——"

"Do not say it," interrupting him, regaining her composure somewhat. "I will not listen to any false name applied to me. You have heaped insult after insult upon me;" again lifting her hand as if to strike. Joe forced the whip from her and threw it back of him, it striking the dining room door with force, and making much noise, as it fell heavily. Biddy, the servant, hearing the report of a loud, hard thump as the whip came against the door, and hearing a woman talking in a loud, angry voice, ran screaming into Mrs. Boynton's room, saying:

"There's murther being committed in the house, mum. Yis, mum, right in the house, mum. Sure, mum, Mr. Joe is getting kilted. Oh! Holy, holy saints! Oh! merciful hivens; have pity on me poor soul and receive me safely," throwing herself on

her knees before Mrs. Boynton. "What's to be done thin? I niver thought the likes of meself would be brought up in a murther trial and Mr. Joe so fine and so nice to be kilt."

Mrs. Boynton was reclining on a lounge half-asleep when Biddy broke in upon her. She looked at her in a half-dazed way, not knowing what she meant, as she had not overheard anything outside the quietude of her own room, Beatrix having carefully kept the doors closed to prevent her from hearing the conversation.

"Bridget, calm yourself. You talk incoherently. I have not heard anything unusual in the house," she said. "Tell me what it is."

"Poor Mr. Joe! he is kilt dead. I heard a pistol bullet go right way through him, and it would have gone clean through me too, if I had not taken meself in here out of the way. "Forgive us our sins," moaned Biddy.

"Do not be so alarmed, Bridget. I do not see any cause for it. Joe can take care of himself. If he has had a quarrel with any one, he will come out safely. I never have the least fear in regard to him. My only fear is for Beatrix. I do not see her. Where is she?"

"She is kilted, too, mum. Yis, mum, kilted dead, jist like poor Mr. Joe. A rale double murther. Oh! protect us," she groaned.

Mrs. Boynton arose, walked slowly to the door, but could not turn the knob. "Some one must be holding it from the outside," she whispered. "Who can it be? Do you know, Bridget?"

“Yis, mum, it’s a woman, mum, in the shape of a divil, mum. It’s the murtherer to be sure. Plase do not go, plase,” pleaded Biddy.

Mrs. Boynton went through another room out into the hall to hear the last words the woman uttered as she left. She went closely up to Joe and hissed her parting words in his ear: “I am the true and only Mrs. Boynton.”

“The devil you are,” muttered Joe, as he shut and locked the door in her face.

Beatrix, hearing a heavy fall, looked around and saw her mother lying face downward, apparently lifeless. Joe, hearing the disturbance, rushed upstairs, took her up gently and laid her on the bed.

“Has she simply fainted? I am afraid she is dead. She heard that woman. Run for a doctor,” he said excitedly to one of the servants. “Do something to spare her life longer,” he implored the doctor as he entered. The servants and family had all gathered around the bed before the doctor came.

“Stand back, every one of you; leave her alone,” he said authoritatively. “She must be kept quiet. She has fainted, I think. I cannot yet tell.” They bathed her head and chafed her hands. For some time she lay pallid and motionless after every exertion on their part to restore her. She finally slowly opened her eyes, looked all around the room with an intensely painful and frightened expression, drew a long sigh, then closed her eyes again.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. BOYNTON had suffered much, had suffered often, for long years, in silence. The exposure to her children was the last straw to her fragile strength, her delicate system. If she could only have known the truth that would be unfolded to her in a few brief hours.

The skillful doctor came often, watched faithfully by her bedside, hoping by science to quell, to crush the merciless disease. Before leaving on his first visit, he motioned Beatrix to another room. Has she received any great shock?" he inquired. Her mind seems to be very much disturbed."

She hesitated. My mamma is often dejected," she mournfully replied.

"Yes."

I do not know how to tell you more, doctor. I am sure I do not," she sadly answered.

"No."

"Mamma has not been well for a long time," she said, evading all direct questions. She was confused, embarrassed." How could she tell her mamma's life secret to any one? "I know it would not be her wish," she thought.

"She must not be annoyed," said the doctor.

"I hope not. I do hope not," said Beatrix tearfully. "I shall do all I can to comfort her."

“There are sometimes ailments which are far beyond the physician’s skill to discover, without the assistance of those who suffer from them. There appears to be some trouble on your mother’s mind. She must be kept very quiet. Do not let any one annoy or disturb her in the slightest way. She has not any organic trouble, but she is very weak. She seems much exhausted. She requires the best of care. I confess I hardly understand this case. She must have everything that is nourishing, and must also take a stimulant. I will leave a prescription that is soothing, which must be given her during the night whenever she wakes. It will immediately again soothe to sleep. She thinks too much, altogether too much. Her mind must rest. I cannot say now that I can give you much hope, although there may be a change for the better after many hours of perfect rest. I desire that you should take great care to follow all my suggestions. I will again see your mother in the early morning,” he said as he turned from her to leave.

Beatrix watched faithfully by the bedside of her mother during the long night. When the break of dawn came clear and bright, she awoke, moved her head wearily to and fro, looked wishfully up at Beatrix, slowly moved her lips and said something in an inaudible tone. She bent low her head to catch the words her mother was murmuring.

“Is it true? You know it all?” she whispered with a moan.

“Yes, dear mamma, I know it all.”

"I will tell you all the facts, then you cannot blame him so much as you now do." She leaned forward, took a sip of wine from a small table near. "This will give me strength. I will talk while I can," Mrs. Boynton said in a very low tone.

"Why have you kept it a secret from me so long, mamma?"

"My dear, why should I interrupt the springtime of your happiness and pleasure? Youth is not the time for sadness and sorrow. That is the time for merriment and joy. I did not wish a single cloud or shadow to pass over your young life. No, darling, it was better for you not to know. Ignorance is blissful in some cases, and so it was in this," and a tear dropped on her hand.

"I am well and strong, mamma. I could have lightened with sympathy the burden of grief, of sorrow that you have borne so silently, so patiently for many long years without complaint. This incessant and constant fear, always gnawing at your heart, that the secret would become known, will now be silenced, and your life will be less embittered since the dread of exposure is at an end." Beatrix withheld from her mother all indications of the torture, misery and sorrow she had suffered for many years. Mrs. Boynton looked up at her with a painful, sorrowful expression for a few moments before again speaking.

"It is a sad, sad story, my dear, but I must tell you," she said softly with a long sigh.

"When you are stronger, mamma; not to-day."

“I must not wait too long,” was her answer.

“Take this,” Beatrix said, “it will quiet you,” passing her some nourishment and medicine the doctor had prescribed. Her mother went quietly to sleep again under its influence, and slept all the rest of the day and night away. The next day she seemed much stronger and better. The doctor and Joe had visited her room twice, but had found her sleeping quietly each time. As the soft twilight came on and the embers of the fire were dying out on the hearth, she again awoke and looked up longingly at Beatrix.

“What is it, dear mamma?” she inquired.

“I want to tell you,” she faintly answered.

“Not yet; no, not yet, you are still too weak to talk. Wait a few days longer,” she pleaded.

“Yes, my dear, it must be now. I think I should not wait longer.”

“It is better you should not talk. That is the doctor’s advice,” she persisted.

“Delays are dangerous,” she said. Mrs. Boynton sat up in bed, supported by pillows, and began to relate her sad history. “When young I was very happy. I had good advantages, being the only daughter of a very indulgent father, who was a merchant in Boston. He had ample means to educate me, but lost everything in a panic two years after my marriage. He died a few months later of a broken heart. My mother having died when I was a mere child, I only have a very faint recollection of her, but have heard much that was good of her. On my father’s deathbed, he called me to his

side to give me good advice. 'Irena, I am well pleased that I leave you with such a good husband and protector,' he said. 'Do your duty always and on all occasions diffuse comfort and blessing on your household.' These were the last words on his dying lips. I always remembered them, and have tried to do my duty. I hope I have succeeded." Her voice ceased, tears rolled down her cheeks one by one, her hands dropped to her side, and she was too much weakened to continue for some moments.

"You have told me much to-day. You are very tired. Can you not wait until some other time to tell me the rest?" pleaded Beatrix.

"Some other time may never come," she sadly said. She again commenced in a nervous, excited tone. "Your father met and married when quite young, not being of le——"

"This must not be. I cannot allow it," the doctor said, interrupting her as he entered the room, and seated himself beside Mrs. Boynton. "She is too excited, very feverish. Her pulse runs fast. What has she been talking about? Why have you encouraged it?" he said to Beatrix. "Why does she have the desire to talk so much? It only defers her recovery. I cautioned you to keep her quiet. She must take something at once to soothe and quiet her."

Mrs. Boynton looked beseechingly at the doctor, drew her hand wearily across her forehead and murmured:

"I must tell; I must tell the rest," and threw her head over on one side and went to sleep exhausted.

“Your mother is very weak, very weak indeed,” said the doctor, but there seems to be something on her mind that tortures, torments her. It may be a relief to her to disclose it. I cannot tell. I am nonplussed. I am going to give her everything in my power to strengthen her, and I hope in a few days she may be strong enough to talk and relieve her mind of that which she is so anxious to say. See that she has her medicine in conformity to rule, and I will see her again soon,” he added, when leaving.

CHAPTER XVI.

A FEW days had passed. Mrs. Boynton seemed much stronger and brighter. It was yet early when she awoke. Beatrix was by her side. The day was dark and gloomy. The morning moved slowly onward; the dark, shadowy hues played mournfully across the bed through the closed shutters as she again propped herself up amid the pillows to continue her sad story.

“Your father was not quite twenty years old when he met and married a woman nearly eight years his senior, much against his parents’ wishes. She was a very mercenary woman, and knew he would come into possession of some money at the death of his parents, although not a very large amount, but he had a small fortune of his own at the time he was married, an uncle having died and left to him his property as his namesake, and he became a partner in his father’s business house in Scotland, which brought him also a very good income. The marriage proved to be a very unhappy one. He found her to be self-willed, high-tempered and very unreasonable. Their married life was anything but a blissful one. They lived together not quite two years, and then separated on condition that he would give her a certain amount yearly for her support, and that she should leave England to live in America.

Nearly a year after, while she was coming to this country, the steamer was shipwrecked and all on board were supposed to be lost. At that time I was traveling with my father pleasure seeking, and while in England we met Mr. Boynton at a hotel where we were guests. We both fell in love and were married in less than four months after we first met." Mrs. Boynton threw her head back with a deep sigh and reached her hand out for some wine.

"You have talked a long, long time, mamma dear; you are too weak to exert yourself so much. If you could only tell me little by little day after day, then you would not get so fatigued. Please do not talk any more to-day; to-morrow you can tell the rest," again pleaded Beatrix.

"No, my dear daughter, I dare not delay. I know not how long I shall be with you. We came here to my present home to live, where my two children were born," she slowly continued. "We lived here for four years and traveled abroad for a year. We had five years of uninterrupted happiness. I returned to this country and to this house, where I have ever since lived. As soon as his first wife, whom he had supposed to be drowned, heard he was married, she went to him and demanded more money and a separation from me, which, of course, I also desired, under the circumstances." She sighed deeply again and closed her eyes, as if to shut the past from her memory. "It was a terrible blow to me. I have never seen him since, for I loved him very dearly, and I knew if I ever should

allow myself to again see him my love would conquer my principles. His first wife, with one other, were the only survivors of the passengers that were on board. She was picked up in an exhausted condition, and after many hours was resuscitated. She had suffered so much from exposure, danger and fright that she lost her reason for a time, and was confined in an insane asylum, but her reason gradually came back to her, and she was restored to health. You now know the secret, my daughter, I have kept so cautiously from you," Mrs. Boynton said wearily and sorrowfully. Every word she had uttered so solemnly in the stillness of that silent chamber went to Beatrix's heart like a deep stab.

"When you know that death is near," Mrs. Boynton added, "grant me this request. Send for him and let me once again see him before I die." Her voice sank lower and lower as she spoke. "If I should die without seeing him, give him my blessing and tell him I loved him fondly, devotedly to the end; not a day, not an hour but my thoughts have been with him. Tell his wife I forgive her for all the anguish she has made me endure."

The last words were softly said, and when finished she sank back in the pillows and sobbed bitterly.

"My dear mamma, did it ever occur to you that there might be some mistake about the woman who calls herself Boynton?" said Beatrix hopefully.

Mrs. Boynton immediately stopped weeping, raised her head, opened wide her large, lustrous eyes and looked at Beatrix in perfect surprise.

“What do you mean, dear? How could there be any mistake? It could not be possible. Mr. Boynton has seen her, talked with her, had business with her. Why did you say that, dear?”

“I hardly can explain why I did. I may be hoping against hope. I was thinking that Joe had intimated that he expected to relate some very good news to us in a few days. I have wondered many times what it could be,” she replied thoughtfully.

“I do not know what my dear boy has to tell us, but I am quite sure he cannot unravel this tangled skein. If I could have even the slightest doubt, I think I could die perfectly happy, but I have not,” she said softly, and again buried her head in the pillow and wept.

Beatrice did not betray the agony she was suffering. Her mother saw no trace of the torture she had endured. Speaking to her in a low, calm voice she said: “Why could you not have told me all this before and let me bear this great burden with you, dear mamma?”

“It seemed such a dreadful thing to tell you, my dear. I have thought much and often about it, but could not bring my mind to speak of it. I thought you were far happier in ignorance.”

“No, mamma; it would have given me happiness to think that I was helping you bear this great suffering of the heart for which you were not responsible.”

“My dear, happiness is not a thing to be commanded at will,” she answered with sadness. “I have tried to bear this great sorrow with fortitude. We must look beyond all this for happiness.”

“You have committed no sin, for you were ignorant of the facts. Therefore you have done no wrong, as the situation was not known to you at the time of your marriage,” said Beatrix, trying to cheer, comfort and console her mother.

“No, my dear, I have been the victim of circumstances. I have suffered as few others have ever been forced to suffer. It has been a heavy cross, but it will soon be ended, very soon,” she said mournfully.

“I hope you will live many years, my dear mamma. I hope and think you will grow stronger now you have relieved your mind of your sad history. I feel very bitterly against the woman who has caused you all this life of misery. She should have relinquished her claim and should not have severed the tie that bound two together by the affection of the heart. Her demeanor has made many unhappy, miserable.”

“Mr. Boynton pleaded hour after hour. He tried to reason with her, and offered her additional sums if she would get a divorce. On account of my children, he argued, but it was useless. She would not consent, she would not listen to one word. She reproached him for having married again, and told him that he had greatly wronged her. How she could consider it so I know not. He is not a man to designedly do injustice to any one. She tried every possible way to influence him to again come and live with her. I am so weak, so weak,” she feebly said, as she laid her pale, wan face down amid the pillows.

Beatrix silently pointed to the little clock on the

mantel as it was striking the hour of 12. "You can see, mamma, that you have talked a long time and you are very much wearied. I hope you will be very much better before long. You must take medicine now and rest."

When her mother was quieted and asleep, Beatrix gave vent to her feelings and sobbed and sobbed two long hours away. She at last thought she knew the terrible truth.

"I am then what I so often feared. How can I bear this hard fate? Would not death be a relief? I am yet young, a long life before me perhaps; and what is such a life worth? If my dear, dear mamma should die, then I should have no earthly tie but my brother, and he does not need any assistance; he can fight his way alone in the world. Why was I the one to be brought to bear so much suffering? I must never allow myself to again see Carl Clayton, for he would not stoop to link his fate with one who is of such an unfortunate birth. I have loved him as I never can love again. He had the affections of my early youth. The stain on my name he must not know. There are many who have suffered unspoken pain of mind and heart as well as myself. I do not know as a gleam of sunshine or pleasure will ever cross my pathway again," and then she remembered the words of her brother, which were: "I expect to have very good news for you soon, which will make you very happy," and a flash of sudden hope kindled within her.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ARE you feeling any better?” Beatrix inquired, as her mother slowly opened her eyes and looked earnestly at her.

“I do not know as I am much better, dear. I am so very weak. Where is my son?” she inquired. “I have not seen him for nearly two days.”

“He has been to see you often, mamma, but you were always asleep, and as he thought you needed the rest, he would not awaken you; and he has so little time. He is so very busy,” she answered.

“Busy!” she exclaimed in wonderment. “Busy, did you say, dear?”

“Well—yes—that is, he is out a great deal.”

“I do not understand what he can be doing,” Mrs. Boynton replied, looking perplexed.

“I can hardly explain to you what the nature of the business is,” replied Beatrix doubtfully.

“Did he not tell you why his time was so much employed?” inquired Mrs. Boynton, looking astonished.

Beatrix hesitated. She could not accurately answer. “You know, mamma, Joe is always busy about something, or about nothing, if it is only sport. I am quite sure he will be at home very soon, as it is nearly dinner

time, and he said it would not be late when he returned. He may have news to interest us."

"He always interests me. I must not go to sleep again until I see my dear boy," she replied wearily.

An hour passed when the door opened softly and Joe entered the room on tiptoe. Going to his mother's bedside he kissed her tenderly, and whispered closely in her ear for some moments. Whatever it was, it was very soothing. Her face brightened up like sunshine after a shower. But Beatrix could not have much hope that it would last, as the doctor had given them no encouragement. "She has received too great a shock. It is only a question of time," he had said.

"That is very good news, Joe, if it can be true. I should be very happy if I could only think that, but I cannot," Mrs. Boynton replied dubiously.

"Yes, mamma, I think I shall be able to confirm that startling good news before very long. It has required a great deal of labor, and many weeks of irksome perseverance, but in a few days' time I hope it will be ended."

"I am sure you are mistaken. I cannot have any hope after all these long years of sorrow. I do not have a shadow of a doubt of its untruth, since it would have been found out long years before." Her voice was very sad and feeble as she answered.

"It was impossible for you and others to think there could be so much trickery and wickedness in this world, and simply for that reason and that alone no one has doubted her story or taken the trouble to investigate it,

I should have searched it out if it had taken every hour of a long life, when once I found that there was a thread of doubt. Let your son alone for that, mamma," said he in a confident tone.

"I may never live to know the truth, whether good or bad," she feebly replied.

"My dear mamma, I hope you are going to live many years. It will not be more than a day or two before I know all, as there is only one party now who can give me any more information on the subject, and that will determine who is to take possession of that individual whom we are all so anxious to claim. I have interviewed several persons and he is the last on the list."

"Have you seen her again? What will she say?" she whispered.

"I will go and sing to her 'Sweet By and By,' the next time I honor her with a call," Joe smilingly answered.

"How can I believe it?" she exclaimed, in a tone of nervous excitement. "If it is only true, only true, I can see him once more before I die. How happy is the thought to me. I loved him so much, no one ever knew how much. He will come back to me. I know he will as soon as he can. I must rest and try to get well and look bright," she faintly said, as she again closed her eyes.

"Beatrix," said Joe, following her into her room, closing the door after him and leaving his mother alone with the nurse, "I expect to prove that this Mrs. Boynton number one, as she calls herself, was married

before she met our father, although professing to be single at the time."

"What did you say?" cried Beatrix in amazement, brushing away the tears that had dimmed her eyes at the thought of her mother's illness and suffering. "Is that a possible story you are relating to me?" and her whole face lighted up with an expression of happiness.

"It is possible and quite probable, I am happy to say. She was married before, that I know, and I am almost certain that her husband was living at the time she was married the second time. That is the last and only thing I am anxious to learn now, the precise date of her husband's death, and there is only one party who can give me the desired information. If you remember, I sent for him early in the fall. It is now long after the time for him to arrive. He is a brother of her first husband and went to Australia with him. I want to see him personally. Then I will know there is no mistake. If I am correct, her second marriage was illegal."

"Ah! but if you were only positive," said she earnestly.

"But I shall know in a few days positively, if the steamer arrives safely."

"You must not forget to write to-night, as it is mamma's ardent wish to see her husband before she dies."

"I shall write to him this evening, and explain every detail, as well as mamma's sickness, although I shall not say her death is hourly expected, as I do not think that. He says he has remained away at his wife's re-

quest, and is very anxious to again be with us all. It may be so."

"I feel no small amount of anxiety at the thought of his coming. The excitement of seeing him I fear will hasten her death, while the expectation may prolong her life," she replied.

"My hope is that she may live many years. I cannot be reconciled to her death. That her desire to see him before she dies will be granted is my sincere wish, but the wisest can tell little of the future," said Joe.

"Could we foresee one day before another, or an hour, or even a minute, we could then make our lives less bitter; but we sometimes unwisely yield to that which looks bright and makes us happy for the moment, regardless of the future, and we can only look forward with hope, but backward with grief," said she, with a sigh.

"You must not always look on the dark side, Beatrix; your young life may have been imbittered, but there may be a silver lining to the future. I manage to get considerable pleasure here. The world is beautiful. You must take people as you find them, and not be influenced by any thought of human caprice. Everything looks brighter now, as you can well see, excepting our dear mamma's sickness. I shall hope as long as there is life that she may recover."

"Yes, somewhat brighter," she replied thoughtfully. "I think you told me you had gained some knowledge in regard to that other Mrs. Boynton while abroad, and

I interrupted your conversation, but I am deeply interested to hear the story."

"Yes, I received some information while in Scotland from the wife of a brother of hers long since dead, who was living in very humble circumstances. She had lived there only two years, however. She said she had often heard her husband speak of his sister, and she told me her history as follows as near as she could remember, as she had never seen or spoken to her. She had married when young a man named Terhune. He was poor, but industrious and of good repute. She soon tired of him, took her maiden name, which was Sheldon, and went to London, where she fell in with a wealthy man, who supplied her with ample means to live in style. When he tired of her he gave her a small amount to live on for awhile. Soon after she met and married a wealthy man by the name of Boynton, she said, but she had heard little of her since, as she had discarded all of her relatives and would not recognize them when she saw them. This woman knew that Mr. Terhune was dead, but could not answer the important question I asked. She could not tell me the date of his death nor at what place he had died. There was one other brother living in Australia, who had gone there with him, but she could not give me his address, so I found little satisfaction there.

"During our short stay in Paris as I strolled leisurely along unemployed through an obscure street looking in at the windows, I saw the name of Terhune on a sign-board over a shoe store. I sauntered in and made a

small purchase and inquired for the owner, but, unfortunately, he was out. A day or two after I went again, but met with the same answer. I did not want to excite too much curiosity. I therefore ordered some shoes made, which would call me there again."

"What a remarkable occurrence!" Beatrix said, as she sat listening to her brother, profoundly interested.

"It was extraordinary indeed that I should stumble upon the name accidentally. It was a fortunate event.

"A few days after I was more successful. I found Mr. Terhune in; he was behind his desk busily writing. After one of the clerks had pointed him out to me, I went directly up to him, and commenced a conversation. I told him that his name was very familiar, and inquired of him if he had any relatives in England or Australia. He looked at me inquiringly, but made no reply.

"'I hope you do not consider that I am asking questions that are impertinent?' I said.

"He hesitated. 'I have little time to make answers to questions except on business,' he replied, rather gruffly.

"'I am a customer here, and was attracted by your name,' I made answer.

"He smiled. 'Did you say you had made purchases here?' he inquired.

"'Yes, sir, I have bought some shoes, and I am very much pleased with what I have seen here and wish to make more purchases.'

"'Ah! take a seat, take a seat,' he said, extending

his right hand to me, while with the left he motioned me to a chair, and came from behind his desk and seated himself beside me. I felt that I had won his good will and could ask questions without number.

“ ‘I am anxious to obtain the address of a man of your name. Not anything to his disadvantage; on the contrary, it may be of assistance to him,’ I said.

“ ‘Certainly, certainly, I am very glad to answer any questions I can,’ he answered, pleasantly. ‘I have a cousin in Sydney, Australia, who formerly lived in England. I do not know as that is the man you are looking for.’

“ ‘That is the very person I am seeking,’ I replied.

“ ‘I have his address in my memorandum book, as I have a correspondence with him,’ he said, going to his desk and taking the book out.

“ ‘I suppose you could not tell me the date of his brother’s death who was living there with him,’ I inquired,

“ ‘I am sorry to say I cannot, but if you will write to this address I will give you, August Terhune, I am sure he will answer willingly any questions you require,’ at the same moment passing me a small slip of paper with the address on. Thanking him I left with a small purchase under my arm, and the priceless little bit of paper in my pocket.

“I went back to the hotel and immediately wrote to him, and in due time received a response that he would accept my offer and come to this country by the next steamer. I was really discouraged. I thought I should

never find out anything until I met this man who kept the shoe store. I think I have told you all I can at present, Beatrix. Was it not a strange accident that I should run across the name?"

"That was very singular, Joe; that was simply chance," she said in wonderment.

"Yes, of all the singular things in this life, chance is the most strange."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE hour was late, the clock had chimed the hour of 1 when Joe bade his sister good-night and left her alone. The important letter had been forgotten, and was left unwritten, so interested were they. "No one knows what a day may bring forth," Beatrix murmured, as she thought of the strangeness of the narrative just related, and sat by the window with her elbows resting on the dark crimson plush of the cushion on the arm of the large upholstered easy chair, her chin resting on her hands, and her beautiful face upturned to the sky, watching the clouds floating hither and thither or turning her glance out over the beautiful park this lovely moonlight night, to see the fountain playing and the moon shining placid and serene from a cloudless sky of deep blue, forming a picture of gentle loveliness, and sighing the time away until she should know all.

When she awoke the next morning it was late; it was a half-hour after 9. The day was bright. The golden sunbeams shone brightly into the room. Her first thought was of the unwritten letter. What if he had forgotten it? If it should reach him too late, what a mistake that would be? Even a few minutes' delay in

the mailing of a foreign letter might deprive her dear mamma from ever seeing him in this life. She hurriedly dressed herself and ran downstairs to the breakfast room. All was quiet. The table was prepared with its pretty breakfast cloth. There was a tempting dish of fruit and plates set for one only. There was no sound to be heard but the chirping and singing of the canary birds in the adjoining room.

“Where is my brother Joe?” she inquired anxiously of the servant as she entered the room.

“He ate his breakfast in a great hurry, Miss Beatrix, an hour ago, and left the house,” she answered.

After learning that her mother, if not better, was not any worse, she took her solitary breakfast with only a servant in attendance. After it was over she went noiselessly up to her mother’s room and quietly took a seat by her bedside. Looking at her pale, sad face as she was sleeping, her heart beat with tender reminiscences. “How kind, gentle and forbearing she has always been with me and my brother in our thoughtless childhood. How willing to overlook my many faults. How patiently she has borne her great suffering of the heart. How noble, unselfish and self-sacrificing her life has been. If I can follow her example, then my life will be one complete victory.” Thus she meditated.

The day was long. The hours moved slowly. She thought her brother would never come, as she watched and waited anxiously for the sound of footsteps. She listened to the old timepiece of a hundred years, as the last stroke of 9 died away in the hall below. Moments,

minutes passed, and yet he did not come. The hour of 10 was striking when she heard light footsteps on the stairs. Rushing out to meet him, she exclaimed:

“The letter, the letter, Joe. I hope you have not forgotten it. I have been so impatient. I thought you would never come. Why were you so late?”

“I am making the most of my time, Beatrix,” he answered pettishly.

“The letter,” again she cried, as he did not seem to notice that she had mentioned it. “I fear you have not written it. If I had only known the address, I should most certainly have written myself this morning.”

Joe gave a low whistle. “I will go at once and write and mail it to-night; it will go by the steamer to-morrow. I admit it had escaped my mind. It will only make a difference of a day in time.”

“There is not a moment to be lost. You know mamma’s life is fast ebbing away, and I am fearful she will die before he——”

“Don’t say that, Beatrix, don’t,” interrupting her. “I could not have given the facts if I had written. It is very unfortunate; the steamer was due to-day, but did not arrive as expected. I have been watching for its arrival all the long day, since the person who is to come is the only one that can give me positive proof of the date of the death, and I hope to get every detail and all the information I desire as soon as he arrives. I am sorry it so happened, but I am almost confident that it will be here to-morrow.”

“I regret that I have been so impatient. I am sure

you deserve much credit for your perseverance and hard work," she answered.

"You must remember that it takes months to send to Australia and get a return answer," Joe replied, as he took his pen to write.

The next day came and yet the steamer did not arrive.

"If mamma can only live to know the truth, if satisfactory, and see her husband once more, I shall be well content," Beatrix said to Joe the next night.

"I am greatly grieved at the delay," he said in a tone of disappointment. "It ought to have been here two days ago, but I shall know to-morrow without fail, as the steamer has been sighted and will be here early in the morning, and your brother Joe will be sure to be on hand to meet it. There is only one thing I am anxious to know, the year of Mr. Terhune's death, which I hope to prove was nearly five years after his wife's marriage to my father."

"That is almost too good news to believe, Joe. That one thought almost makes me happy. I could cry out with joy. The thought of my birth made me very miserable; it seemed unbearable, insufferable to me. It took away every charm of my existence. I could take but little interest even in the innocent pleasures of this life, as the thought was ever before me. I can hardly believe in its truth. I think if it should prove to be false now after so much expectancy, I should waste away into nothing and vanish into space. Dear, dear mamma's few remaining days here will be more peaceful after she knows this to be true. Was that

what made her look so happy when you whispered to her the day before yesterday?"

"Yes; I thought best to tell her little by little, since in her weak state any unusual excitement or overwrought expectation might prove dangerous," he replied.

"If your father comes, as of course, he will, we must break the news gently to her, not let him rush unceremoniously into the room; the excitement might prove instant death," said Beatrix.

"She is so very weak, it might delay her recovery. I shall try and keep him downstairs a few hours after he arrives so as to prepare her for the interview as mildly as I can," said Joe.

"I am so anxious, so curious, to see how he looks, I hardly know how to act when I receive him, since he seems almost a perfect stranger to me. What will you say, Joe, to him? What shall I say? Must I call him father? That would be perfectly proper, of course," she inquired, in a tone of nervous excitement.

"Assuredly call him father. I have always addressed him as such, and he always calls me his son in his letters."

"But it seems so very odd to me. It would be very abrupt for me to rush to him and say 'father' when first we met. It frightens me a little to think of it. I am so little used to it."

"You might practice a little on the name before he comes. What did you expect to call him, *garçon?*" said Joe, laughing.

“I suppose I must be rather affectionate toward him, as I know it is my dear mamma’s wish, and even now she will not utter one word of reproach against the woman who has wrecked her whole life,” she said.

“She possesses a very lovely, amiable disposition. I cannot feel toward that woman any charity, any kindness. I feel the most bitter enmity against her, and I sincerely hope she will have as much suffering as she has caused my poor mamma to endure. Forgive her? never,” said Joe angrily.

“If this is all a mistake?” said Beatrix, in a whisper, looking straight at Joe.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE next morning it was dark and dreary. There was a heavy rainstorm. The air was full of ice and sleet. The wind blew strong and cold. As the clock was striking the early hour of 6, Beatrix heard footsteps going rapidly downstairs, heard the outer door open and close, heard a carriage whirl swiftly away. As she listened, her heart went out in warm sympathy for her brother, braving the cold, the wind, the sleet on such a dismal day, sacrificing his time and pleasure for her and others, as he had said: "It is not for myself that I care, but for the rights of others that are dear to me."

She descended the stairs a few hours later, and met one of the servants in the hallway. "I hope my brother took something to eat or drink before going out this disagreeable morning?" she said.

"No, mum, he did not," said the servant. "He came down in a great hurry, looking scared like and told the coachman to go quick for a cab. He said the weather was too bad for his own horse to be taken out. Miss Beatrix," she lowered her tone as she added, "I think your brother is a little flighty, a little gone here," putting her hand up to the side of her head and gently tapping it.

Beatrix smiled. "I think you are mistaken, Mary. I give him credit for being the brightest one in the family. His head is well balanced. You cannot understand his impatience, his hurry, of late; but it will soon be over I hope."

Joe did not return until noon, and then with a strange man, whose appearance was repulsive. His red, bloated face and swollen nose, a large low, soft felt hat drawn low down over his forehead, made him look anything but attractive. He was very stout and rather short. He had red hair and red whiskers, which seemed to correspond in color with the redness of his skin. Joe took him into the library, closed and locked the door behind him to keep out intruders, and remained alone with him until after dusk. Beatrix was growing very impatient. "Will he ever go, or will he talk forever?" she murmured, as she softly walked to and fro in the hall, listening anxiously for some sound. She could only hear the low murmurs of voices, as they came faintly through the closed door. A moment later to her great relief, she heard the door unlock and heavy footsteps traverse the lower hallway and pass out of the front door.

"I know you have heard very good news. I can see it in your face," she said to Joe as he came upstairs.

"Yes, I have found out all at last. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I have not heard that old familiar laugh for many weeks," said Beatrix.

"At last," he repeated, drawing a long breath and throwing himself down in a comfortable, easy chair in

his sister's room. He was tired, he was weary and worn out from anxiety and the two past sleepless nights.

"This man to whom I have just been talking," he added, "and for whom I have patiently, anxiously been watching for a week past, is Mr. Terhune."

"He took a long time to journey here, much longer than necessary, I think, when it was so important he should come as speedily as possible; but do tell me all about him," said Beatrix, with a little impatience.

"I think it was a little inconsistent myself for him to take so long to come, but it is a long distance. However, he was very glad of the opportunity, and he desired to take advantage of the occasion to visit some friends in England. All the questions I have put to him he has answered satisfactorily, and I now know all I have so long wished to learn. He is a brother-in-law of Mrs. Terhune. While he is not a refined man, he is not such a bad fellow as his appearance would indicate. He keeps a bar at a large hotel in Sydney. This brother, that was the husband of this woman who had the impudence to call herself Boynton, was a man of good habits and very industrious, but not successful in business. He started a small store of fancy articles twice, but failed both times, and his wife was dissatisfied with the small amount of money he was able to give her. After she was able to obtain money from other sources for herself, she gave him enough to go to Australia and commence again in business in a small way, on condition that he would never annoy her again. He will-

ingly kept his promise, for she made his life miserable while they lived together."

"I think mamma is awake, and it might brighten her up to hear such joyful news," said Beatrix.

"Come into her room and you can together listen to my story, as it is such delightful tidings that it may be the means of her recovery." He arose with a languid air, opened the door softly into his mother's room, and found her awake, watching for him. She was sitting up in bed supported by pillows. She was still very weak and only able to sit up a few moments at a time.

"Well, mamma, I hope you feel better," said Joe, leaning over the bed and kissing her affectionately.

"I feel very weak, my dear son. I hope I may gain strength for my dear children's sake," she answered sorrowfully, gently stroking his hair the while.

"Yes, dear mamma, I hope and expect you will be much better after you hear the bright, cheerful news I have to tell you," replied Joe.

"I should be pleased to hear any good news, my dear, that interests you," she slowly answered.

"But it greatly interests you, too, as well as the rest of the family. Do you feel strong enough to listen to quite a long story, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear. I have rested quietly all day. I am very comfortable in this position. I think I can sit here for an hour or so and listen to you," she said, drawing a long sigh.

Joe drew a chair beside the bed, and taking her hand, gently held it while he related the facts to her as

he had previously told them to Beatrix. "I have the exact date of Mr. Terhune's death," he continued, "and it was just five years after you were married to my father. And now, mamma, dear, you have everything to live for. You are his lawful wife, and we are his children. I will telegraph him at once to come and live with us the rest of his life."

Mrs. Boynton looked up at Joe doubtfully, dreamily, as if dazed, for some moments, in silence. Her face wore a deadly pallor from excitement. Her large, sad eyes opened wide with amazement. Not a sound came from those in the sick room. The silence was intense, profound. The melancholy winds whistled mournfully around the house this gloomy, dismal night. Only the sound of raindrops could be heard as they pattered drop by drop against the casements.

She drew her hand softly, slowly across her forehead as if to collect her thoughts, still looking at Joe inquiringly, but yet was quite silent. "Am I dreaming?" she at last said, and her voice sank to a low whisper as she added, "or is this merely a joke?"

"It is all as I have told you, dear mamma. Father will come and live with us the rest of your life," Joe slowly repeated in answer to her question and inquiring look.

Mrs. Boynton started up, sprang out of bed upon her feet with nervous agitation, to the utter astonishment of all, with unnatural strength, and her dark eyes looked supernaturally bright and large as she walked alone across the room, saying: "I must live. I must

live. I am so happy, so happy to think of it. If I can only see my darling husband aga—” Her voice died away before she could finish the last sentence, her trembling limbs gave way and she fell upon the floor from utter weakness.

“What shall we do?” cried Beatrix. “I am afraid she is dead.”

“I think she has only fainted. Get some camphor, get some water,” said Joe, in excited tones, as he took her fragile form up in his arms and tenderly carried her to the bed.

She soon recovered, slowly opened wide her large eyes, looked all around, then rested them on Joe for a moment; then again tried to spring out of bed, but it was impossible for her to even lift her head from the pillow, so weakened was she from overexertion. A smile passed over her lips, lighting up the whole sweet face as she again spoke. “Am I to see my own, my own beloved husband once again? I have loved him so much, so long; in silence. Is he mine, wholly mine, or is it simply imagination? Is it true, all true?” she eagerly whispered.

“It is all true, every word, dear mamma,” replied Joe, “but you must obey the doctor’s orders and keep very quiet if you expect to get well. Father, I am sure, will come as soon as he can, but he cannot possibly get here before a week.”

“My dear children, I am so pleased to know that if I die you will have the protection of a good, kind father, which you will need, and have been deprived of for so

many years. If I can only see him once more how happy I shall be. He was so kind, so gentle, so true, so generous and brave," she said, with a deep pathos in her voice, and tears gathered in her eyes.

"But for that wicked, heartless, despicable woman your life would have been an unusually happy one," said Joe.

Mrs. Boynton shivered at the thought, and her form trembled as she answered: "She has destroyed a great deal of happiness, but I will not condemn her now, as it is all over. I have struggled hard. I have forgiven."

"All over! dear mamma," Joe repeated. "I expect the rest of your life will be one of perfect felicity."

"How long did you say it would be before I could see him?" she inquired with sudden brightness.

"In about ten days, I think at the longest. I shall probably receive an answer to my telegram in a few days that will tell us very nearly the time we may expect him here."

"I must rest, rest, so as to get well and not look so tired, so sick, when he comes back to me, his wife."

Mrs. Boynton tossed her head wearily to and fro, and in a few moments went quietly to sleep, with a sweet smile hovering over her closed lips. Her secret grief and inconsolable sorrow, borne so bravely alone for so many years, had imprinted its fingers too deeply on her physical strength to be retarded in its course now.

CHAPTER XX.

BEATRIX and her brother watched anxiously for three days for a dispatch from their father. Every time they heard the ring of the door bell it brought them promptly to answer its summons, but every time to be disappointed.

On the fourth night, after they had all retired to their rooms, it being after 11 o'clock, the bell rang loudly, and a boy thrust a telegram through the small aperture of the door as Joe ran downstairs hastily, and cautiously opened it. Beatrix, looking over the stairs and seeing the telegram, hurriedly threw a wrap over her shoulders, ran down, lit the gas, and they both eagerly perused it. It was directed to Joe, and read thus:

“Will take the steamer Wednesday, arriving in New York the following Thursday probably, and will be in Boston Friday morning. Much love to my dear wife and children.
Your FATHER.”

Beatrix began counting aloud on her fingers the number of days it would take before his arrival. “This is Wednesday, the day he sails, only eight days before he will be with us,” she said with some agitation.

“Everything possible must be done to strengthen and prolong mamma’s life. It will be such a terrible grief and disappointment to him to find her so weak and ill,” said Joe.

“Everything that earthly power can effect shall be done, but you know the doctor has told us it was only a question of a few days with our poor dear mamma,” she answered, suppressing a sob.

“That would be a most dreadful thing to happen, not to see her alive,” he replied, with great emotion. “I had hoped and thought she would at least live a year. I shall never give up hope while she lives. It will only be a week before our father arrives.”

“I know she cannot live much longer, Joe, and her death at any time will not be unexpected to me, although I cannot be reconciled, as it will be a great loss to us both. She seems to me the only parent I ever had. Of course, I feel kindly toward my father now after knowing all, but cannot have much affection, not even knowing him by sight, and do not think he can have much for us. I often wonder how he will treat us.”

“I have not a doubt that he will treat us in the kindest manner, and as for our dear mamma, I have not given up in despair yet. While there is life, there is always hopes.”

“She has never left her bed but once, and that time she fainted from exhaustion, since she unfortunately heard those few words from that woman, which you must remember, ‘I am the true and only Mrs. Boynton.’”

"I regret that poor mamma should have heard those words," Joe answered tearfully.

"You have never disclosed to me what that confidential letter from father contained as you have so often promised."

"I can tell you in a very few words, Beatrix. He simply stated to me what he thought were facts. The same story mamma told you on her sick bed. He sincerely thought then that that dreadful woman was his lawful wife. That is why several letters to him brought no response to me. I then wrote and called him all the vilest names possible, which brought a quick response from him, imploring me not to disclose the facts to you concerning your birth, fearing it would give you needless unhappiness. It was a very sad, kind letter. He also gave me good advice."

"How could we have been so uncharitable, unjust, as to have misjudged him so. I cannot forgive myself."

"I hope to be so kind and dutiful hereafter that he will forget the past," Joe replied, as he closed his door.

The next day was gloomy and dark, and as Beatrix sat alone by her mother's bedside her thoughts turned to Carl Clayton. "Is he living? Is he married? Is he happy? Shall I ever see him again? Now all is clear I love him more deeply than ever, but it may be that he has erased me from his memory and gone from me forever. If I could only know. To think that woman has wrecked the happiness of three."

Mrs. Boynton slowly opened her eyes, looked up at Beatrix, and anxiously inquired the time.

"It is nearly 5 o'clock, and only seven days more, dearest mamma, and he will be with us," she replied.

"I have now so much to live for, my dear daughter, and yet I sometimes feel as though my strength had nearly failed me, but I am very happy to know that I shall once again see him on earth. I have often thought of the separation. It was very cruel. I suppressed my emotion and kept up good courage while he was with me, but swooned the moment he had closed the door that parted us." Her voice sank lower as she added: "How I suffered he never knew."

She closed her eyes and lay silently thinking. The next day and the next she was constantly failing and losing strength. The fourth day came, and toward night she became unconscious; her eyes moved restlessly to and fro and occasionally a low moan would escape her lips. They all remained by the bedside during the night. All that skill and science could do was done to save the life that was so precious to her children, but earthly skill is not equal to the universal conqueror; victory is his in the end.

"Doctor, I beseech you, spare her if only for a day at least. The happiness of another hangs upon this life so dear to us," Joe said imploringly.

"I think she will return to consciousness before she dies, if only for a few moments," the doctor had said.

"Mamma, mamma, can you not speak only one word to me before you die?" Joe repeated over and over again. The doctors hurriedly held another consultation and shook their heads doubtfully.

“How long, doctor, how long can she live? Can you not give us a little hope?” he pleaded.

“I cannot,” one said solemnly. “It is only a question of a few hours.” There was a wavering between despair and hope during all that night until the rays of dawn began to peep faintly through the closed shutters, when Mrs. Boynton began to show signs of consciousness. Her lips moved gently and her eyes slowly opened and rested on her daughter. She uttered one name, “Beatrix.”

“Yes, dear mamma,” she answered.

“Has he come?” she softly inquired.

“Not yet,” she sadly answered.

She was silent for a few moments, then continued in a very low voice: “Tell her I forgive, and if I die before seeing him, tell him I died blessing him and loved him to the end. Ah! if he had known how fondly. How bitter his absence was, but I kept that all from him. He begged me to go to some foreign land and live among strangers. I thought that would be against the laws of God and man, as I then believed he belonged to another. Let me bless you, my darling children,” she softly whispered. Beatrix and Joe knelt beside the bed and bent low their heads; and with kisses on their lips, she closed her eyes, never to open them again in this world of suffering and sorrow. The long, self-enduring, patient, wearied heart was at last at rest. She had gone where no evil could touch her now. It mattered not whether the long wished for loved one came or not. That poor, tired heart had found repose.

Her closed lips wore a smile as though in peace. They still knelt, they kissed the cold brow. Hot, burning tears coursed down their cheeks. The dread visitor always wins the victory. Kings and queens, subjects and serfs, fall alike. It enters the sumptuous palaces of the wealthy and the hovel of the poor.

It was drawing toward 12 o'clock Thursday noon, and the loved one she had waited so patiently to see for many long years would come to find her lifeless clay. They watched and waited impatiently all Friday and Saturday for that long expected one, but he came not, and it had been arranged that the funeral should take place Sunday at midday. Sunday morning Beatrix and her brother went together into the silent chamber where they had spent so many hours with her when in life. The dead was not alone. There was one other silent, humble mourner that shared their grief, patiently watching beside the coffin. It was the faithful dog Hector. He had stolen in unnoticed and lay at the foot of the bier, almost as silent as the dead, the only sign of animation being a long-drawn sigh. Joe patted his shaggy coat; he raised his head, looked at him wistfully with his big, brown eyes full of tears, licked his hand meekly, and laid his head quietly down again upon his forepaws, with another sigh that was more sorrowful than words.

They took one long lingering look and then the lid was nailed down that shut out the form and face of their dear mother. They had not draped the outer door with crape, fearing it would be too great a shock to

their father when he arrived, as he had been informed of her sickness, but not of her near approaching death.

"It is 9 o'clock, and our father is not yet here; only three hours more before the funeral," Beatrix said, looking anxiously at Joe.

"He ought to be here. Why doesn't he come? I am so anxious," he answered, watching the little timepiece on the mantle, five, six, ten minutes past. "How swiftly the moments fly. Dead and buried. How terrible the news will be to him."

"Could not see her in life. Could not see her in death, how sad! how sad!" said Beatrix mournfully, as hot tears coursed down her cheeks.

The hour of 10 was just striking when the heavy tread of horses' feet could be heard as they dashed along up to the house, and a tall, slight man with iron-gray hair, gray mustache and large, melancholy brown eyes alighted. He dismounted from the cab hurriedly, looked all around up to the house with a smile on his face, then rushed up the steps two at a time, and rang the bell violently.

"It is he! It is he!" whispered Beatrix excitedly, as she looked through the closed blinds.

"We must go and meet him," said Joe sadly.

"I fear it will be a great shock. Break the news as gently as possible," she sobbed.

They walked into the silent hall, down the stairs with a noiseless tread, and opening the door softly met their father face to face at the entrance, whom they had not seen for fifteen years, and of whom they had no recol-

lection. There was a smile upon his lips, and he addressed them pleasantly. "Good-morning," he said. "I suppose these are my children. I hope you are both well."

"Yes, father," Joe answered solemnly. Mr. Boynton embraced them both fondly, as though they were only little children, probably thinking of them as when he last saw them many years before.

"Where is your mother? Is she still sick and unable to come and meet me?" he inquired cheerfully.

Joe shook his head mournfully. "She cannot come and meet you, father. I will take you to her," softly he said.

Suddenly putting a hand on each of Joe's shoulders, and looking him full in the face for a few moments intently, "I think you look like your mother. I am pleased to learn it; but what serious faces my children wear. Brighten up, my dear boy; I hope to make your future all sunshine. It shall be as you say. I will go at once and see your mother, although I am nearly famished, as I have not taken a morsel of anything since I arose this morning. My only thought was to be with you at the earliest possible moment. This is one of the happiest days of my life," Mr. Boynton said gayly, patting Joe affectionately on the shoulder the while. "Shall we now go and see your mother?"

Joe looked sadly at him without replying, took him by the arm, and they walked slowly up the long flight of stairs together, Beatrix following with slow, pensive tread. He softly opened the door and silently pointed

to the long coffin draped in black. They heard a deep growl from Hector as the door opened, and he saw a stranger. Joe took him by the collar and led him from the room, leaving Mr. Boynton alone with the dead. A low moan broke from the lips of the figure in the darkened room, he covered his face with his hands, his frame shook, his voice quivered with emotion. "Oh! Can it be possible?" he cried. "Is it true? Is that all that remains of my beloved wife?"

His voice sank to a very low tone as he softly murmured her name. "Irena, Irena, speak, speak, only one word, my name. You whom I loved so fondly, so dearly."

The eyes had no sight. The closed lips had no salutation for him.

"She has murdered her," he hoarsely whispered, "How cruel, how cruel."

"She forgave her, father, on her deathbed, and I am too saddened by this scene to harbor any ill feeling toward any one," said Beatrix, as she again entered the room and heard the last sentence.

"But I must see her face once more before she is taken away from us forever," he said.

Joe immediately sent for an assistant, and when he arrived it was nearly 11 o'clock; he opened the lid, revealing her face to his view. It had not changed, the same peaceful, sweet smile still lingered about the mouth that it had worn ever since her death.

"Rest, rest undisturbed by any earthly sorrow that thou hast borne so silently for many long years, thou

gentle, weary, sinless soul," Mr. Boynton uttered in broken sobs. He kissed her passionately, knelt beside her, softly repeating her name again and again, and wept bitter tears.

Beatrice and Joe walked quietly out of the room and left him alone in the presence of the dead, for only one short hour, and then they laid her away in her last sleep in the beautiful burial ground at Forest Hills.

"We will all live together, my dear children, and try if possible to forget the sad past," he said a few days later. "The separation was very cruel. I pleaded with your mother many hours to go to some foreign land where we were not known, and live in quietude, but my pleadings were all in vain. I never fully consented to leave her until she nearly convinced me by her coldness that her affection for me was weakened and dead."

"I never can or shall forgive that woman who has caused my mother so much suffering for so many years, and sent her to an early grave," Joe said.

"I am too overburdened with grief to censure her now, but I cannot forgive as that good pious soul has done who has gone from us forever," Mr. Boynton replied.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE house was still, the hour was late, the night was dark, the winds sighed mournfully, while the figure of a woman, closely veiled, could be seen walking backward and forward with slow steps, or crouched low in the dark shadows beneath the windows, watching anxiously a dimly lighted room.

Intense silence reigned throughout. Everything seemed hushed. Every one was asleep in the household save one. He had just returned in his carriage, and entered his room, leaving the coachman to bar the windows and doors. He seated himself by an open desk, with his head bowed, resting on his hands, deep in thought. The dying embers of the fire in the grate had burned low, and turned to gray ashes. The dim low lights were all in harmony with his own sad thoughts. A picture of a beautiful woman not over twenty-five stood on the desk beneath him, and a tear dropped on the face. He rose, walked softly to the window, drew the curtain aside and looked out. There was a black figure slowly passing on the opposite side of the street. It was a woman.

“Poor creature! poor creature! she seems to be in distress,” thought he. He returned to his desk to again

gaze at the picture before him. The clock was striking the midnight hour of 12 when he was startled by a soft tap at the door. "What was that?" he nervously whispered. "Surely no one would come at such an hour and on such a dark, dismal night. I must have been mistaken or dreaming. My nerves are weakened, overtaxed, and I am almost maddened with my past grief."

He slowly raised his head, noiselessly leaned forward and again closely listened and heard the same faint, soft "tap! tap! tap!" slowly repeated, which could be distinctly heard in the stillness. "That cannot be imagination. Some one surely knocked. I must give admittance."

"*Entrez,*" he said, and as he fixed his eye on the knob of the door, it slowly turned and the door softly opened, and the same heavily veiled woman whom he had seen outside, stepped softly into the room and looked at him for some moments in silence. "Who is this stranger? Why does she not speak?" he wondered, as he rose from his chair and stood before her. He scrutinized her closely. Her ungloved hand that was exposed to view sparkled brightly with many jewels. "I must break the silence."

"Good-evening, madam."

She made him no response, but stood quite still, gazing at him.

"I may be entertaining a lunatic at this late hour, who must have stolen in when Charles was locking the door." He again addressed her. "Whom have I the

pleasure of receiving?" "She yet refuses to answer. She seems to be dumb; perhaps she does not understand English. *Asseyez-vous, je vous prie, madame. D'ou venez-vous.*"

She threw her veil aside, and they stood looking at each other in profound silence for a moment.

"Pauline!" he gasped. "You here! How dare you intrude on my silent hours so full of recent grief that you have brought upon me and mine?"

"Joseph," she moaned, "Forgive me. Oh! forgive. I have sinned against you, God knows, but I loved you greatly."

"Loved me!" he scornfully repeated, "and you made the innocent to suffer for that love."

"Have some charity for the love I had for you," the late visitor pleaded.

"Do not torture me with your love. I care not to listen. It is time wasted. Only idle mockery. Your love was without principle; without heart, without soul, devoid of anything but instinct."

The words coursed hurriedly and vehemently from Mr. Boynton's lips, and his face burned with indignation.

"Have some mercy for me. Think of the love you once bore me," she cried. The point of a small embroidered bronze slipper was thrust artfully from beneath a dark, purple velvet robe. The garment fell loosely from over her shoulders, displaying her white, shapely neck, that glistened and sparkled with diamonds in the darkness of the room. He stood before her with

his hands clasped behind him unmoved. His face had grown calm and rigid in the few moments that had passed. His words rang out cold, clear and calm in the silence as he replied:

“Your lesson is well learned, madam, but it is useless; it is all lost, all lost. Your acting is well done, but I am older and wiser than when I first met you. I did fancy you many years ago, but it was simply boyish infatuation. I have loved only one woman, my wife.”

“Irena was——”

“Stop, woman,” interrupting her. “Do not pollute her pure name with your false lips. I will not listen to one word, not one word,” he said, firmly. “Not one word of censure ever passed her lips of you, who have been her life torture. No duty was ever left undone, no word of love unspoken, no deed of kindness ever unbestowed. Such was her life. What can you say of yours?”

“I cannot listen to you. Have a little pity,” she almost screamed.

“Be cautious, madam. If my son should hear you, I will not be responsible for the result, as he might thrust you from the house,” he said sarcastically.

“Great goodness! I never want to run across that young stripling again. He is a perfect terror. I appeal to you, not to your son.”

“What can you expect of me?” he inquired. “I have no money for you.”

“How can I live? You will not leave me in want.”

“Sell your jewels, you have many. Sell your furniture, that is valuable. Sell your bric-a-brac, your horses, those I cannot take as I have given them. They will bring you money. I have none for you.”

“Mercy, pity!” she cried.

“Mercy, pity!” he repeated contemptuously. “Yes, as much mercy as you have given me and mine I give you, no more.”

“I confess I have done wrong, but I loved you passionately, and it would be a pleasure to serve you. What is your wish? What do you ask?”

“I have only one request to make of you. Let me alone. I ask no more. I ask no less. The past cannot be reclaimed.”

“Do you leave me to suffer?” the late visitor inquired.

“I shall watch your fate with interest, and you shall suffer as you have made others suffer.” His voice was cold and calm.

She arose and looked at him disdainfully. “I shall not suffer. I shall live in elegance and luxury. You shall see.”

“Unscrupulous woman, you will suffer, the worst kind of suffering. Remorse will ever be with you, in your sleeping hours as well as your wakeful ones. It will rule over you like a tyrant. It will curse as it only can curse; it will rob the sunlight of its brightness, make daylight darkness, and night hideous to you.”

“You are revengeful. You will be disappointed if I

am yet happy. I do not propose to be made miserable if I can procure money. That will bring happiness in a measure, as it will bring comfort."

"Repent. Mend your ways. Remember you are no longer young. Time has dealt kindly with you, but all the blond wigs or false devices will not cover age much longer."

She flashed with rage and scorn, started toward him with outstretched hand to stop his words. "How dare you talk to a lady in such a manner. It is brutal. I will not listen to such language."

"It is very disagreeable to hear the truth sometimes, I acknowledge, madam, but I have been forced to tell it. The more I talk the more exasperated I am. Let us part."

"Not forever, I hope. Have some compassion," she again pleaded.

"How much have you shown toward me? I have suffered, how much I alone know."

"Do you not think I have had my share of suffering, being separated from one I have loved for so many years?" said his visitor.

"The little love you are capable of will not destroy much of your peace of mind. The want of money will bring you more unhappiness, but that is no excuse for all the deception you have practiced for so many years. You are simply mercenary," he responded coldly.

"Believe at least that I loved you sincerely and let that plead for my forgiveness and pardon," she persisted.

He walked the floor to and fro with bent head and knitted brow, but made her no reply.

“I hope you will relent and grant me another interview and some assistance,” she pleaded.

“I shall never help you in any way again,” he answered firmly. “Now go thy way, thou miserable woman, and never molest me again.”

And so she went out into the great, cold world alone, unloved, and uncared for.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE sorrow and depression in the old homestead that followed after the death of Mrs. Boynton was unendurable. Every book, every leaf, that had been so carefully marked spoke of her. Months had passed away since her death. Mr. Boynton had remained at home with his children. He was ever thoughtful and careful in his attentions, and they had both learned to love him and looked to him for advice and protection.

Beatrice, ever serious, ever thoughtful, seemed more so as days passed by. She was like a drooping flower. While her mother had lived, the care of her had diverted her mind from herself. Her thoughts now turned to Carl Clayton, he was ever before her. She had loved him with all the tenderness of youth, as only such a nature as hers can love. "Was he married? Did he ever think of or care for her now, or had some one else supplanted her in his affections? If not, where and how could she see him?" These questions often repeated themselves in her thoughts.

"If I could only go to New York, I am sure I could find him somewhere or somehow, he is so well known, and then I could explain all. He thinks I did not have any affection for him, but even then he wondered why

I did not accept him for his position. I never can or shall love any one else as long as I live, but it may be with him as it is with a great many other people, 'Out of sight out of mind.' But if he is married? Oh! how unhappy I am at the thought!"

As she was in this frame of mind one morning awaiting her father and brother for breakfast, a deep sigh unconsciously escaped her lips, and her beautiful eyes were dim with tears.

"What is it, my dear daughter? I am sorry to see you always looking so sad," her father said, as he entered the room and overheard the sigh.

She made him no response, but arose, went toward him, greeted him affectionately, and inquired after his health, and how he had slept.

"Very well, my dear, but I fear you are not well. I think it is altogether too gloomy here for my children. The sad past is ever before you. We can shut the house up or leave it and Hector in the care of Charles, and travel to new places, new scenes. We will seek amusement; anything that will lift the cloud that has overshadowed your past life. You have been well taught, well trained. You are far too young and beautiful to live a life of seclusion. We must not mourn for the dead. We must strive for the happiness of the living. What is your wish? What your desire? Would you not like to travel?" he inquired tenderly.

Beatrix's face brightened and she smiled as though the thought pleased her. "I should like very much to visit New York. I have seen very little of that city.

Do you not think you would like to go there, papa?" she eagerly inquired.

"Yes, my daughter, if you think you would enjoy it. It will be a little late to visit the city now. We can go abroad this coming summer and spend next winter in New York. My business is in good hands, and does not need my immediate attention. Although I am not a wealthy man of leisure, my income is sufficient to travel and make you very comfortable. I expect Joe to take my place at the head of the firm, as he seems very well pleased with the idea, and as my general expenses have been considerably diminished, you need not deny yourself any comfort, my dear."

"You are ever kind and indulgent, my dear papa; I should not like to go where you could not enjoy yourself and be happy. But it would please me very much to spend the winter in New York, if it would please you as well," she answered, looking anxiously at him for an answer.

"Then we will go, my darling, as I am always happy wherever my children are," was his reply, as he raised his large, melancholy eyes and looked tenderly at her.

Immediately after breakfast Beatrix began making preparation for their departure, with a lighter heart than she had had since the death of her mother. Her depression in a measure wore off. All was bustle, confusion for a time in the house. The thought of possibly once more seeing Carl Clayton gave her special pleasure in the arrangement for their journey. A week had

passed and everything was nearly in readiness for their departure. In a week they would sail.

“Six days before we sail. How very slowly the days pass. And three months before we shall be in New York. How long it seems. Although the Claytons’ wealth and position are superior to my family’s, I know that will not be any objection now the cloud is lifted and no stain remains on my name. How delighted I am at that one thought of once again seeing Carl. But what if he is married? ‘If’—that word nearly suffocates me,” and so she mused.

The day at last arrived, bright and pleasant, in the latter part of June, when they sailed from Boston harbor. They journeyed to Scotland, England and France, and returned to New York the latter part of September. They went to a fashionable hotel on Fifth Avenue. Beatrix went sightseeing. She drove in the park with either her brother or father almost daily, hoping to see Carl. Weeks passed and she had not seen him anywhere. She only met with disappointment wherever she went. She would often read his name in the paper at a public dinner, or as a prominent figure at a political meeting, or at a fashionable entertainment at a private house, but she was never where he had been, she never seemed to be in the right place to meet him.

She took walks on the principal streets, hoping to meet him suddenly face to face, and that he would stop and inquire about her health and her whereabouts. She could then explain all. “If I could only once see him, I would rush up and speak without any hesita-

tion. I am sure I should," she said to herself many times.

Months had passed away, she had thrown aside mourning and now looked more lovely and beautiful than ever in her light drab walking suit trimmed with black fur, or in a cream or white evening dresses. They went to all places of amusement, to the opera, the theater, which were all new to her, as she had led such a studious life, but never once had she seen the object she was in search of. A gentleman of leisure and wealth, who boarded at the same hotel and had often seen Beatrix and fallen very much in love with her, formed the acquaintance of Joe, and invited him with his sister and father to accompany him to his box at the Italian opera the following evening, which was Wednesday.

"We will accept with pleasure," Joe had responded, without consulting his father or sister.

"Mr. Murray, a gentleman who is living at this hotel, has invited all of us in his box, Trix, for tonight, and I have accepted," said Joe, the next morning at the breakfast table.

"How very kind he is. I shall be delighted to go. It will be so much better than to be crowded into small seats," she replied.

"Who is the gentleman you have just mentioned?" inquired Mr. Boynton, looking up from the papers he was reading.

"Jack Murray, as he is commonly called. He is a well-known club man here in the city, and a very

bright, clever fellow, I think. I have taken a great fancy to him."

"Will you please go, papa?" Beatrix sweetly pleaded.

"I think so, my dear, if you wish it," he replied.

When evening came Beatrix equipped herself with extreme simplicity as usual. She was dressed all in white; cream white silk and tulle, pearl ornaments and a long white opera cloak trimmed with white fur, and a bouquet of lilies of the valley, her favorite flower. This completed her simple toilet.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT 8 o'clock precisely Mr. Murray was anxiously waiting in the parlor for his guests. He had not long to wait, as a few moments later they all entered the room. A formal introduction was gone through with. Beatrix thanked him for his kindness, and they were all whirled away in Mr. Murray's carriage. The opera of Faüst had commenced when they arrived. Beatrix placed her bouquet on the cushion in front of the box, leaned forward, with her hands clasped together beside the flowers, perfectly enchanted with the music, and perfectly unaware of the many lorgnettes leveled at her unconscious loveliness.

"Oh! how delightful! How very charming! How well they all rendered their parts, did they not, Mr. Murray?" she exclaimed, as the curtain fell on the last act, uplifting her soft, dreamy eyes to the tall, dark, handsome Mr. Murray, who stood directly behind, gazing at her in mute admiration.

"Yes, it was very well done, I think," he said, languidly, "but I am a little wearied of the opera, although it is very popular."

"You have seen it many times, I imagine. Yet I scarcely understand how any one could tire of such a de-

lightful opera with such talented artists for singers. I was perfectly charmed, but it is quite new to me. You do not know, of course, but this is really my first season out. In fact, I have never been much in society, as in my younger days I had the care of an invalid mother, who required all my attention at home, and I enjoyed myself by her side more than anywhere else." Her eyes grew misty with tears as she said these last words.

"I am very glad if you enjoyed the opera, Miss Boynton. My box is at your disposal whenever you feel inclined to occupy it. It will always give me pleasure to see you here."

"I have enjoyed it very much, Mr. Murray, more than I can tell you. I am exceedingly fond of music, and I fear I shall take advantage of your kind, generous offer."

"I beg you will not put it in that way, for I feel very grateful to you, as I have had the pleasure of being in company with one of the loveliest and most charming of women this evening," he answered, thrusting one hand in his pocket and looking lovingly down into her soft eyes.

Beatrice bowed her head and made no reply to his remark, but took his offered arm and they all walked out to take the carriage for home. As they walked toward the stairs, she accidentally met Carl Clayton face to face with a lady on his arm. Their eyes met. Carl looked steadily, unflinchingly at her in astonishment. Her eyes dropped in confusion under his steady gaze, her courage forsook her. She could not speak, she was

too much surprised, embarrassed. She did not know what to say, or how to address him. She hastily lifted her fan, gently tapped Joe on the shoulder with it, and hurriedly whispered: "It is he, he. Speak, Joe, speak."

They were pushed along in the surging crowd and separated among the confused multitude before Joe had an opportunity to understand or make any reply.

"There he is now, Joe. Speak, quick. Don't you see him? It is he," Beatrix cried excitedly, pointing one finger out of the carriage door that they had just entered. Joe looked at Mr. Murray wonderingly. "Murray, I believe the opera has turned my sister's head. The first case of lunacy that has ever been known in our family." Turning to her he said, "Explain yourself, Trix. Whom do you mean by 'he?' I saw several hundred of them."

"Why, Joe," looking at him surprised, as to her there was only one "he" in the world. "How very stupid. It was Carl Clayton," she exclaimed, and sank back in one corner of the carriage, drawing a long sigh and almost burying her face in the soft, white fur of her cloak.

"You really look quite pale. I hope you have not fatigued yourself. Allow me," said Mr. Murray, taking her fan and gently fanning her.

"I am a little tired," she wearily answered.

"I thought you were speaking of an emperor or a prince, or some other great personage," said Joe. "I did not recognize Mr. Clayton. If so, I should surely

have spoken to him, as you know he is a man I have always greatly admired, and I should like very much to again see him. Why did you not speak to him yourself?" he inquired.

"He had a lady with him," she faintly answered.

"O—h! You were afraid of the lady, were you? I am not at all surprised at that. I confess I am a little afraid of them myself," Joe said, with a light laugh.

Beatrice sat silent in thought the rest of the way home. Mr. Murray was leaning forward, still fanning her, and noticed her abstracted manner, and wondered where her thoughts were tending.

When once alone in her room, before disrobing, she threw herself in a large easy-chair and gave way to thinking. She sat there many hours with her hands clasped and her head dropped. "I have looked in vain for him for many months, and then to-night let such a good opportunity pass. I only blame myself. Why did I not speak? Oh! dear. How much better not to have seen him at all, yet I know now where to find him and I propose to go every night until I can again see him, for I am quite certain I can control my emotion better, should I meet him the second time. But who is this lady he is with? If she had not been with him, I think I should have had more courage to speak." She arose at last, unclasped her hands, and threw her long fur mantle aside, resolved to see him again and speak, whatever the circumstances were. The next morning Beatrice's first thought was of the opera. "How should she get there? Can we not go to the opera again this

evening, papa?" she inquired of him as soon as she entered the breakfast room, where he was awaiting her.

"Yes, my daughter, I will go as soon as I finish my breakfast and secure as good seats as possible," he replied. Mr. Boynton hastily ate his breakfast, went out, but returned shortly. "There is not a seat or a box in the whole house," he said. "It is one of Patti's nights, and everything was secured many days ago. Even weeks previous the best seats were taken."

Beatrice looked greatly disappointed. Her lips quivered as she replied, "I never have heard Patti, and I have always been very anxious to see as well as to hear her."

"I know you have never heard her, my dear, and you shall certainly hear her before she leaves. I will go early to-morrow morning and secure tickets for one of the nights she sings, but to-night is the first night after an absence from this country of over a year, and there will be a great crush."

"What is it, Beatrice?" Joe inquired, as he entered the parlor where they were sitting.

"Why do you ask?"

"You have such a woebegone sort of die-away look. You look something like a sick lamb."

"I am sorry if I look so distressed, but I regret very much that I cannot hear Patti to-night."

"Is that your only trouble? I will try and see Murray. I know he will be delighted to have your dear company. He did not have eyes or ears for anything else but you last night. I think he is indeed gone. I

expect there will be a wedding in the family soon."

"If there is to be a wedding in the family it must be you, as I do not think there is any one that seems to be very anxious to marry me at present. Mr. Murray has simply a friendly feeling toward me, not anything more," she gravely answered.

Joe laughed. "A life of single blessedness for your brother, Trix," said he. Putting both hands in his pocket and commencing a low whistle he left the room.

Beatrix, on returning to her room, a short time later, found a note awaiting her there from Mr. Murray inviting her to the opera in the evening. She clapped her hands with delight. "I am sure to see Carl there tonight," thought she. Immediately she answered, thanking him for his kindness, and asking permission to take her father and brother.

"By Jove! Murray, deuced pretty girl you had in your box last night," Jim Knickerbocker, a friend, said as he slapped him on the shoulder in the office of the hotel while he was reading the note from Beatrix.

"Y-e-s, yes. Glad to see you, Jim," looking up from his note. "There always seems to be somebody in the way when there is a pretty girl in the question," he answered impatiently.

"Duel, eh, Jack?"

"No, I have not gone quite so far as that yet, I hope, although I do not know but what I ought to rebel a little," he replied indolently. I was in hopes to have her to myself this evening, and she has asked permis-

sion to bring all the masculine gender belonging to the family along with her, and what can I do? I cannot be discourteous enough to refuse."

"Sad, sad. You have my sincere sympathy," his friend said, laughing. "A man of your wealth and good looks stands a very good chance to win any girl, I should say. The greater haste the less speed, it is said."

"No one can get a chance to look at her alone for a moment. Father, brother always around. What an unlucky dog I am."

"I should say you were decidedly lucky, my friend. Think of a poor devil like me who has to go out every day and scratch for a living. Well, good-by, my dear boy. I wish you good luck. I must be off to business. I will drop into your box this evening to see that pretty girl and hope to find you in more buoyant spirits."

Mr. Murray's friend having left, his mind wandered to the pure, gentle image of Beatrix. "I seem to be unfortunate in not getting an opportunity to see her alone, but I will watch my first chance and not let her slip through my fingers, for she is as lovely of character as she is beautiful. I must not let any one else step in before me. All the boys are on the *qui vive* to know her, but I will guard her from all."

CHAPTER XXIV.

EVENING came. Beatrix appeared in the same white dress she had worn the previous evening, having as yet not worn bright colors since she had discarded mourning. A cluster of lilies of the valley was fastened on the bodice. They all entered the box just as the curtain rose on the first act. Patti soon appeared. Beatrix sat listening breathless with delight, forgetting everything. All sorrow, grief, trouble had gone while she sang. Carl Clayton, who had been her first, her only thought, her chief desire in visiting the opera, had for the moment completely vanished from her mind in her enthusiasm and ecstasy over the sweet singer and the music.

"Oh!" she sighed with delight, "I never could have imagined it possible for any one to articulate such sweet sounds. How much everybody must love her. Do you not love her, Mr. Murray?" she innocently inquired, looking up into his face.

"Yes, I love her music very much," replied he with a careless little laugh.

"Oh! I am so glad they have succeeded in bringing her back," she exclaimed as she clasped her hands with joy together. "I wonder what she will sing."

The sweet singer raised her hands before her with a

pretty gesture to still the thundering applause, and sang sweetly and pathetically "Home, Sweet Home." During the singing not a breath was heard the while. The stillness was unbroken in that large audience. As the last note died away, Beatrix with quivering lips and tears dropping one by one looked up and saw Carl Clayton in the box standing directly back of her. How long he had been there she knew not, but there he was, near her, the same handsome, intellectual, courtly man she had met over two years previous at Seaview. He had changed but little, though he may have looked a trifle older. She started perceptibly, suddenly rose from her seat and a deep blush overspread her fair skin, her eyes met his cold, steady gaze for a moment only, then dropping her glance to the floor, she bent her head, but not a word did she utter.

He did not avert his gaze from her face an instant, but looked earnestly, steadily at her in silence. Not a muscle of his face changed. What his feelings were no one could discover. Joe broke the silence. "Trix, you expressed a desire to see Mr. Clayton. I went to his box and invited him in here, and you have not even extended a welcome to him." Tears still glistened in her soft, dreamy eyes as she again timidly raised them to his with an appealing look, and put out her hand to welcome him. Her sweet lips parted slightly, but not a sound came. Carl stiffly and silently extended his right hand to her, stroking his mustache reflectively with the other. He looked her full in the eyes, but not a smile passed over his countenance.

“Clayton, my sister has not returned to earth yet. She has been so enraptured with Patti that she soared above all earthly things during the music.”

Carl did not make any response to Joe's remark, but was regarding Beatrix with severe coldness.

“Beatrix, you said you wished to see Mr. Clayton,” again said Joe.

“I did wish to see you,” with drooping eyes, she faltered.

“Yes,” Carl simply replied.

“Have you been well?” she inquired in a low voice.

“Quite well.”

Beatrix Boynton was nonplussed. She did not know what to say to this self-possessed and elegant man of the world. There was a sternness in his manner that almost frightened her. If he had been less cold and distant, she could have expressed herself more freely. As it was, all her hopes vanished. She had always thought him to be very genial, companionable. She could not understand why he had so changed.

“Your brother invited me here and said you desired to see me,” Carl at last said with cold courtesy.

“You were very kind to come,” she said, with forced composure. “My father I think you have never met,” introducing him. “Mr. Murray, I believe is an old acquaintance.”

Carl turned and shook hands cordially with Mr. Boynton, who had not been unmoved at the singing, for there were traces of tears in his eyes.

“I saw you here last evening,” she again tremulously

addressed him. "I was sorry I did not have an opportunity to speak to you then."

"Yes, I remember," he coldly responded.

Carl looked calm, cold, inscrutable.

"I beg pardon, my dear Miss Boynton, but every one is leaving the house. I do not think you can be aware of the time. They will soon shut the doors, and close us in here, not a very desirable place to spend the night," said Mr. Murray petulantly, as he had been watching with jealous pang every word that Beatrix had uttered to Carl. He removed the long white cloak from the peg and carefully arranged it over her shoulders, at the same time offering his arm. She reluctantly walked out of the box with him, still gazing anxiously, wistfully at Carl. His face did not alter in its expression a shade; it was as cold and stern as when she had first spoken to him in the evening.

"I am very glad to have had the pleasure of again seeing you," she said to him, smiling faintly as she spoke.

"Thanks," answered he coldly.

"I should very much like to hear about Maud, since I suppose you hear from her often," Beatrix remarked, making every effort to continue the conversation.

"Yes, we often see her. She has been very unfortunate, but it is quite a long story. She has spoken of you many times. I think she really took quite a fancy to you."

"Which surprises you, no doubt," she answered, with a smile.

"Pardon me, Mr. Clayton, but your mother is calling you," Mr. Murray said, with a bitter glance at him. "She has been waiting for you a long time, and I am not surprised that she is growing impatient."

"Carl, Carl, do you propose to keep us waiting here all night? Nearly every one has left the house. It is very late and I am very much fatigued. You surely cannot expect us to go home without you," said Mrs. Clayton, not condescending to notice Beatrix.

"Clayton, why will you not come and see us? We are on Fifth Avenue, not far from where you live," said Joe, naming the address, and "Beatrix has often spoken of Maud, and I know it will interest her very much to again hear of her."

Carl glanced at Beatrix with the same cold, stern look he had worn during the evening. He hesitated a moment before replying. "I think I can run in to-morrow between two and three in the afternoon. Would that time be agreeable?" he said doubtfully, still gazing fixedly at her.

"Perfectly," answered she, and her face brightened up with a pleased expression.

"Carl, Carl, come," Mrs. Clayton continued calling nervously, as she stood waiting at the top of the stairs with the same young lady Beatrix had seen with Carl the night previous.

"Good-night, Miss Boynton," said Carl stiffly, and turned to the others, and hurriedly shook hands with them. "I hope I shall see you to-morrow," exclaimed she, looking anxiously at him.

"Probably." In a moment more he was gone.

"You know all about Mrs. Clayton I think I have heard you say," Beatrix inquired of Mr. Murray after they had entered the carriage to go home.

"Yes, I know about him. Everybody knows something about him, I suppose, by reputation. He has newspaper notoriety enough. If that is his ambition, he must be well satisfied. I presume he enjoys reading about himself. As for myself, my aspirations do not run that way," declared he sullenly.

"Oh! I was not thinking of that, but I always see a lady with him, the same one that was in company with him to-night. Did you notice her?" she said looking earnestly at him, hoping for an explanation.

"I think he takes her with him wherever he goes; at least I always see them together. It is a well-founded fact that they are engaged, although it has not yet been announced, but everybody knows they are very much in love with each other, and they are soon to be married, I believe."

"If he is in love with her, he cannot be in love with any one else," she replied dubiously.

"Certainly not. A man cannot be in love with two women at once; of course not. Impossible," he answered, looking at her as though well satisfied with the news he had imparted.

"Do you think her pretty?" inquired she faintly.

"She is considered very handsome, and is a very bright, accomplished girl, it is said, and Mrs. Clayton seems quite delighted with her son's choice, and is per-

fectly devoted to her, but I cannot understand what there is about Clayton to please the ladies' fancy so much, unless it is his wealth. Other men have wealth and good looks to go with it," quietly stroking his mustache with a self-conscious air. He paused a moment, looked earnestly at her and inquired: "How did she strike your fancy? Did you think her pretty?"

Beatrice sighed heavily, and replied faintly, "Yes, very."

"You seem to be very much interested, Trix," broke in Joe. "I am inclined to doubt his engagement, as I do not think Clayton a marrying man."

Their conversation was now drawn to a close by their arrival at the hotel. On alighting from the carriage, she thanked Mr. Murray for his kindness, holding out her hand to bid him good-night. He pressed it gently for a moment, made a ceremonious, indolent bow, and they all disappeared to their rooms for the night.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. MURRAY paced to and fro the greater part of the night, thinking of the beautiful girl, Beatrix. Her sweet manner and soft violet eyes were ever before him. He had fallen passionately, jealously in love with her. "If my time is well chosen, I shall be able to see and have a talk with her before Clayton comes to-morrow. If I can once obtain her promise, she is not a girl to break it for Clayton or any one else in the universe. Does she prefer him to me? Why should she?" He oft repeated these words to himself as many a hapless man has done before. "But why do thoughts surge up in my mind like this regarding him? I do not see how he can possibly interfere with me, for I do not think there is any doubt that he is engaged to Miss Child. How foolish I am to vex myself with these questions. He treated Beatrix Boynton with the greatest indifference, even coldness, at the opera, which much surprised me, as he is usually so affable and courteous. Sweet girl, it made her unhappy. I could see it did, she has such a delicate, sensitive nature. It was unkind, but he is probably so much in love with Miss Child and she with him, that he did not want to give her any cause for unhappiness. He is quite right." This last happy thought enabled him to have a few hours slumber.

“Joe, I should like to have you try my fast horses. I have a pair of splendid bays, and I think they will please you. Why will you not take a spin around the park to-day, and see how you like them?” said Mr. Murray to him the next morning.

“Thanks, Murray,” said Joe; “it is very kind of you to make me that offer. I have an engagement to go with my father down to the lower part of the city this morning to attend to some business. I do not know how long we shall be detained, but if I can possibly get back here in time, it would be a pleasure to take a drive. I am a great lover of horses, and very fond of driving fast ones.”

“Why will you not promise me, Joe?” he said again, pressing the offer. “I am very anxious to have your opinion of them, and I know you are a very good judge of fine horses.”

“Very well, Murray, I will promise. I will accept your kindness. What will be the most convenient time for me to go?”

“How will 1 o’clock suit you? Can you not be ready with your father by that time? That is a pleasant time this season for driving. I believe your sister is expecting company this afternoon, and I will play the agreeable until she is better entertained.”

Joe laughed lightly. “What scheme now?” thought he. With his past experience and quick perception he was not easily deceived.

“That the human race is not to be depended upon I became painfully aware some years since, but horses are

rather more reliable. I will try and be here by 1 or a little after, and I know your company will be very agreeable to my sister." Seeing that Mr. Murray looked a little disconcerted, he put his hand on his shoulder, saying: "That is all right, my dear fellow. You have my best wishes. My sister is sweet and lovely, go in and win; if not, the world is wide and the woods are full of them."

"I do not quite understand," said Jack Murray, as he languidly moved on.

That afternoon Beatrix had arrayed herself in a light drab cloth dress with silver and drab trimmings, a most becoming costume. She was ready and impatiently waiting in their small private parlor long before the clock chimed the hour of 1. She took one of the latest novels that was lying on the table, and seated herself by the window to read, but her mind was too full of happy, eager expectation at the thought of again seeing Carl Clayton to get interested in it. That one thought only of him revolved to and fro in her mind. A few moments later Joe entered the room with Mr. Murray. She arose, changed the book from the right to the left hand to shake hands with him, and said in a pleasant tone: "I am so glad to see you. I have thought so many times of your kindness. Won't you please be seated," at the same time motioning him to a chair.

"Trix, I am going to take Murray's fast trotters out on the road to try them," Joe said to her. "I hope to get back alive. If I don't get smashed all to pieces I

hope to be back here in time to see Clayton. So try and make yourself just as agreeable as possible so as to hold him until I return." Having said that he went out, leaving Mr. Murary alone with Beatrix.

He had well selected his time, knowing that she would be in waiting for Carl Clayton, and had offered his horses to Mr. Boynton and her brother for a little turn in the park, as he carelessly put it, not thinking of the advantage he was throwing into the path of Beatrix to be alone with Carl. They discussed several subjects, but she was somewhat distraught, and every few moments fell to thinking. As he looked at her she had never seemed so beautiful, so lovely, as she sat there before him with downcast eyes resting on the open novel lying idly in the folds of her gown. How faultless her figure. How bewitching and so unconscious of her loveliness. "I must improve my time before any interruptions," thought he.

"Beatrix, I often think of you. Do you ever give me a single thought?" said her companion in a deep, low voice.

"I do indeed, Mr. Murray. I often think of you," she replied with frankness.

His face lit up with pleasure at hearing these words. "Do you very often?" inquired he.

"Yes, very often. Your kindness I do not think I can ever forget; I should be very ungrateful if I did. I did enjoy the opera so much. How grand it was! I could not have gone except for your generosity. It was so very thoughtful."

"You are very fond of music?"

"Passionately fond of it," she answered, in a low tone, as she carelessly turned the leaves of the novel in her lap.

He was a little perplexed. He knew not what to say. He knew he had not conveyed the meaning by his words to her that he had intended. She apparently had not understood him.

"You are very beautiful, Beatrix. You are faultlessly fair," said he.

"Yes, I think my skin must be very fair, since every one tells me so. That must be owing to my physical strength and health, I think. I enjoy the most perfect health. Do you not think that every lady could be as fair if she would only study health? My dear mother taught me to study first my comfort, which is the secret of good health. I am indebted to her thoughtful training for my fair skin. Health is to be preferred to small waists and tight shoes, so she always told me," she answered innocently, and with some emotion.

He moved beside her and took her hand in his. "You do not understand me, Beatrix. I love you, love you passionately."

Slowly, gently drawing her hand away, she looked at him with a troubled expression in her eyes, but in hushed astonishment; then her eyelids fell and her head drooped, but she made him no answer. He had been very courteous, considerate, but she thought the attention shown her was simply because she was a stranger in the city, and his kindness she fully appreciated.

He saw her head droop, the color on her cheeks brighten and burn to a deep red. The drooped eyelids with their long dark lashes shading her soft dark eyes all spoke love to him, all gave him hope, even more than hope—full assurance in the return of his love.

“I cannot tell you in words how intensely, wildly, I love you.” The voice was low and earnest.

Beatrix was surprised, pained and saddened at these words. It was unexpected. She made a movement with her hands to stop him.

“No, no, let me go on, let me tell you more.” Dropping his voice to a low tone he continued: “I loved you before I knew you, loved you the first time I ever saw you. I love you more since I know you. Daily my love has strengthened. Tell me you love me in return and we can live our lives together and be happy in our love.” He poured forth these words hurriedly without pause, in the ardor of his passion.

She slowly raised her head, looked anxiously at the clock, then turned her sweet, lovely face to his and her lips quivered as she replied:

“Your words have made me very, very unhappy. I hope you will not think unkindly of me. I do hope not. I am so very sorry this should have happened, for I like and respect you very much, but—” she hesitated.

“You like me, but do not love or care to marry me,” he said, interrupting her. “You have a preference for some one else whom you expect to marry.” The hope of a moment ago had vanished.

Her voice dropped to a melancholy, low tone of regret as she replied: "I shall never marry."

"Never marry?" he repeated, looking surprised, perplexed at the answer she made to him.

Again she glanced impatiently at the clock. Five minutes to 3. How fast the tiny clock ticked out the gray afternoon hours, never so fast to her. A look of disappointment passed over her face while she was still gazing at the timepiece without replying.

"You have made rather a startling, I may say, shocking, statement for one so young, so beautiful, that you will never marry. I really do not understand it; you must have a very good reason. Will you allow me to ask for an explanation?"

She silently, sadly looked at him for a moment, then with bent head and eyes downcast, she slowly, softly murmured, "I have loved once. I never can love again."

Mr. Murray's face clouded a little. He felt piqued, mortified and somewhat angered at her reply. He had not thought of a refusal. He had wealth, good looks and was considered a "catch," as the word goes. Why should she refuse him? So many women of wealth and position would consider the offer of his hand a great favor. He knew her hand was not bestowed on any one else. What did she mean by loving once? Some girls fall in love every day. So he mused as he stood gazing at her in silence.

"I do not think you can realize what you are doing or saying. I think you will retract your words when

you consider at leisure. You surely have encouraged my attention," said he, with some sullenness.

There was a sad, troubled look on her sweet face as she replied: "I am very sorry if I have done wrong or given offense. If I have misled you it was due to my ignorance of your fondness for me, which I regret. I shall return home soon and in few weeks you will get me out of your thoughts I hope."

"Never. I shall never cease to think of you," he replied, in a tone of despair.

Her voice trembled a little as she again spoke. "I do not think it possible for me ever to love again," she softly and sadly repeated.

Beatrix Boynton had watched the time in eager anxiety until the last stroke of 3 had died away, and with it her hopes had been crushed. The last hope she had caused to spring up in her heart of ever regaining Carl's love had now died out. She never expected to see him again.

Mr. Murray, seeing how utterly depressed and thoroughly unhappy she looked as she sat there before him in all her loveliness and grace, with her hands clasped over the book in her lap one in the other, and her head bent, with the bright color still lingering in her face, and tears in her eyes, he relented, his anger was subdued. He walked impatiently backward and forward in the room, then went to where she sat and bowed his head before her and calmly replied:

"Beatrix, I have wronged you. I have misled myself."

She uplifted her eyes that were still wet with tears to his, and softly said, "You understand."

With head still bowed, he gently answered: "I understand. I shall never marry."

It was now ten minutes past 3, when they were interrupted by a loud knock on the door, and an attendant brought in a card bearing the name, Carl Clayton. Beatrix's whole countenance lighted up with a smile, her heart beat and fluttered, and a little cry of delight unconsciously escaped her lips. She covered her mouth with her handkerchief to force back the emotion, and told the servant in a nervous tone to show him to the room. Then with forced calmness she arose and put out her hand to Mr. Murray. "I am so pleased if you do not think badly of me. We can always be friends, can we not? At least I should like very much to be, with your permission. I should feel very sorry indeed to have you think unkindly of me. Now you understand me better, you know I have not purposely done wrong; don't you?"

"Yes. Good-by. God bless you."

"You have been so very kind and good to my father and brother, as well as myself. I should hope I would not do anything to offend or make you unhappy," said she, in a low voice.

He held her hand in his with a little passionate grasp, then raised it to his lips for a few lingering moments in silence. Then their lives were parted forever.

"Oh! here is Mr. Clayton," exclaimed she, with a happy smile, and her face turning a trifle pale, as he

entered the room. And she advanced to meet him and offered her hand with a kindly greeting. "I am very glad you did not forget me. I had nearly given you up, as I expected you at an earlier hour."

Carl shook hands with her rather frigidly, and said: "I know it is past the time I promised to be here; I had nearly forgotten it." Turning toward Mr. Murray, he greeted him cordially, saying: "I am glad to see you, Murray. How is your health?"

"I am quite well," answered he gloomily, and withdrew from the room.

Beatrice and Carl were left alone.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CARL saw how disturbed she looked and observed the varying color coming and going in her fair skin as he silently gazed at her. "She is in love with Murray," he thought.

Beatrice's eyelids at first dropped under his cold gaze; the next instant she raised them again and addressed him in a pleasant manner. "I am delighted to see you. I think you will find this comfortable," offering him a chair.

Carl passed her a chair with his usual courtesy, and seated himself directly opposite.

"You must have been very much surprised to see me after so long a time," said she, in a cheerful tone.

"It was unexpected."

"It is so long since I last saw you. I fear it will seem to you as though I was almost a stranger."

"It is a long time."

"I should have been greatly disappointed if you had forgotten your promise to-day."

"Should you, indeed?" answered he coldly.

"Yes, I should have been very much grieved. It was growing so late in the day I thought it had escaped your memory."

"I admit it did nearly escape my mind."

"I do think it seems a little selfish for me to expect you to spend much time indoors on such a pleasant day as I believe you usually take a drive in the park whenever the day is fine."

Carl scrutinized her beautiful face for a moment keenly. "It being a pleasant morning I took an early drive in the park with my mother and a lady friend who is visiting at our house."

A look of pain flitted over her face. "I—I—remember," she faltered. "I have seen you with a young lady several times. The one you refer to I suppose is the same one I saw with you last evening."

"The same."

"She must be very charming."

"She is very charming."

"She is also very accomplished, I understand," she said, with a slight tremor in her voice she could not quite control.

"Very accomplished."

"Do you think her very pretty?"

"Very pretty."

All the bright color had now faded from her face and left her very pale. Carl had been watching her closely, and had noticed every change in her expression. She timidly uplifted her eyes and looked him full in the face. His countenance was cold, unfathomable. She was now convinced that he was completely estranged from her. A tear glistened on her eyelash and her lips trembled as she said, "Please tell me all about Maud."

"Maud, as you perhaps know, eloped with M. La

Bau. It was very unfortunate, but my mother unconsciously encouraged it. Maud had had clandestine meetings with him and received notes from him at Seaview some weeks before either my mother or I had seen him, and I have since learned that your brother captured one of the notes, although I have heard that he did not know one word therein. After learning this, my mother encouraged his coming to the house, and she took quite a fancy to him herself. She also thought that she was breaking off an objectionable engagement, and was surprised when she learned that M. La Bau was the one her parents so much objected to. He had followed her to our seaside resort. He treated her very cruelly, however, and deserted her when she did not receive remittances. She has returned to her father's home with her infant, a broken-hearted girl."

Beatrice sat with her head slightly bent forward, a hand resting on each arm of the chair, looking earnestly, attentively at the speaker during the recital of this story. Her face was thoughtful and sad.

"How very sorry I am for dear Maud," said she. "I loved her much, she was so kind and affectionate. I do not see how any one could have the heart to treat her unkindly."

A puzzled look passed across his face, while a moment elapsed before he made her any answer.

"Yes," he said, "she was a girl of kind and generous impulses. I am sorry she could not have found some one more worthy of her love."

"You see her very often, I presume. Will you

kindly remember me to her, and tell her I very often think of her?"

"I may not see her again very soon. I fear your message may escape my mind."

"I hope I may meet her accidentally, as I chanced to meet you," she said, a faint smile passing over her sweet lips.

"Yes, I thought we had met for the last time to meet no more," he replied with icy coldness, as he was silently blaming himself for coming.

The words fell on her warm, tender heart like a heavy weight. There was a wishful, pathetic look on her face, but she was silent and embarrassed. Seeing her embarrassment, he continued: "Your brother is not here, I see. I am sorry he is out, as I came almost expressly to see him. I had hoped to find him in. Do you think he will soon be home?"

"I am sure he will be back soon, as he wanted very much to see you. Mr. Murray kindly offered him his horses for a drive. He is so fond of driving fast horses that I suppose the time has slipped away more swiftly than he has realized. He has very often spoken of you before we came to New York, and said he should surely hunt you up, should he make a visit here. I do hope you will remain a little longer, for he will be very much disappointed to find you have gone," she pleaded, as Carl had risen from his chair and taken his hat and cane from the table.

"He is very kind to give me a thought. I hope I shall again see him before he leaves," he answered in the same severe, cold tone.

"I am certain you will, as he has promised himself that pleasure," she replied.

Carl walked restlessly to and fro, then went to the mantelpiece, put his elbows upon it and stood a moment in thought, then slowly he crossed back to where Beatrix sat and stood quite still, gazing at her with cold scrutiny.

Beatrix, on seeing Carl standing, also arose and stood before him with bent head and quivering lips, as she said tremulously, "I expect I shall return to Boston soon, and we may never meet again."

"That you consider your home, I believe," he said, with cold indifference.

She sighed heavily. "Yes, that is my home."

"I hear that it is a very pleasant one."

"It is very comfortable," she answered. She was struggling hard to control her emotion and appear unconcerned.

"I think your brother told me he was making only a short visit here, and that your father came at your solicitation."

With averted face, she answered: "I was very anxious to come, although I have visited the city before, but never to remain quite so long."

"You may be so pleased with the city and the people that you will decide to come here and live the rest of your life," he retorted with cold hauteur.

"Oh! no, no, never," she cried in a tone of despair. She uplifted her dreamy, wistful eyes to his. She found no response to her tortured, wounded heart. He

wore the same unaltered, stern, cold look. Her face grew very pale and her voice was very low when she again spoke. "I hear you are to be married soon." Her lips trembled, her voice faltered as she said these words.

"Indeed!" was the only word he uttered in response.

Her eyelids drooped, her breath came fast and quick. She was trying to subdue the gnawing pain at her heart. She bent her head in silence. She was making every effort to keep back the tears that had come unbidden to her eyes.

Carl did not avert his gaze from her face an instant, but stood calmly, coldly, quietly scanning every change in her countenance, with his hat and cane in one hand and gently stroking his mustache with the other.

"You have my best wishes, and I hope you will be very, very happy." These words she spoke hardly above a whisper.

Carl looked pale, proud, disdainful. "I ought to be very grateful to you for your kind wishes," he responded, his lips curving with cold contempt.

"You do not understand me, I am sure you do not," she said, with a little hysterical laugh that often comes before weeping.

"I may understand too well. I thought I could return the same kind wishes to you that you have been kind enough to bestow on me, since when I entered the room I feared I interrupted a very affectionate scene," the same sneer still lingering about his mouth.

The beautiful head still lower drooped. The setting

sun was now sending a dim shadowy light through the room as she stood silently resting her eyes on the carpet beneath her. Her voice was hushed with emotion.

Carl's brow was knit and clouded. He waited a moment for a reply; none came.

He again spoke in a low, deep, earnest tone:

“Great heavens, Beatrix Boynton, are you satisfied to adorn yourself in fine clothing and place yourself before the eyes of men as a passionless, heartless beauty, to make conquests, to tamper with their affections, without any care or thought of the anguish you are inflicting? To subdue, to humiliate, to subjugate; to make yourself a thing to be admired simply as a beautiful statue; to be flattered, adored, and have men bow down to you like so many slaves in admiration of your beauty? Is that your only ambition; to dominate over slaves? Or do you crave social power, and is your greed so great for gold that you will sell yourself to the highest bidder, barter your soul for money? Is that your only——?”

Carl paused abruptly without finishing the last sentence. Beatrix was sobbing violently. She had fallen back into the chair unable to combat with her emotion longer. Both elbows were resting on one arm, her handkerchief pressed closely over her face with both hands. She was weeping passionately, bitterly, like a child.

Carl listened a moment at her violent weeping, and stared in silence at her. He was utterly astonished, perplexed. The same puzzled expression stole over his features he had worn so often while in conversation with

her during the afternoon. His face softened in its expression. The hard, cold look had slightly melted away as he saw those genuine tears. He was unprepared for that. He had never seen her show any emotion before except for music, and that he knew she was exceedingly fond of. He knew he had spoken with great impatience, coldness, even harshness, and seeing her sincere grief, he relented. He was neither heartless nor illiberal, but he had doubted her sincerity. He thought she was devoid of any affection, and he had thought and hoped that the old love for her had been destroyed within him.

“Beatrix, I am very sorry I have given you so much cause for unhappiness and grief. I know I have spoken very harshly, for I spoke in anger.” He bent over her, resting his hand lightly on her head and gently stroked her hair. “I hope you will not further distress yourself at my hasty, unkind and thoughtless words,” he soothingly said.

His voice was soft and kind. She partly raised her head from her desponding attitude. “I will not detain you longer. Only let me once more be alone; please do not stay,” she pleaded in broken sobs. “The fault is all mine. I have acted unwisely. I know it all now,” she added.

She again covered her face and the excited, nervous sobbing came only the faster and more bitter. Beatrix’s weeping had unmanned him, and made him very wretched. He did not know how to act to console her. He walked backward and forward nervously in the

room, uncertain how best to act. Turning toward the door he met Joe at the entrance just coming in. Beatrix arose and quickly disappeared in the adjoining room, her sleeping apartment, closing and locking the door after her. Joe greeted him cordially, saying he was sorry not to have been home sooner. Carl was distraught and impatient to get away, and in no mood for conversing. He rushed for the stairs without making Joe any answer, leaving him to stare after him in wonderment. Taking a cab at the hotel, he drove rapidly home, and entering the house, went directly to his room and rang the bell for a servant. "A little dry toast and coffee is all I wish. You may serve it here," he said to the attendant. "Tell my mother I am well, but do not wish to be disturbed by any one. If there are any callers, I cannot see them. Remember my orders."

When alone Carl seated himself in a large, easy chair before the open grate, locked the door and gave himself up to thinking. He drank a few sips of coffee that had been brought, but not a morsel did he eat. "Was Beatrix Boynton the artful, intriguing girl his mother had pictured her to be? Was it possible for any one with such childlike, innocent manners, and lovely face to be anything but natural? If her manner is assumed and acquired, her acting is perfect. In all my travels and experience with women, which has not been limited, I have never seen anything better done. Why did she refuse me at first? That is one thing I do not understand. Has she since learned of my wealth and position, and is she now willing to marry me for that?" She

puzzled him in his early days when first he met her. She puzzled him more now. "Poor Murray, he looked dejected; he was evidently in love with her. Why so much emotion when she spoke of hearing I was to be married? Surely that was not assumed." So he mused, gazing at the open fire, until long after midnight.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“MY son, are you alone? Where is Beatrix? Have you seen her?” cheerfully inquired Mr. Boynton, when he went to dinner and found Joe eating alone, having been detained talking business with some one in the corridor of the hotel.

“I was nearly famished, I could not wait any longer for any one. The drive in the park and the exercise of holding those horses has given me an excellent appetite. I shall not yearn, or beg for the pleasure of driving those horses very soon again. I was tired, I was cold, I was hungry. Did not know as I should ever be able to manage a knife and fork again.” Joe talked on in a light-hearted way, without answering directly his father’s question.

“Mr. Murray is very proud of his horses, and they are very fine animals. He has been exceedingly kind and generous during our stay here. He knew you were fearless and strong of wrist, and probably thought you would enjoy the drive. We must invite him to our home in Boston and repay him, if possible, for his many kindnesses. We are very much indebted to him, and I cannot comprehend why he should be so interested in our pleasure, but I fully appreciate it.”

“It is as plain as daylight to me, although I think Murray had some design on our lives, governor,” Joe laughingly said, and Mr. Boynton laughed with him.

“Why does not Beatrix come to dinner?” again he inquired.

“I have not seen her. As soon as I returned home I went directly to our room, as I was anxious to see Clayton and have a chat with him. Not a word would he speak. He was mum as a nutshell, and acted something like a sea monster, almost knocking me down to get away. Beatrix I did not even have a chance to look at. She skipped out of the room into her own as lively as a cricket and locked herself in. I knocked at the door and inquired if she was coming to dinner. She answered through the closed door and asked to be excused, saying she had a severe headache, and wished to be quiet, and that she could not eat any dinner.”

“I am very sorry to hear that. I think this is the first time I ever heard her make any complaint of ill health. I hope she will soon recover.”

“You need not be anxious, father. Beatrix enjoys the most perfect health generally. I presume she will be in her usual good health by to-morrow. When I returned home I did not know what had happened. I thought I had struck a lunatic asylum. Beatrix and Clayton flew in opposite directions out of the room the minute I entered. Immediately after I ran across Murray in the hall and he growled at me like a bear. I intended to humbly thank him for the lively time I had to keep his horses from running away with us, and

breaking our necks. I concluded they had both offered themselves and been refused. Women are at the bottom of all trouble, governor. Why don't they take me for an example, and let them alone? A dozen of them make fools of themselves by falling in love with one woman."

"Beatrice would not by design cause a moment's pain to any one, and it is hardly possible that any girl would refuse Mr. Clayton, with his wealth, position, handsome face and figure and courteous manners," answered Mr. Boynton.

Beatrice Boynton's gentle, loving, sensitive nature was crushed and wounded at the harsh words Carl Clayton had uttered. The rebuke had vibrated to her heart like a sharp knife. She knew he had misunderstood her, and if he had been less cold and severe she could have explained all, but from the moment he had entered her presence he had treated her with great coldness and indifference that had injured her feelings so that the little life history she would have revealed to him she was forced from expressing by his severity. She knew he had no mercy for deceit or artifice, and she had a deep sense of his nobility of character. She still loved him with all her youthful ardor, and had looked forward with eager joy to the time when she should again see him; had looked and watched so patiently for so many months, and now he loved another. "Yes, he loves her, he loves her." She repeated this again and again in the anguish of her soul, in the darkness and silence of her room. She suffered all the torments of a

woman who loves and has been loved in return, and is convinced that the love that was once hers is all given to another, never to be reclaimed. But not a word of blame or reproach had she to utter against him, for she well knew it was her fault only.

“He will be married to that beautiful girl I have so often met him with and be happy, and he deserves it, while I shall be weeping over my sad fate, due to no act of mine.” She sat there in thought she know not how long. Slowly the cold moonbeams stole over her sorrowful, beautiful face. She was still there when the first soft shade of daylight broke into the room. Her thoughts had been too agonizing for sleep. She at last arose, walked slowly to the bed without disrobing, and went to sleep from utter exhaustion. She slept until her little watch on the bureau pointed to 9 o'clock. As she wearily arose and threw aside her dress for a simple, loosely made gown of cream color trimmed with lace, the thought came back to her of the cruel words Carl had spoken. She threw herself back on the bed face downward, resting on her beautiful bare arms and sobbed bitterly. Hearing her name called, and a knock on the door, she hastily arose and inquired who it was.

“I felt anxious about you, my dear, and came to inquire if you were sick,” her father said.

“I have a slight headache and will have a little breakfast in my room, if you will excuse me a short time longer,” she answered, without opening the door.

“Very well, dear. I am in no hurry. Do not hasten; take time to eat your breakfast. I will wait here until you come.”

She sent for her breakfast, but could not eat any. Every mouthful choked her. She bathed her eyes that were yet red with weeping, and twisted her soft, brown hair in a heavy coil on the top of her head and held it in place by an arrow of shell, and tired and restless, went out to their little parlor, where her father sat reading the morning paper, waiting patiently for her. He rose as she entered, went toward her, and kissed her affectionately.

“Why, my darling, you look pale, nervous, sick. I was sorry to learn last night that you were too ill to dine with your father. Have you not yet recovered from your headache, dear?” inquired he, looking anxiously at her.

She simply nodded her head in response.

“I have brought you some lilies of the valley, the flower you love so much, my dear. See,” said he, pointing to a vase standing on a table near.

She walked slowly toward the flowers, bent low her head over them to partly hide her face from his gaze.

“You are always kind and ever thoughtful, my dear father. It was very good and considerate to bring those sweet flowers to me. I do not know how I could ever live without you,” she said with sadness.

“My dear daughter, why do you grieve so? I am anxious to make you happy. Anything that I can do to make your life pleasant it would be a pleasure to do. But you must not grieve your young life away,” he said in mild reproof.

“I sometimes grieve to think I have ever given you

an unkind thought, for I now know you have been one of the best of fathers," she answered, with a sudden and deep pathos, as she bent lower her head over the flowers and passed her hand rapidly across her eyes.

"But you must not grieve over the past, as all your life you have done your duty."

"I hope so," was the faint reply.

"That thought ought to be a great consolation to you when you think of the dead."

"I think of the dead only as in peace and rest."

There was great sadness in her voice as she uttered these words.

"Then do not grieve, my dear, but derive what happiness and pleasure you can while you live. There are others left on earth for you to love, and those who love you devotedly. Your duty is with them."

She sighed as she listened. "I should like very much to go home. I think I should be far happier living in quietude in our comfortable home alone with brother Joe and you, my dear papa, than in this cold, gay city. I meet strangers. They do not understand me. I do not understand them."

Mr. Boynton looked at her astonished. "You surprise me, my daughter. Only yesterday I think it was that I heard you say you were perfectly happy here, and would like to live here forever and make it your permanent home. I really do not understand why you have changed your mind so suddenly."

"It may seem strange to you that I have changed so hastily, and I do not think I can give you the motive,

but I am very tired of living here and would like to go to my peaceful, quiet home." She had seated herself by the table, with her back almost turned to him, one elbow rested on the table, her cheek on her hand.

"My dear, I was under the impression that you were enjoying yourself immensely. Theatres, operas, concerts, horse shows and no end of amusements and meeting of old acquaintances. I thought your life here very agreeable, very pleasant."

"Life here seems cruel, heartless, pitiless, cold, unbearable," she answered with warmth.

"I cannot understand my child. Why so dissatisfied? Why so sad to-day? and why this haste?" persisted her father.

"I cannot explain; indeed, I cannot. But I am very impatient to get off."

"How soon would you like to go, my dear?" inquired he, still puzzled.

"To-morrow, the day after, to-day, if possible," she answered, with a little impatience.

"Something must have annoyed you greatly. I am sorry you are so unhappy to-day," he said, in vague anxiety.

Turning to him, and seeing how anxious he appeared, she crossed to where he sat and put her trembling, cold, hands in his. "My dear papa, I fear I am unreasonable, nervous to-day. I did not feel quite well, but it is not anything serious. I hope it will soon wear off. Do not let me disarrange any of your plans. I will stay longer if you think you can be happier here. It

seems so thoroughly inconsistent and selfish in me to consider only my own wishes without consulting the pleasure of others that are very dear to me," she said in a sympathetic tone.

"My darling, to consult the happiness of my children is my greatest pleasure. I have some business to attend to. I will find Joe at once and we will go immediately downtown. I know he is anxious to get home. I think we shall be able to leave by to-morrow night. So you can get everything in readiness."

Her father having kissed her good-by, left her alone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BEATRIX began at once with feverish haste making preparations to leave. She had gathered all her things together, and was placing them safely in her trunk, hoping her father would decide to go that evening, so anxious was she to get away. The vexatious torture of heartache, of alternating pleasure and pain that make up the life in the world that she had sought for so eagerly, had brought to her only unhappiness and disappointment. She now looked to her quiet home as the only shelter of repose, the only safe, peaceful, serene place on earth. Her heart seemed empty and desolate. Seeing Carl Clayton had revived afresh her love. He had never looked handsomer, more lovable, more elegant than when she first met him after so long an absence. We never appreciate or value our happiness, our possessions, more than when we are about to be deprived of them. Her night had been sleepless, the day had been one of fasting; she had nearly finished her task, when she again gave herself up to thinking. She threw herself in a large armchair. Resting her arm on the table, she bowed her head upon it and gave way to a fresh burst of weeping.

It was now nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when

an attendant entered with a silver salver bearing a card upon it. "Who can it be? Who is it?" inquired she wearily, slowly raising her head from her arm.

The servant stood quite still near the door hesitating, and stared at her attitude of grief in bewilderment.

"I am not expecting any one. I know no one who should call on me. Who would take the trouble? Bring it here." Without moving from her chair, she indifferently, mechanically took the card from the salver. When she read the name of Carl Clayton, she was amazed. She opened her eyes wide with surprise. The card dropped to the floor from her trembling fingers. She threw back her head against the cushion of the chair and shivered with emotion, and a deep-drawn sigh escaped her. "I cannot see him. No, I cannot," recovering her composure. It is impossible. Do you not see I am very busy?" she said to the servant, looking pleadingly at him.

"Yes, mum, I see. I'll go and tell him yez out, shall I?"

"Tell him anything to keep him away," she said imploringly. "Tell him I am not able to see any one. Tell him I am not well, which can be truthfully said, for I am quite sick enough to be in bed."

"Indade and yez are, miss, yez look dreadful. Any one could see with half an eye that yez is a sick lady. I'll get rid of him meself. The idea of bothering a swate lady like yerself," he muttered, as he hurried from the room.

"What can it all mean? He seemed to be so bored

yesterday and yet he comes again to-day. Probably repenting of his cruel words, he comes to seek my pardon. But I cannot trust myself to see him. Better for me never again to meet him, for he is engaged to some one else. He the same as admitted it yesterday, at least he did not deny it," she mused.

The attendant soon returned with a broad grin on his face holding a silver coin in one hand. "Indade, miss, and he says he must see yez and he is such a rale gentleman, and so very handsome, and it is only jest for a minute as he wants to see yez," said the man.

"Oh! no, no! Ask him to please excuse me. Tell him I am very tired and busy," she answered, with weariness and languor, her head still resting against the back of the chair, her hands lying listlessly in her lap.

"Only for a minute he wants to see yez, miss," again persisted the servant.

"Hush!" she whispered, raising her finger; her quick ear had detected a step near.

"Excuse my intrusion. I have taken the liberty to follow the attendant to the room, as I am not willing to leave without seeing you," said a kind, melodious voice just outside the threshold. The voice she well knew. It had the same kind tone she had so often heard over two years ago at her little seaside cottage. But even then she had not the courage to meet him. She sprang out of her chair to her feet, to fly from his presence, and advanced toward her bedroom door. Carl walked quietly, rapidly into the room, gently put

out his hand before her to arrest her movement, took hold of the knob of the door to keep her from entering the next room, and said kindly, mildly: "Do not go, Beatrix. Yesterday you wanted to see me. To-day I want to see you." She pushed back her hair from her low broad forehead with a quick, nervous movement, her lips quivered, she meekly bowed her head and stood quietly before him without making him any answer. He motioned her to sit down in the chair by the table she had just vacated, and drew a seat beside her for himself. "I fear you thought me very cruel, very harsh, very unkind yesterday," he said in a low, kind tone to her.

Moved by a nervous restlessness, she leaned forward to where stood the large bunch of sweet and fragrant flowers, and detached one of them from its companions, and bent low her head over it.

"I know I spoke very hastily, roughly," he continued. "If I have done you injustice I am very sorry," he added dubiously.

She sat twisting and breaking unconsciously the little delicate flower she held in her hand until it fell in fragments at her feet.

"I judge you were not very glad to see me to-day, as you have not spoken a word since I came. I must try and make myself more agreeable," he said in a low, persuasive tone that was very fascinating to most women.

Her head was bent, her face was thoughtful, but still she was silent.

"I hope you will forgive me, will you not, Beatrix? for the unkind and very thoughtless words I used to you?" he said penitently.

"I have forgiven," she answered sweetly. These were the first words she had spoken. She could not harbor any ill will toward any one. Malice did not exist in her nature.

"I feel happier since I know I am forgiven. Some years ago," he continued, "I was very much in love with a young girl I met at Seaview. Do you remember the incident?"

Her eyes filled with tears, she drew a long sigh. "Yes, I well remember," she softly answered.

"She gave me a little white flower as a memento of the pleasant evening I spent with her on the beautiful grounds by the sea, like the small remnant you have remaining in your hand," he said, leaning over with his usual grace and taking it gently from her. "She refused me, I never knew why."

Carl, looked studiously, silently at her, waiting for a reply. None came. The silence was broken only by a low sigh.

"Would she be willing to tell me why?" in the same kind, gentle tone, he inquired. Carl Clayton was watching her intently. His love had only slumbered to be awakened by the first touch. She now knew she held a place in his heart that no other woman would ever hold. She looked up at him with a sad, pathetic expression on her face. His kind, gentle manner had given her fresh courage.

"I am very anxious to tell you," she said faintly, smiling through her tears.

She hesitated. "Shall I tell you now? It is a sad, long story. I am afraid it will weary you. Do you really think it will interest you?"

"However long, I will listen to you patiently; it will give me pleasure to do so. Perhaps another day will do as well, I think you need rest," said her companion kindly. "You look very weary and exhausted to-day."

"I think to-day will probably be the only time, the only opportunity, I will ever have to tell you, since I leave the city to-morrow perhaps forever, and it will be a relief to my mind to tell you a little of my dear mother's sad history as well as my own. Then I hope you will think more kindly of me. You will then know how you have misjudged me."

"I am exceedingly sorry if I have done so, or given you cause for unhappiness," he answered compassionately.

Beatrix passed her hand gently across her forehead as if to collect her ideas, as she sat silently thinking a few moments.

Carl was carefully, thoughtfully watching her every moment. Her face was very pale. Her eyes were swollen with weeping; there were dark circles under them. Her delicately and sweetly molded mouth drooped with a plaintive expression at the corners, and her whole manner had the appearance of intense suffering and sadness, mingled with fatigue and lassitude.

Carl broke the silence. "You have not yet told me

why, Beatrix. Why do you hesitate so, when you see I am so anxious to hear your story?" he inquired encouragingly.

She put her finely poised head a little on one side, her eyes resting thoughtfully on the carpet. "I am not quite sure but it will bore you," she said doubtfully.

"It will greatly interest me. It would not be possible for you to bore me. I admit I have been much angered, and the error may have been mine," he said, still a little in doubt. He leaned forward and gently took in his the hand that was resting on the cushioned arm of the chair to give her courage to speak. "Your hand is icy cold, and you are looking very pale. I do not think you ought to exert yourself much to-day. I do not think you can be well. Do you not think you need rest?" inquired he, with pity and pathos in his voice.

"Oh! no! I shall feel much better when I have explained that which now to you seems most strange." Beatrix commenced and told him as briefly as possible of her mother's sad life. "I was surrounded by mystery. My father's name was never mentioned to me," she said. "I thought if I told you that, you would regret your offer and never again want to see me; and such a good kind father as he is, and always has been. I cannot say too much in his praise," she added, in a very low, pathetic tone.

"And the mystery of your life is the only reason you refused me, Beatrix?"

"That was my only reason," she answered, very

faintly. The color by this time had all fled from her face, and left her perfectly colorless.

“And you loved me then?”

“Yes, I loved you then,” murmured Beatrix, half-consciously, while her hands fell listlessly over the arms of the chair, her head rolled over on one side, and she slid noiselessly down on the floor and lay motionless at his feet.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BEATRIX BOYNTON'S hidden grief and the torture she had endured from the harsh words she had received from the one she had loved so fondly, and for whom she had watched so long with anticipation of so much pleasure at once more meeting, together with the long fast and sleepless night, had been too much for her already overwrought nerves, and she had swooned from utter weakness, exhaustion and nervous emotion.

Carl started, drew in his breath and looked down at her in surprise. He lifted her up from the floor in his arms, gently laid her upon the lounge, and hastily rang the bell for the servant. "Miss Boynton has simply fainted. Bring some water quickly and send the maid at once," he said to him. They bathed her head and chafed her hands. In a few moments after she began to return to consciousness. There was a slight movement of the lips. She was saying something to herself, unconscious of her surroundings. Carl bent low toward her and listened closely.

"Yes, Carl, I loved you always, always."

These were the words Carl alone heard her utter.

Beatrix slowly opened her eyes from these murmurings, and started wildly, vacantly at those about her.

She soon remembered the past. A cold nervous shiver ran over her as she slowly raised herself to a sitting posture. "She will not need your assistance longer," Carl said to the servants. "You may go and send up some hot bouillon immediately. Here is something strengthening. You had better take it at once," he said, as he took the cup from the hands of the servant. She shook her head with a sad, sorrowful gesture without speaking.

"Will you not do that much to please me?" he said, in a low, kind voice. "I command obedience. I am your master hereafter."

A sense of great happiness had come into Carl's life. He now knew that Beatrix loved him. A sweet smile broke over her face like sunshine coming through clouds. Her dreamy, appealing eyes turned upward to his inquiringly. A thrill quivered through his veins as he met the soft, wistful eyes of the woman he loved uplifted to his. He could not disguise it from himself longer. He loved her passionately—loved her as ardently as he did from the first, when he had met her a few years previously at the seaside. He drew closely to her, gently put his arm around her waist.

"Drink it, darling; you must obey me. It will do you good. You are unnerved and weak. I have been very cruel, but I am going to redeem myself, and always be considerate and kind to you in the future," he said tenderly.

Beatrix took the cup and drained the contents.

"What do you mean?" she inquired breathlessly, in-

nocently, with an accent of eager hope, as a faint blush came into her dazzlingly white skin. Her beautiful brown hair had loosened and hung in tangled meshes over her shoulders. The loose sleeves of her garment had slipped back, exposing her exquisitely moulded soft white arms. The timid, blushing girl he so well remembered seemed to him more beautiful than ever in her simple, cream white morning robe. "Idiot I must have been to have thought her anything else but a sweet lovely girl devoid of any art," he thought.

"I mean, dearest, that I will share your sorrows and pleasures all my life. No shadow, no cloud shall ever cross your pathway if I have power to shelter you from it. If possible, I will make your future all sunshine."

Her lips parted slightly in surprise; she uplifted her face lovingly to his and laid her hand gently upon his arm.

He took her hand from his arm, carried it to his lips and kissed it tenderly. "Do you not think I have had reason to doubt your love, Beatrix? You have never yet in your conscious moments for once expressed in any way to me your love."

Her hands stole softly, tenderly around his neck, and she rested her head in a long embrace upon his breast. "Yes, dearest Carl, I love you more than I can tell. I loved you long ago, loved you only," she softly murmured, in a tone of delight.

"Such a wicked, sweet one you have been to keep me in doubt for so long," he said laughingly.

"I do not like to think of it, Carl. I think I have

behaved very badly. I am the one that ought to redeem myself instead of you, but I will promise to be very, very good in the future."

"I will guard your life, darling, as carefully as I have kept this little flower you gave me long ago." Carl took from his vest pocket a small well-worn envelope, which contained dry faded leaves of a lily of the valley. The dried leaves scattered over Beatrix's dress as he turned the envelope upside down, and held out the palm of his hand to receive the contents. "See how faithful I have been and how long I have loved you."

Beatrix looked at him in astonishment. She picked up the faded leaves and the little dried flower from her dress.

"You will not care for these any longer, will you, Carl? As you will have me instead of the withered flower. I hope I shall not wither and fade as quickly, for I fear your love would fade also."

"Such beauty as yours, my love, always lasts. Years may pass over you, age may furrow your brow, gray hairs whiten your head, yet you will still grow in beauty as your whole life has been one scene of kindness, love and truth. Such women never fade."

"I am so pleased to know you have changed your opinion and do not think so badly of me as you did yesterday. Now you love me for myself, don't you, Carl? Once you loved me simply because you thought I was pretty. Such love as that soon dies out. But I thought you were engag—" She hesitated without finishing the sentence. The thought of losing him

seemed more dreadful to her than the loss of her own life.

Her companion looked fondly at her as he saw a faint, pink flush steal over her lovely face. "Say it, dear. It cannot alter the facts, 'engaged.' No I am not engaged to any one but my own sweet Beatrix. But if you had only trusted me at first, darling, your sufferings would have made you only the dearer to me. I could not have loved you very much if I could not have borne some sorrow for your sake."

"I made a great mistake, dearest Carl, but I know you have forgiven me and I shall always have perfect faith and trust in you in the future, and never again keep any secret of sorrow or pleasure from you. But your mother, do you think I shall please her? she inquired thoughtfully.

"When she knows you well, you will please her, I am sure," he answered consolingly.

"I hope so. I shall try very hard for your sake, Carl, but you know she is very fond of Miss Child; at least I have been so informed."

"Yes, it seems to have been her pet anticipation that I should marry her, and she as well as Miss Child have taken some pains to cultivate the report of our engagement, and I do not know but that I should have submitted if I had not again met you; but I have now consulted my own heart. Why should I not make the selection of the companion of my life? On that one subject at least I think I am justified in making a choice to please myself. I am always anxious to please

my mother, but in this I think she has been a little unreasonable.”

“You will always love me, Carl, won’t you, and not let your mother influence you against me, or any one else supplant me in your affections?”

“My own sweet one, no earthly power can separate us now. You are safely entwined around my heart. No rival can ever sever us. Why do you have these doubts?”

“I am so very happy I fear it cannot last,” she answered, as she looked timidly, lovingly up to his face.

He gazed fondly down into her eyes and pressed her closely to his heart, and pressed his lips to hers.

“By Jove, governor, see what the young folks will do when you are out of sight,” Joe said to his father as they had entered the room unannounced.

Carl arose, approached toward Mr. Boynton and extended his hand. “We only want your consent to make our happiness complete.”

Mr. Boynton shook Carl’s hand heartily, then crossed to where Beatrix was and embraced her tenderly. “I was always very proud of my daughter. I am now prouder than ever for her choice.”

“Well, Clayton,” Joe said, “I will congratulate you when I recover from these bruises on my arms where you thumped and knocked me around yesterday in your haste to get off.”

Carl laughed and they all laughed with him. “I had a puzzle on my mind. I wanted to get home to think it out.”

“The devil of a puzzle you must have had to knock everything over that came within your reach. You were in such a peculiar state of mind I did not know but that you took me for a football.”

“When you are in love, Joe, I shall overlook everything you do, however extravagant it may be. I hope I shall prove to be a model brother-in-law.” Carl glanced at the clock on the mantel. “It is after 6 o’clock I see. I had no idea it was so late. Time has passed so rapidly. Do you think you will go to-morrow? Can you not defer it a few days longer?” he said, addressing these last remarks to Mr. Boynton.

“Most assuredly I will defer it if my children are anxious to lengthen their visit. Yesterday my daughter was very anxious to get away from you. To-day she seems anxious to stay where you are,” he answered with a laugh.

“I think I will change my mind again, papa dear,” Beatrix said, going to him, softly patting him on the cheek, and smilingly looking up to his face.

“I will answer that question myself,” said Joe. “You have such an indulgent father, I know you could induce him to do anything you asked, however unreasonable. I suppose if you asked him to take a trip to the moon and invite the gentleman that inhabits it to make an earthly visit to you, he would make an effort to get there some way, but you hustled me off in great haste this morning to secure berths on the boat for to-morrow night. It was at your suggestion that we purchased tickets at this early date, and I propose to go

and take you along with us. You will see enough of your future husband hereafter," he said with a good-natured laugh, nodding his head at her the while.

A slight shade of disappointment passed over Beatrix's face. She made no reply to her brother's remarks, but turning to Carl and putting out both hands to him, said: "I am so very sorry, but you will come and see me to-morrow before I go, will you not?"

"I will come in to-morrow as early as possible and will take you in my carriage to the boat later in the day," he answered. Carl bade them all good-night and left.

On his return home he broke the news to his mother as gently as possible. Mrs. Clayton, when first hearing of her son's engagement, paled with anger. She was greatly disappointed, and did not hesitate to express her dissatisfaction. She stormed, raged, and entreated in turns. When she found he was deaf to all arguments and exhortations, she succumbed and wished him happiness, but inwardly, secretly hoped something would happen to prevent the marriage.

CHAPTER XXX.

ALONE and in the silence of her little bedroom Beatrix thought over her new, sudden happiness. "Only last night I was so very wretched and now I am deliriously happy." What a day it had been, beginning with the darkest clouds and ending with the greatest felicity for her.

"How beautiful everything looks to me."

She glanced out of the window up to the pale moon that was shedding a soft light over the yet bright, busy city. A shadow came over her sweet face as she thought of his mother's disapproval. "What if anything should happen to take him from me?" she murmured in thought. As she knelt beside the bed to offer up her evening prayer, she fervently prayed for the one she loved so fondly and for his mother's reconciliation, and that she might do her duty in all things. Her night slumber was dreamless and peaceful. She awoke in the morning refreshed, rose early, had everything in readiness to leave long before noon, and sat impatiently waiting in her little parlor nearly an hour before Carl came. "I surely thought you would be here long before this. I have been so anxious to see you. It seems many hours that I have waited, Carl," said she as she

eagerly opened the door for him to enter on hearing his footsteps.

"I was in hopes to be able to get here before, but I have been very busy this morning for you, darling," he replied, looking down into her soft eyes.

She wound her arms around his neck and puckered up her sweet mouth for him to kiss. He stooped and kissed her upturned lips, saying:

"I knew you would forgive me when you knew I had been detained for you."

"For me," she said in wonder. "How could I detain you, Carl, when I have been watching so anxiously the clock for over an hour for you to come?"

"I will show you what has kept me so long."

He took from under his arm a pale, blue push box, opened it and drew forth a large, exquisite solitaire diamond ring, also a large heart-shaped pendant, with a spray of lilies of the valley set with large diamonds.

"Oh! how beautiful, how magnificent," she exclaimed. "Are they really for me?" she inquired, in surprise.

"I bought them expressly for you, dearest."

"Why did you get anything so very valuable for me? I do not know why you should," she timidly said.

He gently drew her left hand toward him and slipped the ring on the third finger. It sparkled with great brilliancy. Then he took the heart and pinned it to the neck of her dress. "Look in the mirror, love, and see how they please you."

She arose, stood before the mirror, saw how they sparkled on neck and hand and how costly and brilliant they were, and looked back at him in wonder and surprise. "Such large, expensive diamonds. How I sparkle. How very kind and thoughtful you are, Carl, but why should I have them? Where should I wear them? Something more simple would have done for me."

"You will need and wear them after your marriage," he answered, as he drew her toward him, kissing her passionately. She looked at them again and again in wonderment. They seemed too gorgeous for her simple dress. It all seemed so strange to her, for she had never had anything of value in diamonds before. Her father had once given her a ring with a small cluster of diamonds and those were the only ones she possessed.

"I was up early this morning and improved every moment," said he. "I looked at a house on Murray Hill that I am sure will please you.

"Anything will please me where you are, Carl, however simple or humble the abode," she answered, blushing deeply. "You know my own home is very simple.

"I desire to furnish you with one as comfortable and pleasant as the one you leave."

She held up her shapely hand, moving her fingers to and fro, looking at the sparkling of the many colors in the ring. "I did not expect anything of so much value," she said with great simplicity.

"If you forget me when you are away, you can look

at the ring as a little reminder. That third finger was believed to be directly connected by a slender nerve with the heart itself by the ancient worshippers of Egypt.

“I never can forget you, Carl. I only hope I shall prove worthy of you and appreciate all your kindness.”

“I am well pleased if you like your gifts. I feel as though I was still in your debt for giving into my care your dear, precious little self.”

She sat in thought a few moments, with her hand resting on his arm, looking lovingly up into his face.

“What are you thinking of, dear? Why look so serious?”

“Carl,” there was a world of love and tenderness in the voice as she spoke his name. “If anything should happen to take you from me, I think I should die,” she almost whispered.

He snatches the hand from its resting-place and takes it to his lips. “What should happen to me, sweet love? You do not think I am going to drown myself, or sever the arteries in my throat just as my happiness seems complete, do you?”

“No, not that, but I am so happy,” she breathes, “and you seem so great, good and kind that this happiness seems more than I deserve.”

Carl laughed. “Love magnifies. I may prove to be a very dull old dog, but you must not have any evil forebodings. The clouds I hope and think have all passed over your youthful head. I hope to make the future all brightness and sunshine.”

Beatrice Boynton's young life had been so painful and full of disappointments and sadness that she was fearing some accident would snatch this sudden happiness from her grasp. They talked over their future plans in a dream of love, forgetful of time. Carl jumped to his feet on seeing the lateness of the hour. "We must be off at once. How long we have been talking," he exclaimed. "I saw your father downtown and promised him I would see you safely down there in time for the boat; we have no time to lose. Make no delay in getting ready. Drive as rapidly as possible. We must be there before 5 o'clock," he said to the coachman, on entering the carriage. Occasionally he would look out of the window and urge him to go faster. The whistle had sounded and the plank was being removed when the horses dashed upon the pier covered with foam.

Joe was watching eagerly for them, and stamping his foot with rage. "What idiots lovers are," he muttered, as the carriage drew near.

"Hold, hold! Let that plank remain," cried Carl, as he jumped from the carriage.

"Who the devil are you?" inquired the men.

"Carl Clayton." He slipped some silver pieces into their hands, the plank was quickly replaced, and they all hurried aboard, leaving Carl behind. Beatrice leaned over the boat, throwing kisses and waving her handkerchief until he could no longer be seen.

"Carl always commands obedience. Why is it?" she inquired of Joe, thinking of the plank being replaced.

"I do not understand it unless he has a large interest in this line of boats. You can see, Trix, how you will have to toe the mark after you are married," said he with a provoking little laugh.

"It is very wrong to talk so, Joe. I am sure he will never give me a cross word; he is all goodness, kindness and generosity of heart," she answered somewhat indignantly.

"That is enough to make a brass monkey laugh. Love is blind to all faults. I expect to be called in very often to settle a quarrel. You know you were never a success in a dispute."

"I shall make every effort to please him, and I do hope I shall succeed. I know he has no compassion for deceit, so I shall never give him any cause for anger again."

"If he ever should be overcome by a bad temper, just call upon your brother Joe. I will bring my big dog and all my firearms along with me and make him skip around lively," Joe answered, with a mischievous nod of his head at her.

"How very unkind you are," says she, blushing slightly. "If you could only see the magnificent diamonds he gave me. They are really worth a fortune."

Joe opened his eyes with surprise and gave a low whistle. "He is considered rich, I believe, but I did not know he was a man of great wealth."

The hour was early in the morning when they arrived home. The only servant in the house, old and faithful, answered the summons of the bell. The house

had been closed for so many months that it looked dark and solitary, with the darkened windows and the furniture still clothed in its summer linen. Beatrix walked to and fro, singing as she went, ordering the servant to open the blinds to let in brightness and light. However gloomy her surroundings, to her the future looked bright and beautiful. Every morning brought a letter from Carl, and once a week he took a trip on to see her.

It was arranged that the wedding should take place in two months, the early part of March. The old homestead lost its usual air of gloominess and tranquillity during those few months of preparation. At last Beatrix's simple trousseau was completed, and the day came bright, clear and beautiful.

The wedding was very simple, very quiet, according to Beatrix's wishes. There was no one present but her father, her brother and two old trusted servants to witness the ceremony. A murmur of surprise, of disappointment, indignation and disgust ran through the circle in which he moved when they read in one of the morning papers the announcement of the marriage of the Hon. Carl Clayton to Beatrix, only daughter of Joseph Boynton, of Boston, Mass. "No cards."

"Who is she?" so many inquired. They had never heard of her. Some ordinary person, was the general opinion, who had by her artfulness fascinated the wealthy, handsome and gifted Carl Clayton whom great heiresses, great beauties had tried in vain to win.

"Extraordinary good fortune for her."

Meanwhile Carl and his lovely bride were taking a week's sail in his beautiful yacht, away from the envy, strife and treacheries of human life, more happy alone in each other's society than in the gilded halls of pomp and wealth.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"I ONLY wish this could always last, Carl, such a happy, tranquil, peaceful life with you alone, and this is such a splendid boat. I feel so perfectly happy," Beatrix said, glancing lovingly at him as they were approaching New York.

"I want you to see your new home, darling. I hope the one I have chosen will please you. I should be very sorry to disappoint you, if you are expecting anything very sumptuous," he said, as if in doubt.

"You need not have any fears as to that, Carl. If it is ever so simple, if it pleases you, I shall be perfectly happy in it."

"Are you sure, dear, you will be satisfied in a very simple, modest, lowly little home with me alone?" he inquired, looking earnestly at her.

"Oh! my darling Carl, I am perfectly sure. I shall be very happy in the most simple, the most humble, the most lowly, the most plainly furnished home. Anywhere with you I shall be perfectly contented," she sweetly answered, while a smile of perfect happiness stole over her sweet, fair face, and twining her arms softly around his neck, she drew closely his face to hers and kissed him on cheek and lips. "I have those ex-

pensive diamonds, you remember, Carl, you gave me. They will bring money. I do not need them."

Carl laughed heartily. "I think you had better keep them, dearest. I would remain on the water longer, as it seems to please you so much, but you know we are to sail for Europe in a week, and my mother has a number of things she wished me to attend to for her."

She sighed a little, dreading his mother's critical eye, and whispered softly to him, "If I can only please her."

"She does not know you, my love," was his answer.

They had now arrived in New York. Carl's carriage was waiting to take them to their future home. The coachman stopped at an immense, stately looking mansion on Fifth Avenue. A smart looking man in livery rushes down the broad stone steps and opens wide the carriage door. Carl alights quickly and puts out his hand to assist Beatrix. "Come, dear," he says.

"What place is this? It looks like a public building. Shall I get out, too?"

"Yes, dear, you had better come too."

"Is this your mother's home," she timidly inquires.

"No, darling, this is my dear little wife's home."

"It looks so large, I did not think you would require anything quite so immense for two, and I understood by what you said our home was to be very simple," she said, as she walked by his side up the broad stone steps. "Oh! how very grand and magnificent it is," she exclaims as she steps into a spacious and splendid marble hall.

Just inside the entrance suspended from the ceiling hung a large horseshoe composed of lilies of the valley and maiden-hair fern. On the circular staircase were tall palms. Beatrix looked in amazement at Carl, who stood gazing at her with an amused smile on his face.

“It surely is not all for us alone?” she said, in surprise.

“For us alone, dear. You must look at the rest of the house.”

She followed him into the large drawing rooms, which were tinted in soft cream and gold, beautifully frescoed and hand-painted, and upon the walls hung tapestry of great value. Luxurious chairs in soft tints of plush and velvet, rare bronzes, and marble statuary filled the rooms. Upstairs with Carl, in mute admiration and astonishment, she wandered from room to room. There were the pink room, blue room, Turkish room with its jeweled walls that sparkled with many colors, and her own little *boudoir* tinted with delicate blue, and hung upon the walls was light blue brocade with raised figures in silver color, with hand-paintings on the ceiling of Cupids playing hide and seek amid pale pink roses and lilies of the valley. There was everything that was useful in the most costly form. There was a beautiful white ivory with “Beatrix” carved finely on it, vignettes set with garnets and rhinestones, and a small silver writing desk in one corner with everything in readiness for use. She moved slowly after him like one in a dream, her feet sinking low down in the soft, yielding carpets as she went.

Next came the art gallery, which contained pictures of all sizes by the most celebrated artists.

She stood transfixed, gazing at the beautiful pictures, among them being one of herself that Carl had painted some few years before.

Carl stood looking at her, smiling, greatly amused at her look of wonder. Then putting his arm around her waist he said: "Come, dear, we are not through yet. It will take a day to look at all those fine paintings. I am afraid you will fall in love with your own picture. You did not know your husband could paint such a good picture of yourself, did you? Well, dear," he continued, without waiting for a reply, "We will take the elevator for the next floor, as I fear you will get very wearied."

They were whirled swiftly up to the next floor in a gilded lift, upholstered in pale blue plush and gold that might have been fitted up for a queen's *boudoir*. They moved on through an immense library into the billiard room. Beatrix's eyes dilated with amazement, as she stood on the threshold. Carl again laughed at seeing her surprise. "Come up to the billiard table, and see if there is anything you think you would like."

She slowly crossed to the table, her mouth slightly parted, the forefinger of one hand resting on her lips, as though overpowered with wonder. The room darkened and brilliantly lighted with electricity and gas, was dazzling in appearance. It shone with brightness and splendor, and sparkled with many diamonds. These were her presents, diamond earrings, necklace,

armlets, marked "from your beloved husband," a silver service from her father and brother Joe, vases of great value from Mrs. Clayton, and a hundred or more from others. Beatrix opened and shut her eyes and slowly passed her hand across her forehead, and looked up to Carl's face in mute inquiry. She was bewildered by the wealth and luxury with which he had been delighted to surprise her.

"What are you thinking, love?" inquired he, his face beaming all over with amusement.

"I cannot think. I am confused, stunned and astonished beyond expression at the grandeur and magnificence. It was all so unexpected, so sudden. Words are too feeble to express my thanks. I feel as though I had had a glimpse of fairyland. I have never seen anything half so grand, so beautiful, before in my life."

"Then the house suits you? I am pleased at that, as this is also your wedding gift from your husband, that is, if you think it is quite fastidious enough for your refined taste," replied he, laughing merrily.

"Oh! Carl, do not say that. It is a marvel of beauty," she answered, blushing deeply and looking down at her very simple drab traveling gown. On learning of Carl's great wealth, she had a feeling of timidity, not knowing whether she should fill the position satisfactorily to him.

"I cannot forgive myself for ever giving you a moment's suffering, and I so misjudged my dear kind father as well as you, my dear Carl," she said, kissing him affectionately.

“My darling, life is full of mistakes. I could have shared your sorrow and lightened the burden. In every large city there are many cases of secret sorrow and hidden unhappiness that make home life a misery.”

“I shall pray that no such sorrow may ever cross our pathway, dearest Carl, and it will always be my greatest desire to make your life very happy.”

CHAPTER XXXII.

TIME speeds onward. Five years have now passed away. The bells of Christmas have chimed forth their merry peal. The bright rays of the morning sun glitter through green wreaths in a room fragrant with flowers, and on a Christmas tree laden with bright toys. The happy prattle of two beautiful children can be heard, as they together sit on a soft tiger rug playing with some toys they have gathered from the tree. Grandpa Boynton and Uncle Joe are sitting near and laughing heartily at their funny little sayings. Beatrix, if possible more beautiful in womanhood than in girlhood, whose domestic life had been one of uninterrupted happiness, is seated in a luxurious chair, equipped in furs, listens for a moment with a proud, happy, contented smile on her face, then stoops, kisses them fondly and says, "Good-by, my darling children, mamma must go to the hospitals and see some poor little children and take them some nice things to eat and some pretty little toys to make them happy."

"I will escort you to the carriage and take a little stroll down the avenue," said Joe.

They both sauntered out together, Beatrix walking a short distance by his side. Hearing shambling footsteps from behind and looking around they saw a

woman considerably under the influence of liquor. Her face was bloated and red, her hair was disheveled and white with age, loose locks hung carelessly over her shoulders. Her clothes were shabby from long wearing, what once had been rich and elegant. "Say, Mr. Boynton," said the woman, with an affected smile, "can't you forgive me and get the old man to give me a little money?"

"No, not by one word will I intercede in your behalf. You are a heartless, unprincipled woman to deceive a good man for so many years."

"But, Mr. Boynton, I did not know that Mr. Terhune was living," she persisted, with an assumed smile.

"Yes, you did; you gave him sum after sum to keep him silent, and made the innocent suffer as long as you could."

"I did not mean to," she answered, with a grin.

"You are too much under the influence of a disgusting liquid to comprehend well what you are saying. Now, go your way, you miserable woman. You have done all the harm you can."

"Are you hungry?" inquired Beatrix, holding out a handful of silver coins, with a look of disgust mingled with pity on her sweet face. "I will give you these if you promise me you will never annoy or molest my father again.

"Excuse me," she drawled out, as she took the silver and shuffled past. That was the last that was ever heard of her.

The shades of night were fast approaching when Beatrix returned home. She opened the door on a merry group. "My darling, we have been watching and waiting for you for some hours," said Carl, as he arose and removed her long fur cloak.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting dinner, but I was delayed longer than I expected, I had so many toys to distribute to those poor children," she said, with compassion.

"My dear daughter, I fear you will break down under this constant strain of charitable work. You are neglecting your social duties, which every one deplures."

The speaker was none other than Mrs. Clayton, who had learned to love her as an own daughter.

"I am so grieved at the misery I see around me that I think I ought to try to show my gratitude for the great blessings I have received by throwing some gleam of sunshine and brightness into the pathway of those less fortunate."

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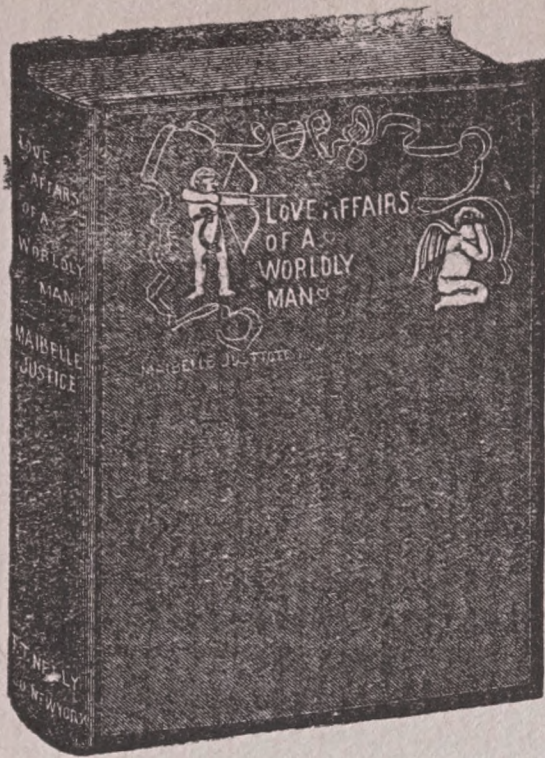
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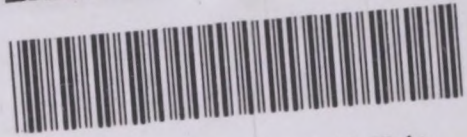
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