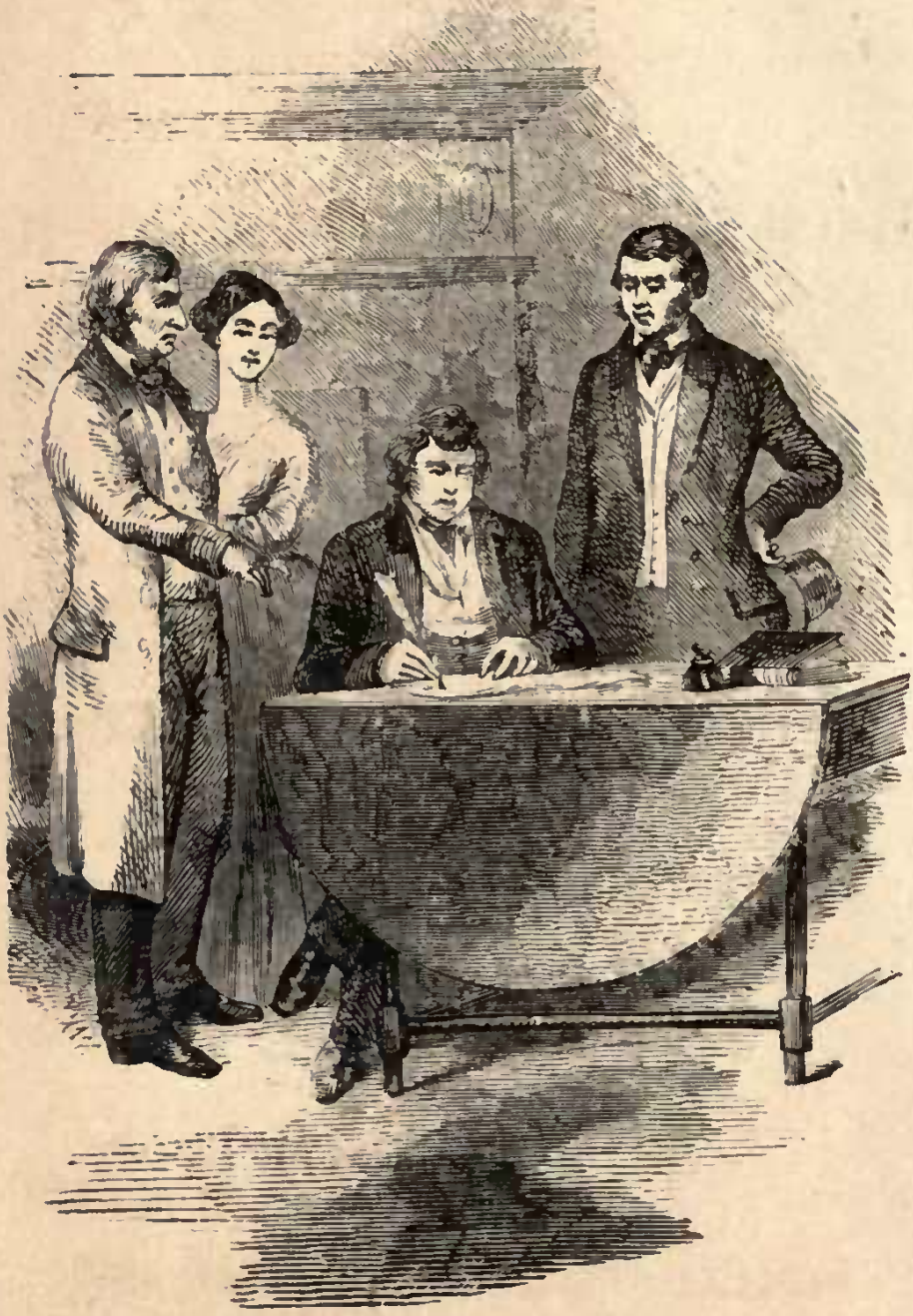

Pride restrained the better feelings of both; and, with a nervous hand, Richard wrote his name. — page 33.

HEARTS AND FACES;

OR,

HOME-LIFE UNVEILED.

BY

PAUL CREYTON,
J. T. Trowbridge
AUTHOR OF "FATHER BRIGHTHOPES," ETC.

SIXTH THOUSAND.

BOSTON:
PHILLIPS, SAMPSON AND COMPANY.
1854.

Stereotyped by
HOBART & ROBBINS,
Boston.

PREFACE.

"Father Brighthopes" was the author's first experiment at book-making. It depended upon the public whether it should also be his last. But, somehow, the little venture was successful; it found many friends here and there; and the favor with which it was received acted like genial sunshine to quicken and mature a second plant, of a not dissimilar species.

The present volume is composed of short domestic tales, written to illustrate American Home Life, and to afford the reader a few simple, and, it is hoped, useful lessons, as well as amusement for now and then a leisure hour. No attempt has been made at fine writing, in any of them. Of strange romance and startling fiction there is none; and, if the book

meets with anything like the kind reception accorded to "Father Brighthopes," it will be owing, not to its literary merits, but to the every-day subjects on which it touches, and to the gentle feelings of the hearts to which it appeals.

With these brief remarks, the author takes leave of his friends for the present, gratefully acknowledging their kindness, and hoping to be able again to greet them in a few months, in a work more replete with thought and spirit, and more worthy of a place in their affections, than anything he has yet attempted.

CONTENTS.

THE TWIN COTTAGES.

I. — THE OLD HOUSE.

No two families ever dwelt together, under the same roof, in more perfect unity and happiness than the brothers Felton; occupying, with their wives and children, the old Felton house, in the flourishing township of Pennfield. They were brothers in feeling as well as in name; — their wives were like sisters, and their children were like the children of the same parents in their kindness towards each other. Neither ever visited the city, and brought home presents to his own children, without distributing gifts equally curious and gratifying to his little nephews and nieces. The two families enjoyed everything in common; eating at the same table, riding in the same great carriage, sitting in the same pew at church, and laboring together to advance their common interest.

The Feltons lived thus for years. But at length, when they saw new and beautiful houses rising about their estate in the fairest portions of Pennfield, they conceived a desire to build a more splendid house than the humble cottage in which their parents had lived and died.

"Why not?" asked Lionel, the elder of the two brothers, as they were walking across the fields together, one mild Sabbath afternoon. "The old house is really getting to look quite poverty-stricken, in the midst of the improvements which are going on around us."

"And as our families increase," rejoined Richard, who was no less ambitious than his brother, "we find the old house growing too small for us. We must either build an addition in the spring, or put up a new house; and, really, I am inclined to think the latter would be the cheapest, in the end."

"No doubt of it, brother," said Lionel. "But, even if it would not, we can afford a little extravagance, I am sure. Here we are, with two hundred acres of the best land in the county, free from incumbrance; and we have money enough at interest to build as fine a house as you can see from the top of Hodge's Hill."

"Well, then, supposing we put up a new cottage,' added Richard, casting his fine eye, with an expression of pride, around him on the broad and beauti

ful fields of the Felton estate. "Where shall it stand?"

"On the north road, to be sure," replied Lionel. "There is not another such fine locality in Pennfield; and I am sure father himself purposed building there, had he lived. The finest orchard on the farm, you know, is on the north road; — the new house shall go up directly in front of the orchard, with its front door looking towards the east."

Richard was accustomed to rely upon his elder brother's judgment, and on this occasion he coincided with him in every suggestion he made touching the new house. They walked leisurely over to the north road, and, in their imagination, constructed just such a cottage as they wished to build there in reality, and admired its imposing beauty, until it would have been a difficult thing for them to dismiss the subject from their minds, and live contented in the old house half-a-dozen years longer.

It was resolved, then, that the new house should be built; and you may be sure that the wives of Lionel and Richard showed no disposition to discourage the enterprise. It was something they had long desired, but to which they had small hopes of being able to persuade their husbands; for, — if the truth must be told, — the old Felton house was quite large enough and sufficiently convenient for both families for ten years to come; and it was

hardly thought that two such sober-minded men as Lionel and Richard would incur the expense of a new house merely for the sake of appearances.

The project was the subject of much talk and study during the subsequent fall and winter; and, after the principal points in the construction of the proposed cottage were resolved upon, an architect was employed to draw up a plan.

Whilst the brothers were engaged in getting choice framing-timber out of the woods, and in drawing logs to the saw-mill, their wives at home employed their time in constructing quilts, curtains and rugs, and in preparing rags for carpets, to decorate the new cottage. Long before spring, they had agreed upon the style in which each room was to be furnished, and given a thought to every article, whether for use or show, from the ornaments on the parlor mantel-piece to the stove in the kitchen. All this time, their labors and discussions were conducted with great cheerfulness and commendable good feeling.

One important arrangement, however, still remained to be made. The large, square bed-room, in the south-east corner of the house, would be the most desirable and pleasant apartment of all.

"I think," said Martha (Lionel's wife), referring, for the fiftieth time that day, to the plan of the new house, which lay upon the sitting-room table, "I

think, Maria, you can't object to giving *that* room up to me. Lionel has spoken of it. I think he is set upon it; and, really, I think we ought to have it."

"I don't know about that," replied Maria, bending over her work, and plying her needle very rapidly. "Richard and I were thinking *we* ought to have that room. In fact, we did n't suppose there would be a word said against it."

"Well, we won't quarrel about it, of course," pursued Martha, pushing the drawing across the table in a rather abrupt manner. "But I am sure, when you come to reflect, you will allow that we have the best right to the room."

"How the best right?" asked Maria, in a quiet tone.

"Why, my dear woman, you can't deny that Lionel has done all the planning, and headed every enterprise about the new house. He first suggested the idea of building, as Richard himself allows. Now, really, every person of sense must say that *he* ought to have his choice of the rooms."

"Every person of sense?" echoed Maria, losing patience with her sister-in-law. "You appear to think *I* am not a person of sense —"

"Maria —"

"Because I don't happen to think just as you do. Now, I must say that I think any person of

sense must give the right of the square bed-room to me."

"Well," said Martha, with an angry gesture, "by what right do you lay claim to the room?"

"I can tell you, without getting angry," replied Maria, in a significant tone. "You say Lionel has taken the lead in everything connected with the new house; and so he has, because Richard has been willing to give in to his opinions, as younger brothers generally do. Lionel has had his way about everything; but Richard has done as much hard work as your husband has; and he could have done the head-work as well, if Lionel had not insisted on having it all done to please himself. Now, after giving up all to Lionel, Richard certainly ought to have his way about one trifling matter; and that is, the square bed-room."

"How unreasonable you are!" exclaimed Martha. "You have n't any sense on this subject. You know very well that Richard was glad to have my husband take all the cares of building off his mind; because Lionel is more capable of head-work than himself."

"That I deny!" said Maria, with great firmness of manner. "I don't know what you can be thinking of, to make such an absurd remark. Was n't Richard always the best scholar, and don't Lionel

even now apply to him, when there is any figuring to be done?"

"The best scholar has nothing to do with building a house," said Martha. "But there is no use talking with you, until you come to your senses. All I've got to say is, *we* shall have the square bed-room, at any rate! There!"

This arrogance on the part of her sister-in-law made Maria very angry, and she answered without giving her passion time to cool.

"I declare, Mrs. Felton, this is too bad! A person would think you were insane. It is not the room I care so much about; for, if you had asked me kindly to give it up to you, I would have given it up without a word, as Richard and I have always given up everything to you and your husband. But, if you *claim* the room, it is another thing; and you'll find that people who have suffered themselves to be trampled upon can set up for their rights, when driven to it. Say what you may, *I* will never go into the new house, unless we can have the square bed-room!"

"We can go into it alone, then, and like it so much the better," said Martha, with a provoking laugh.

"We'll see if you can!" retorted Maria, her eyes flashing upon her sneering sister. "We'll see!"

Maria turned her back scornfully upon Martha,

as if determined to have no more conversation with one so void of reason; and Martha deliberately moved her seat to the opposite corner of the room, apparently with the intention of getting as far from the insane Maria as possible.

II. — THE QUARREL.

It was on a cold afternoon in mid-winter that the dispute — the first serious quarrel between Martha and Maria — took place. Lionel and Richard had been at work all day drawing logs out of the woods; and, at night, unharnessing their teams together, they returned to the house, walking slowly side by side.

"I calculate we shall move into the new house early next fall," said Lionel. "Our work gets on famously. We shall have everything ready for the carpenters in two months, and the masons can build the cellar-wall as soon as the frost is out of the ground."

"The women are getting on finely, too," rejoined Richard. "Now, tell me, Lionel, did you ever see two wives, under the same roof, agree so well?"

"Never. But it is no wonder. Martha would sooner give up everything to Maria than quarrel with her."

"And Maria feels the same towards her."

With these words on his lips, Richard opened the door. The wives were sitting in the position in which we left them.

"How happens this?" said Lionel. "The table is not set."

"Maria, how have you forgotten yourself so?" asked the mild Richard. "You usually get supper, I believe."

"I always have till to-night," said Maria, flushing very red. "For two months I have set the table three times a day, without a word. Now I think it is time *somebody else* should set it."

As Martha knew very well who was meant by *somebody else*, she said, quickly,

"I don't know what this means, I am sure. Maria has always wanted to set the table, because she does not like to sit all day; — and, as I can sew faster than she can, I have left the duty to her."

"I don't understand this trifling!" said Lionel, sternly.

"Nor I," replied Richard, biting his lips.

"Come, brother, let us set the table ourselves."

Maria had now reflected long enough on the folly of what she was doing to be heartily ashamed of her conduct. She felt that she ought to have set the table, but pride had sustained her; and now, before she could leave her chair, Martha, who knew, perhaps, how much a little condescension at such a time

would speak in her favor and to Maria's disadvantage, quietly arose and put away her work.

"I am sure," said she, "I would rather set the table than not. It is much pleasanter than sitting all day; and I would have had supper all ready by this time, if I had not supposed *somebody else* preferred to do it."

"Maria, what does this mean?" demanded Richard, impatiently.

Wounded pride, anger and shame, struggled in Maria's breast, until she burst into tears.

"I have been trodden upon and insulted long enough!" she sobbed.

"Trodden upon and insulted!" echoed the impetuous Lionel, with a frown. "By whom? Not by Martha, I know. Come, sister; have done with this nonsense!"

"Brother!" replied Richard, in a suppressed voice; "it is not for you to judge and condemn my wife. See, she weeps; and she would not weep for nothing."

"Fudge!" said Lionel, with a gesture of irritation.

Richard turned calmly away, and followed Maria to her room.

As soon as Martha saw her husband disposed to take her part, she thought best to hold her peace, and go quietly about her work, with the peculiar

air of a person very much abused, but, nevertheless, perfectly resigned. Lionel walked across the room, sat down, and took his youngest child upon his knee.

"Now tell me what this quarrel is!" said he to his wife, in his usual imperative manner when excited. "What is the matter with Maria?"

"It is such a trifle that I am ashamed to mention it," replied Martha. "I did n't think she was so silly. There was something said about the large square bed-room in the new house, and Maria spoke up very crank, and said *she* laid claim to that. I asked her by what right; and she answered that it was time for her to lay claim to something, since she and Richard had suffered us to trample upon them, and have our own way in everything, so long."

"Did she say that?" said Lionel, angrily.

"Yes, and a great deal more like it, which I can't repeat. Of course," added Martha, with a self-approving smile, "I could n't hear her talk so without making some reply; and so I told her that, if anybody had a right to the bed-room, it was ourselves, for the house would never have been built if it had not been for you."

Lionel's brows gathered.

"Richard shall know of this!" he muttered. "I could have borne anything rather than that she

should have said *we* trample upon *them*. My blood boils at the injustice of the charge. I take the lead in business, because I have more of a business turn than Richard has; and because he knows it, and is more willing to trust to my judgment than his own. We trample upon them! So this is the reason why Maria did not set the table."

"I don't know of any other reason, I am sure," replied Martha.

Meanwhile, Maria was telling *her* story to her sympathizing husband.

"I ought to have set the table, I know," said she. "But Martha was so unjust and tyrannical that I had to rebel. It is true we never quarrelled seriously before, but it is only because I have always tamely submitted to her domineering disposition. She has had everything her own way, and so has Lionel; and she thinks that, because we have submitted before, we must now. I told her, if she had asked me kindly for the bed-room, I would have given it up to her; but when she claimed it, on the plea that the house was of Lionel's building, and not yours, and that you were not capable of taking the lead in business ——"

"Did she say that?" muttered Richard, whose pride was touched to the quick.

"O, that is not half what she said!" exclaimed Maria.

"This is insulting!" said Richard, with much irritation. "Because Lionel is the eldest, and I have allowed him to take the lead, as elder brothers naturally do, she must doubt my capability! But Lionel himself must see the injustice of this, and he shall know of it to-night."

During this time, Richard's two eldest children, — Jackson and Wolcott, — together with their cousin Edward, were milking the cows, feeding and taking care of the stock, and performing other duties about the yards and barn, to which they always gave their attention after school. To see that the boys slighted none of the "chores," Lionel, as was his custom at night, left the house, directing his footsteps towards the barn; and Richard went out soon after on the same errand. The brothers met in the door of the wagon-house, and stopped to speak with each other.

"The women," said Lionel, carelessly, "have had a foolish quarrel."

"I am very sorry for it," replied Richard.

"I hope they will make it up again soon, brother. But I must say I think that Maria is the most to blame."

"To blame for resenting an insult to her husband?" said Richard, hastily.

"Who has insulted you?"

"Martha. She said I was not capable of doing

business. If I have permitted you to take the lead, Lionel, it is not because I consider myself in any way your inferior."

"It seems to me you are getting into a passion about nothing," rejoined Lionel. "Martha may have said you had less business tact than I have; and that you yourself cannot deny."

"That I do deny! I acknowledge no inferiority. As Maria said, you and Martha are growing presumptuous."

"She said we trample upon you! Absurdity!"

"Ha!" ejaculated Richard, with irritation. "You have never presumed too much, have you? Your wife laid claim to the bed-room, because your judgment is superior to mine!"

"Come, come, you talk like a school-boy!" muttered Lionel, with a sneer. "I think we had better drop the subject till some time when you are cool."

"Lionel, this is unkind!—this is unjust! I cannot suffer such intolerance. It is as Maria said. You presume too much on our good-nature."

"Hum! yes, trample upon you!"

Richard turned angrily away. The two families sat down to the table together that evening, but not a word was spoken by the parents. The children saw that there was some trouble in the house, and conducted their conversation in whispers.

After supper, Richard sent Jackson down cellar for a pan of apples and a pitcher of cider; but, instead of directing him, as heretofore, to pass the fruit first to his aunt, and fill his uncle's glass before his own, he told him to place the pitcher and pan upon the hearth before the blazing fire, where everybody could help themselves.

Lionel cast a strange look upon his brother, and exchanged glances with his wife. Immediately after, Martha called Edward to her, and whispered something in his ear.

Although the candle Jackson had used was still left burning, Edward lighted a fresh one, and, passing through the pantry, went down cellar. In a few minutes he returned with another pan of apples and another pitcher of cider, which he placed upon the hearth close beside Jackson's, selecting the nicest apple he could find for his mother, and filling his father's glass to the brim.

"Pass it to Richard," said Lionel.

Richard, proud, sensitive and indignant when aroused, imputed this silent rebuke as an insult, and refused the proffered glass with a look of scorn. Lionel smiled contemptuously, and quaffed the beverage in silence. For the first time in many years, the two families parted that evening without bidding each other good-night.

III. — THE FEUD.

Lionel arose betimes on the following morning, lighted the kitchen fire, and went out to feed the teams long before the dawn, while Martha, contrary to her custom, busied herself in preparing breakfast. This strong-minded couple, in talking over the quarrel of the previous evening behind their bed-curtains, had arrived at the fixed conclusion, that, Richard and Maria having acted foolishly, they should be the first to make advances towards a reconciliation.

"It will be best to go about our business, and say nothing to them, until they have done pouting," said the stern Lionel.

"I think so, too," said Martha.

On the other hand, Richard had said to his wife,

"Lionel has not been like a brother in this; nor Martha like a sister. Their conduct has been too over-bearing. They have insulted us, and I think it is their duty to ask our pardon."

"To be sure it is!" exclaimed Maria.

So there had been four hearts full of bitterness and anger, beneath the peaceful roof of the old Felton house, that night.

When Maria arose, and found that Martha was preparing breakfast, she was more angry than ever.

"She does it to provoke me!" she exclaimed to Richard. "This is insult heaped upon insult!"

At the breakfast-table a sullen silence was maintained by Richard and his wife, while Lionel and Martha kept up a light and careless conversation between themselves, in order to show a proper contempt for the resentment of their companions. This affected indifference rankled in the sensitive heart of Richard; and, having made a light and hasty breakfast, he went to the barn, and drove his team into the woods without saying a word to his brother.

Lionel followed, soon after; and the brothers helped each other roll the logs upon their sleds as usual, but it was without a kind word or a kindly feeling. Each waited for the other to speak; and had Richard or Lionel uttered a single word of kindness, it would undoubtedly have been responded to with an outburst of brotherly love, and would have resulted in a perfect reconciliation; but, as it was, they worked together thus all day, making themselves and each other as miserable as possible.

The following day being Saturday, Lionel rode into the city to make some purchases, and to conclude a contract for the disposal of a quantity of wood, which the brothers had long been anxious to send off while the sleighing lasted.

Now Lionel, imperious and unyielding as he some-

times was, had naturally a kind and generous heart; and when he thought how wretched the family quarrel had made them all during the past eight-and-forty hours, and remembered how happy they had been living together in peace and good fellowship, he resolved to forgive Richard's unreasonable spite, and make the first efforts towards the restoration of mutual confidence and love. Accordingly, whilst he was in the city, he purchased a box of figs, to be divided equally between Richard's children and his own; a silver comb for Maria, precisely similar to one he bought for Martha; and a handsome gold pencil, which he intended as a gift for Richard.

With these laudable resolutions and generous presents, Lionel returned home at night, anticipating the blessings which should follow a noble action. But, most unfortunately, Martha and Maria had been quarrelling all day; and even the children had begun to imbibe the poison of ill-will, and show their spite towards each other.

When Lionel produced the figs, he called all the children to him, and chose some of the nicest to give to little Lizzie, Richard's youngest child.

"Come, my dear," said he. "I have got something for you."

He held up the figs, and Lizzie, clapping her little hands with delight, started forward to receive them; but her eldest brother, Jackson, said,

"You don't want any figs, Lizzie; let Jane have them, and I will buy you a new doll, and a whole bunch of raisins, when I go to town."

Lionel scowled darkly upon his nephew; but once more offered the figs to Lizzie, who, influenced by her brother, hesitated to receive them.

"I would n't coax her!" exclaimed Mrs. Lionel. "Give the figs to Martha and Jane; they will be glad of them. *I* have not told *them* not to accept anything that is given them!"

These emphatic words, uttered in a significant tone, were accompanied by a sneering glance at Maria.

"Mrs. Felton," said Lionel, sternly, "is it your will that your children should not accept a present from me?"

Maria answered, on the angry impulse of the moment, "If you think your presents are going to pay us for the abuse you have heaped upon us, you had better keep them to yourself!"

Lionel's eyes flashed fire, as he pushed the box of figs away from him, exclaiming,

"Here, Edward, divide them with your sisters. Take these combs, Martha. I designed only one of them for you; but, since I cannot make an offer of a present without being insulted, you had better take them both."

Had Richard been present, it is probable this

scene would have terminated more happily for he only waited for the smallest manifestation of kindness on the part of his brother to forgive and forget all. But the brothers did not meet until Martha had conferred with her husband, and Maria had told her side of the story to Richard; so that Lionel's efforts towards a reconciliation resulted in a more bitter and determined animosity between the families. His pride would not allow him then to offer his brother the pencil he designed for him; nor is it probable Richard would have received it, had it been offered.

Taking example from their parents, the children now did nothing but quarrel continually. Even on the following morning, which was the Sabbath, usually so peaceful and happy in the old Felton house, there were dissensions and strife between Richard's children and Lionel's.

Richard was somewhere about the yard, and Maria occupied the sitting-room, while Lionel and his wife remained by the kitchen fire. Lionel was shaving and preparing for church, when his attention was drawn by angry voices in the yard behind the house. Looking out of the window, he saw Lizzie, Richard's youngest child, quarrelling with his daughter Martha, whom he had sent to the shed for some chips.

"Call her into the house," said he to his wife

The latter was about to comply, when she heard Maria, in the other room, cry out,

"There is that great creature, Martha, hurting little Lizzie! It is a shame! Run out, Wolcott, and bring your sister into the house!"

"That is pretty talk!" muttered Martha, turning to Lionel. "Let us see what Wolcott will do."

They watched from the window, and saw the boy run hastily up to the children, seize Martha rudely by the shoulder, and push her aside. Unfortunately, Martha's foot slipped, and she fell to the ground.

"The little villain!" muttered Mrs. Lionel.

"I will see if he is to treat my girls in that way," said Lionel, going towards the door.

"There is no need!" exclaimed his wife. "There is Edward."

In effect, Lionel's eldest child was already upon the spot. Seeing Martha crying, and supposing Wolcott had hurt her badly, he struck his cousin violently on the cheek. With a cry of rage, Wolcott flew at his assailant; but Edward was much the largest and strongest boy, and, a moment after, he had thrown his cousin down upon the frozen ground.

"Edward! Edward!" cried Lionel; "come into the house!"

Before the boy could obey, however, Richard,

coming out of the wagon-house, and seeing his favorite son beaten by his cousin, so much older than himself, ran to the spot, and, taking Edward angrily by the shoulder, shook him with all his might.

"Let go of me!" shouted Edward, fiercely. "I am not to be whipped by you, sir!"

"There 's spirit for you!" cried Mrs. Lionel, delighted. "But I hope you are not going to see your son abused by his uncle, for taking his sister's part!"

"No, not I!" muttered Lionel, rushing out of the house. "Take your hands off from him!" he added, in an angry tone, confronting Richard.

"Do you mean to bully me?" demanded Richard, purple with rage. "You will find that I shall stand upon my rights now, if I *have* suffered your tyranny from my boyhood."

"Brother! brother!" cried Lionel, choking with wrath; "beware what you say!"

"Beware what you do!" retorted Richard, still retaining his hold of Edward.

"As I am a living man," muttered Lionel, intensely excited, "I shall use violence, if you do not release my son!"

And he placed his strong hand upon the throat of Richard.

"Unhand me!—unhand me, sir!" cried Richard, beside himself with passion. "I shall strike!'

"Release my son!" said Lionel.

Richard did release his son; but it was to clench his fist, and level a fierce blow at his brother's temple. Lionel staggered; but, recovering himself immediately, he folded his arms, and, fixing his terrible eye upon Richard, said, in a hoarse voice,

"That blow shall never be forgiven!"

And he stalked into the house, leaving Richard overwhelmed with rage and shame.

IV. — THE BUILDING OF THE COTTAGES.

The awful occurrence of the morning cast a deep shadow of gloom over the old Felton house for the remainder of the Sabbath. Even the youngest children seemed to be aware that *sin* had been among them in an unusual form. Neither family went to church that day; nor did they eat together, or associate together in any manner. Edward made a fire in the parlor, by the direction of his parents; and thither Lionel's family retired, leaving Richard's in the possession of the sitting-room.

"You need n't have anything more to say to your uncle's people," said Martha to her children.

"Did Uncle Richard strike father?" asked little Jane.

"Hush!" muttered Lionel.

The sound of his brother's name made his brow contract with wrath.

Meanwhile, Richard was miserable. "I should not have struck my brother," he would say, in his remorse. Then, in his anger and pride, he would add, "But he laid his hand upon my throat! I gave him warning. *His* hand upon my throat!"

In the evening, Richard saw Lionel leave the house. He did not return until late; and Richard, with many misgivings, asked himself where his brother could have gone. He knew in the morning.

Squire Stone came early to the house, and inquired for Richard. As the latter had not gone to work, he was easily found; and the squire opened his business to him at once.

"I am very sorry to learn that there is some difficulty between you and your brother, Mr. Felton."

Richard scowled, kicked the ground with his foot, and said nothing.

"I saw Lionel last night," pursued the squire. "He says he thinks a division of your property is necessary."

Richard started and turned pale; but he only murmured,

"Well."

"Are you of the same way of thinking?"

"I will agree to anything reasonable."

"But this, Mr. Felton, I think unreasonable. I told your brother so, and tried to dissuade him from it. But he is determined."

"Is he?" cried Richard, trembling with excitement. "Very well. Let the property be divided. I am willing."

"But you know this division will necessarily be a very difficult thing."

"Not so difficult but that it can be accomplished," said Richard, firmly.

Squire Stone then saw Lionel, and, after a conference with him, returned again to Richard. Unfortunately, he had not the happy faculty of reconciling enemies, and his negotiations only made matters worse. Before night, the division of the property was a settled affair, and the preliminary steps had been taken to effect the important object. Arbiters were chosen to adjust the business, so that the brothers might not come in contact; for all this time they had never spoken to each other, since the fatal affray.

The directions Richard gave to his friends were,

"Divide the stock, the farming implements, the land, — everything, as you see fit. Act according to your judgment and friendship. Only one thing I insist upon, — the site where we were going to

build in the spring must be included in the land which falls to my share."

Now, it so happened that Lionel had set his heart upon that building-lot.

"I must and will have that," said he, "if it be at the sacrifice of ten times as much land anywhere else."

With the building-lot in the way, the arbiters found the greatest difficulty in settling the division of property. At length, Squire Stone suggested that the lot itself should be divided.

"A good idea," said one of the arbiters; "we can run the line up to the north road, and cut the lot in the centre, giving the boys half and half."

This suggestion was reported to the brothers.

"Very well," said Lionel; "divide it."

"Cut it in halves, then," were the words of Richard; "I care not, since he is not to have the whole."

The lot was accordingly divided, and, the arbiters having come to a decision, a surveyor was appointed to run a line according to their directions. The necessary articles of agreement were then drawn up, to which the brothers were to put their names.

Until the last moment, Richard had hoped that some word of regret at the division of the property would escape his brother; nor was it without many misgivings that Lionel saw the hour arrive when

the last tie between him and Richard was to be broken. The hand of the latter trembled, as he took the pen to sign his name. He raised his eyes to his brother's face, to find there one kind look, to hear one word of regret, of which he might take advantage, even at the last moment. But Lionel looked sternly on, to see if Richard would sign, without an appeal to him for a brother's reconciliation. Pride restrained the better feelings of both; and, with a nervous hand, Richard wrote his name. How angry with himself was he afterwards, to think that his hand trembled, while Lionel's was firm; and how the latter sneered, as he glanced his eye at the unsteady lines his brother had traced, in his agitation!

The deed was done, and henceforth the brothers possessed nothing in common. The old house had fallen to Richard's share; but Lionel was to occupy a certain portion of it, particularly designated in the articles of agreement, until he could build. The house, the cattle, the flocks of sheep, the poultry, the farming implements, the household furniture, even the timber which had been got out for the new house,— everything was divided. Even with the old house in his possession, Richard was resolved to put up as fine a cottage as his brother; in fact, having learned that Lionel proposed using the old plan, and building as close to the desirable

site on the north road as possible, Richard determined to put up a cottage exactly like it, upon his own side of the line, in order not to be outdone by his brother.

While the Feltons were energetically making preparations to build, they lived in the old house in the most wretched manner imaginable. Maria never suffered her children to set foot in Martha's portion of the house; and the latter was quite as anxious to prevent all intercourse between the families; while Lionel and Richard avoided each other scrupulously, nor ever communicated except through the medium of a third person.

The two families no longer sat together in church. The second Sabbath after the affray, both were present at the morning service; but the old pew was vacant. Secretly the brothers had hired separate pews in another part of the house. Richard cast his eye towards the old pew, to see how Lionel's family would look there alone; and Lionel, about the same time, glanced in the same direction, impelled by the same curiosity. Both were surprised to see the old pew vacant; but they were still more surprised when their eyes met, and they found that the new pews adjoined each other in the body of the house! However, as Lionel entered his pew from the right-hand aisle, and Richard his from the left, and as it would require but little care on the

part of the parents to keep the children from getting together, neither of the families saw fit to change their seats again.

As soon as the frost was gone out of the ground in the spring, Lionel set his men at work on the north-east corner of his farm, close to Richard's line; and Richard, at the same time, employed laborers to dig a cellar on the south-east corner of his land, close to the delectable site which had formed the object of dispute. Masons laid the two cellar-walls at the same time, and worked so near each other that it was easy for them to jest about the strife between the brothers, talking across the line.

"It gives two good jobs to us and the carpenters," laughed one.

"So it does," replied the other. "People never make fools of themselves, without working for somebody's good. What will you bet but I will get my cellar done first?"

"A new hat for Sundays," was the answer.

The hat was wagered, but neither won it; for the cellars were both finished on the same day, at the same hour.

Meanwhile, the timbers were hewn, and the two master-carpenters emulated each other in getting ready the frames. These were both finished at about the same time; and they might have been raised on the same day, but Lionel sent out his

invitations to the neighbors before Richard, so that when the latter went around to invite them to the raising-bee, he found, to his chagrin, that they were all engaged to his brother. Lionel's haste, however, availed him nothing. In his anxiety to get the start of Richard in putting up his cottage, he sent out invitations prematurely, and when his neighbors were on the spot the carpenter declared that, do all he could, he had not been able to get ready for the raising. So Richard's house-frame was put up on the following day, and Lionel's the day after.

It then became a matter of strife between the two families to move and get settled in their new houses before each other. The frames were clapboarded and the roofs shingled in the most hasty manner; the doors were hung and the windows set with the greatest possible despatch; then a few rooms were done off, to accommodate the families until the rest could be finished. Both brothers now became strangly nervous; and Lionel, fearful of being preceded by Richard, made hasty preparations to move. Discovering these, Richard did the same; and the brothers went into the twin cottages on the same day, almost before the paint and plastering were dry.

V. — PLEASANT NEIGHBORS.

Ill luck now appeared to attend all the undertakings of the two brothers, who had formerly been noted for their good fortune. Richard, unaccustomed to take the lead in business, missed Lionel's cool head and practised judgment; and the latter began to see the inconvenience of having none to second his efforts.

It was not in the farming business alone that they were not so prosperous as formerly. From the day they moved into the twin cottages, everything went wrong. The children took cold from the dampness of the freshly-plastered rooms, and there was sickness in both families. Owing to the division of the household furniture, both found themselves crippled for want of useful articles which it was difficult to procure. A horse, which nobody but Lionel could manage, but which had fallen to Richard's portion, kicked Jackson in the side, and laid him up all summer with broken ribs. Then Edward fell into the well Lionel was digging, and broke his arm; and Lionel himself got his fingers smashed beneath a beam, at the raising of his barn. Richard, overcome by anxiety of mind, had a fever, which left him a mere wreck, and from which he was long recovering. Both Martha and Maria, worn out by hard work in the new houses, were obliged to

employ girls to help them; and girls are always a great trial to people who have been accustomed to do their own work.

The expenses of building were so much greater than Richard had anticipated, and he had to employ so much extra help on the farm during the summer, that, long before fall, he bitterly regretted not having remained in the old house five or six years longer. But, having commenced, he would not be outdone by his brother; so he borrowed money to build exactly such a barn as Lionel was building, and to make everything else correspond.

Richard had been in his new cottage a year before the last of the carpenter's work was done; and even then, in consequence of the haste in which the frame had been put together and covered, it was necessary to call in a joiner, to make some little repairs. All this time, Lionel's house was in nearly the same condition; but at length both cottages were, as you may say, completed; and there they stood, side by side, on the north road, looking so exactly alike, in outward form and arrangements, that they attracted general attention, and obtained the appellation of "The Twin Cottages."

Now, all the satisfaction the rival families had gained by building separately was in the possession of *two* large, square bed-rooms, instead of one; although, singular to relate, Richard did not occupy

his, within two years after his removal into the new house; and it is currently reported that Lionel's was never done off for a sleeping apartment, but left as a sort of play-room for the children, and a convenient place to shell corn in, or crack butternuts on rainy days. Thus, the square bed-room, which was the origin of all the unfortunate difficulties between the two families, became an object of very small importance in their eyes long before they had experienced half the inconvenience of the separation.

The cousins were brought up to hate each other, and to do each other all possible mischief. They formed their school-fellows into two distinct clans, that waged perpetual war, and gave their teachers, as well as themselves, a great deal of trouble and unhappiness; until all respectable and well-meaning boys got to shun the Feltons, as if their influence had been contaminating.

Not many months had elapsed before both families saw the convenience of living so near together, the proximity of their houses affording every inducement and facility to quarrel. The cousins threw stones at each other over the board-fence which had been built on the dividing line of the two estates; they got each other's balls, when knocked over by accident, and refused to give them up; and once, when an unconscious chicken of Lionel's stole

through the fence, to pick up a grain of corn out of Richard's yard, Wolcott set the dog upon it, and afterwards threw its dead carcass insultingly into his uncle's garden. By way of retaliation, Edward, who at that time had no dog, loaded his father's gun, and peppered the first of Richard's geese that put its unlucky head through the fence. After this, as if impelled by some fatality, turkeys, geese, ducks and hens, showed an extraordinary tendency to rush blindly upon the destruction which awaited them at the mouth of the dog and the muzzle of the gun; so that numbers of the inoffensive poultry fell miserable victims to the animosity existing between the two families.

Things progressed in this happy manner, until a fat calf belonging to Lionel had the misfortune to take a fancy to some nice grass which grew on the wrong side of the fence. For many days the fated animal might have been seen casting anxious glances at the appetizing herb, which, perhaps, looked ten times more delectable in prospective than the most epicurean calf would have proved it to be in reality; so that, when the fence was broken by a gale of wind, the devoted animal leaped gayly through the breach, and commenced cropping the grass with great voracity, without alloying the pure pleasure of the stolen repast with a single thought of Richard's merciless big dog. In five minutes, however

he was aroused from his delicious revery by a terrible growl, and in an instant the fangs of Nero were fastened upon his throat. Jackson and Wolcott set Nero on, while Martha, from the door of her own house, watched the sport with a heart boiling over with rage. Edward ran to the rescue; but, two boys and a dog being too much for him and a calf, — or for *two calves*, as Jackson facetiously remarked, — he was forced to retreat. The calf was horribly mangled, so that it died the day after, to the grief of Richard, and the infinite wrath of Lionel.

Edward, more incensed than even his parents, felt bound to retaliate. Accordingly, when Richard's best horse jumped into his father's corn-field a few weeks after, the determined youth deliberately loaded his gun, and, walking up close to old Bay, shot him in the right knee. The animal was ruined, and Richard enraged. A law-suit followed, which proved to be of endless duration, owing to the obstinacy of the contending parties, and which involved both brothers in debt, giving the lawyers of Pennfield more lucrative employment than three generations of Feltons had ever given them before.

In connection with the cold-blooded maiming of old Bay, an incident occurred, which, as an instance of the manner in which the brothers now annoyed each other, will well bear relating. It becoming

necessary for Richard to purchase another horse, he attended an auction for the purpose, and bid high upon a fine chestnut mare, which he thought just suited for his business. His bid was eighty dollars; somebody else bid eighty-five. "Ninety," said Richard. "Two and a half," came from another part of the room. "Five," pursued Richard. "Eight," was bid by the same unknown individual.

"It's your brother bidding against you," whispered a friend in Richard's ear.

True enough, Lionel was bidding for the horse. Resenting this interference, — for he knew his brother had no use for another horse at that time, — Richard was determined to outbid him; but, when the horse had gone up to one hundred and twenty-five, the thought struck him that he did not want him at that price, and that Lionel wanted him still less. So he let Lionel have him; and Lionel sold him, a week afterwards, for eighty-seven dollars.

In the following spring there was a freshet; and the brook, which, in its south-westerly course, watered first Richard's farm, and afterwards Lionel's, became swollen to an unusual degree. One afternoon, Jackson and Wolcott, having been down the stream to repair some fences, discovered a spot where, with a little assistance, the water would overflow its banks, and, turning into a deep ravine, find its way to the river, without flowing

through Lionel's land. No sooner was this discovery made, than the disadvantages of a brook were considered; and, concluding that a diversion of the course of the stream would be of lasting injury to the uncle, the boys began to work with their shovels in right good earnest. In a short time a narrow, turbid channel crept sluggishly across the softened earth of the bank; then it came with greater force, carrying the mud and gravel with it; and, finally, it went rushing down into the ravine, a perfect torrent, to the great delight of the boys, who ran away, in order that their share in the work might not be discovered.

On the following morning Lionel went over his farm, to see if the west meadow still lay under water, in consequence of the overflowing of the stream, and was astonished at the sudden and mysterious manner in which the waters had subsided. The meadow was dry, and the stream had shrunk into a mere thread of water. He followed it up, until he discovered the cause. In his wrath, he sent Squire Stone to Richard, charging him with diverting the course of the stream, and threatening a law-suit if the bank was not repaired. Richard knew nothing of the change in the course of the brook, and he sent back a scornful defiance to Lionel. A law-suit followed, even more difficult and expensive than the other; it being alleged by the defendant

that the stream had now found its original course, from which it had been diverted by his father, forty years before, in order to water the south part of the farm; and by the plaintiff, that the defendant had turned the water into the ravine, to do him an injury. Thus, aside from their other misfortunes, the brothers had two endless law-suits to plunge them into debt.

VI. — THE CONFLAGRATION.

The quarrels of Lionel and Richard proved injurious to not only themselves, their families, and their immediate friends, but, in a certain measure, to both church and state. They belonged to the same political party; but, when Lionel received the nomination for high sheriff, Richard's friends refused to vote for him, and for the first time in ten years the opposite party carried the day. Afterwards, Richard was nominated for state representative; and, by way of retaliation, Lionel's clique went against him unanimously, throwing their influence in favor of another candidate. Owing to this split in the party, their political opponents triumphed again, and sent to the Legislature a fellow who proved a traitor to the best interests of his district. The quarrel of the brothers created a division

in the church, too; the devil taking that opportunity to sow dissensions and hatred in the hearts of two-thirds of the members.

Meanwhile Martha and Maria cherished as bitter animosity against each other as their husbands did. They never visited the same neighbors, nor met each other at the same sewing-circles, if they could help it. If Maria received an invitation to visit a friend, she was sure to ascertain if Martha was to be there before accepting it; and Martha was no less scrupulous in avoiding her sister-in-law. On one occasion, when Maria arrived at a tea-party, and found Martha there, she turned abruptly about, and went home in high dudgeon; in return for which demonstration, Martha, a few weeks afterwards, suddenly took her departure from a quilting-bee, when Maria, unconscious of her presence, made her appearance. These quarrels and petty spites created a great deal of scandal and ill-will in the neighborhood, until the good ladies of Pennfield, tired of strife and dissensions, resolved, with one accord, to drop the acquaintance of the Feltons altogether. So Martha and Maria received no more invitations to any place; and you may judge how miserable they were, living by themselves.

On the last occasion of a tea-party at Maria's house, an incident happened which particularly had something to do with the subsequent coldness of the

Pennfield ladies towards the two sisters-in-law. Of course, Martha was horribly jealous to see so many famous tea-drinkers visiting her rival; and she fretted and scolded about it all the afternoon. Edward took the hint, to invent some method of annoying Maria, and pleasing his mother.

In the field in the rear of Lionel's house was a large brush-heap, the result of trimming the orchard the previous season.

"The brush is dry, and the wind in the south-west," said Edward.

"And the smoke?"

"Will hide Dick's house in a beautiful manner."

"Burn the heap, then!" cried Martha, with a malicious laugh.

Accordingly the heap was fired, and Richard's house smoked. It was a warm day, but Maria was obliged to close all the doors and windows, to keep out the suffocating cloud which rolled down upon them before the south-west wind. In spite of all her efforts, however, it got into the house, and into the eyes and into the tempers of both her and her guests. Even the tea failed to soothe them; and the party separated in the worst humor in the world. Martha watched the discomfited ladies, as they went away all enveloped in smoke, and laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks. Edward laughed too, until the wind changed, and blew the

fire into the fence, which he was obliged to sit up all night to watch, with a couple of buckets of water for his companions. After this, Richard's boys burned a brush-heap when the wind was in the north-west, and smoked a juvenile party which their cousin Martha gave, to the great distress of the poor children, who went home with tears in their eyes.

But the rival families were destined to have enough of fire and smoke, as we shall proceed to show.

After watching many months for an opportunity to shoot Richard's dog, — which manifested a great deal of canine sagacity in avoiding Lionel's premises, and in scrupulously keeping on the right side of the board-fence, — Edward determined to have a dog too, as large as his uncle's. He accordingly purchased a pup, of a breed famous for size and fierceness, and kept him chained to his kennel until he had attained to formidable proportions. In the pride and ambition of his youth, Cæsar took early advantage of his freedom from the chain, to invade the territory beyond the board-fence, and declare hostilities against the unknown dog, whose hated bark he had heard so often. Nero, feeling, as a matter of course, a bitter enmity towards everything that made its appearance from the other side of the fence, marched up to Cæsar in true Roman fashion,

and, with a growl, challenged him to a personal combat. The ambitious Cæsar desired nothing better; but Nero's maturity and knowledge of the world were altogether too much for his youth and inexperience. Cæsar was discomfited, and returned to his rightful dominions in a frightfully mutilated condition.

Cæsar, for a long time, did not cross the board fence again, but contented himself with growling on his own territory at his formidable enemy, who regarded him with lofty disdain. One evening, however, four years after the removal of the brothers into their new cottages, Cæsar had the audacity to chase one of Richard's cats over the line. Richard, who happened to be in the yard at the time, whistled for Nero, whose rage was unbounded on seeing his rival within his domains. A skirmish ensued, and Cæsar retreated over the board-fence; but Nero, too much excited to use his ordinary discretion, followed him, and fought him upon his own territory, reckless of consequences.

Lionel heard the affray; and, it being late in the evening, and quite dark, he came out, with a lantern, to see what was the matter. Perceiving that Nero had Cæsar by the throat, and was shaking the life out of him with considerable despatch, he placed his lantern upon the ground, and ran for a pitch-fork.

Observing that his brother was about to make use of that formidable weapon, to terminate the quarrel in favor of Cæsar, Richard ran hastily to the fence, and was on the point of shouting a fierce remonstrance, when a startling accident attracted his attention. Nero had thrown Cæsar against the lantern, and upset it; the candle had fallen out, and now the flames were creeping languidly into the straw scattered before Lionel's barn. The pressure of a foot would have extinguished the fire, and Richard's first impulse was to warn Lionel of the danger; but, when he saw his brother set upon Nero with the fork, he thought, in his anger, "The wind is north, *my* barn will not be in danger," and held his peace, shrinking away into the darkness, to witness the result.

Pierced with the sharp tines, Nero fled howling over the fence, pursued by Lionel, until beyond his reach. Then Lionel turned back, and, to his consternation, saw the yard all in a blaze. "Fire! fire!" he shouted, trampling upon the flames. "Fire! fire! fire!"

His shouts filled the night with echoes. A moment before, Richard had been laughing in malicious triumph; but the wild, startling cries smote heavily upon his conscience. Much as he felt that Lionel had wronged him, the sight of the flames, which he

might have extinguished, oppressed him with a sense of remorse.

"I am no better than an incendiary!" he muttered, in his excitement. "But it may not yet be too late!"

Lionel trampled upon the flames with furious energy; but the straw was dry, and he saw the fire gaining upon him, and, darting its forked tongue towards the barn, threatening destruction. In despair he cast his eyes toward the house, and shouted again for help. Nobody appeared. The fire was within three yards of a large pile of straw, heaped before the barn-door. Suddenly Lionel was conscious that there was somebody working by his side. He did not pause to see who it was, until the pile of straw burst forth one sheet of flame. He turned, and in the glare of light saw his brother Richard!

The latter was laboring with desperate energy to smother the flames beneath his coat; and, as his brother gazed upon him, he felt all his resentment give way to gratitude for that one act of generosity.

"Brother," said he, in a trembling voice, "I thank you! But it is too late; the barn must go."

Richard raised his eyes to his brother's face, and slowly withdrawing from the heat of the flames, murmured,

"I am sorry! I am sorry!"

"God bless you, brother! I did not expect this kindness!" exclaimed the agitated Lionel.

"This is no time to talk," said Richard; "the wind is getting into the west. I am afraid your house will go too, brother!"

As he spoke, the dry straw and hay within the barn having taken fire, the flames burst forth through the cracks and crevices, and through the thin roof, throwing a wild glare of light around.

VII. — THE LAST OF THE TWIN COTTAGES.

The brothers rushed to the stables adjoining the barn, and made haste to save the horses, the carriage, and all articles of value which could be got away. Meanwhile Edward, who had gone to bed, was aroused by the alarm, and rushed, half dressed, to the scene of destruction. Jackson and Wolcott came next, and, taking example from their father, exerted themselves to save their uncle's property; then several of the neighbors, aroused by the shouts of fire, and alarmed by the glare of light, came hurrying to the spot.

The barn burnt like kindling-wood; the stables were on fire in an astonishingly brief space of time, and the flames went surging on towards the house.

"Leave everything," shouted Richard, "and remove this wood! It is the only way to save the house!"

The wood was corded in long rows between the stables and the cottage; and, following Richard's example, all hands went to work, tearing it away; but, as the fire increased, the heat became insufferable. The smoke and flames rolled across the wood-piles, blinding and suffocating, and conspiring, with the heat, to drive the fire-fighters backward. The most they could do was to remove a few cords of the wood nearest the house; then, while some began to carry the furniture out of the cottage, others brought water from the well and cistern, and, with the aid of ladders, drenched the clapboards and roof.

All efforts were vain, however.

"The house must go!" said Lionel.

The wind had increased, and the advancing flames had driven the inexperienced fire-fighters from their position on the roof.

"I will mount the ladder!" cried Richard.

He went up, and received the buckets from Lionel's hands, working with energy and courage, until both cistern and well failed.

"It is useless to work longer," said Lionel. "There is no more water."

"Then the house must surely burn!" said Richard.

"And my family!" murmured Lionel, as he saw his wife and children carrying goods out of the house, or standing in the fierce light, looking up with terror and dismay at the increasing flames. "They will be houseless!"

"Not so!" replied Richard. "The old house is at your disposal. I was going to tear it down last fall, but I am glad I did not. It is yours, brother!"

Lionel was too much affected to utter his thanks.

At that moment a wild shout rang upon their ears. Richard's barn was on fire!

"I am ruined by my own folly and guilt!" he muttered, as he descended to the ground.

The brothers rushed together to the new scene of excitement. It was too late. The fire, left to itself, had crept from barn to barn through the straw, and now Richard's stables were in a blaze. The wind had increased, and was blowing strongly from the west. Lionel neglected his own property to save that of his brother; and, while the cottage of the former was left to inevitable destruction, everybody ran to the rescue of Richard's. But his cistern was dry, his well shallow, and between his house and barn there was a hay-stack in a most dangerous position. This was sure to burn; for the sparks from the barn were already falling upon it,

and nothing, it was thought, could then save the cottage.

Maria had experienced a sort of fearful joy when told that Lionel's buildings were on fire; but, when she saw Richard at work to save them, she also began to feel an anxiety to see the flames extinguished. This kindness towards her neighbors was followed by many unpleasant reflections touching the past, and the sight of Martha in distress made her conscious that she had wronged her sister-in-law more than she had ever acknowledged to herself before. So, when she saw Martha retire to the fatal fence, and weep bitterly over her misfortunes, she went to her, and asked her to come into her own house. Martha felt this kindness, and thanked her; but she could not go in, — she must see her own cottage burn.

Then, when the alarm was spread on Richard's side of the fence, all Maria's pity and anxiety for others was changed to fear for the safety of her own home. Martha saw the danger; and, although a moment before she might have felt a vindictive joy at beholding Maria as unfortunate as herself, it was not so now; for even Richard's exertions in her behalf had not touched her heart like Maria's single word of kindness. Women are more impulsive than men; and nothing knits together hearts at enmity like mutual distress. Martha and Maria

fell into each other's arms, and embraced, mingling their tears together.

Richard's fears for his cottage were but too well founded. The flames blew upon it from the stack, the shingles caught, and all exertions to save it were vain. Soon its light was added to the general conflagration, and billows of fire surged upward from the roaring roof, illumining the country for miles around.

Richard had been even more successful than his brother in saving his portable property, which was all conveyed to a safe distance from the fire.

When everything was done, the brothers stood together in the glare of light which shone from Richard's house, and their families gathered around them.

"You see," said Richard, "I shall have to go with you into the old house."

"Pardon me," replied Lionel; "I am afraid you will want it alone, with your own family."

"There is room for all of us," said Richard. "There was once, — there is now!"

"Will you give me your hand, brother?" asked Lionel.

Richard made no reply; but extended his hand, while the dazzling light from the house betrayed the emotion visible on his features.

"We have not thriven since our separation,"

pursued Lionel. "Ours has been an ungodly quarrel, brother. Shall it end here?"

"There can be no better time," replied Richard. "After the awful chastisement with which Heaven has punished our folly, we should be reconciled. I acknowledge myself to blame. brother. I ask your forgiveness!"

"With all my heart I forgive you, Richard!" exclaimed Lionel, through his quivering lips. "And you will forgive me, although I have been more to blame than you. As I was the oldest, I should have come to you first to offer you my hand, when we quarrelled."

"Say no more," murmured Richard. "I forgive everything. Here is my hand again, brother! And our wives ——"

Martha and Maria were weeping again in each other's arms.

"This is well!" said Lionel. "Let this end all differences, law-suits and strife, which have proved so ruinous. We will tear up the papers, brother, which divide our lands."

"And the old house," added Richard, smiling through his tears, "will be large enough and good enough for our families, for ten years to come."

"We will never leave it till it falls down!" cried Lionel. "We were happy in it before the new house was thought of, and we can be happy in

it still. And O, brother, — sister, — wife, — children! let these four terrible years of unhappiness and strife be a warning to us in future!"

They stopped not for the congratulation of friends, but by the light of the burning cottages took their way together across the fields, towards the old house, which was henceforth to be the happy home of the reünited families.

MARRYING A FAMILY.

"I HOPE it is all for the best," said Mrs. Rentwell, wiping her eyes. "You will excuse these tears, Mr. Allen. It is a solemn thing to part with a dear one out of my household, Mr. Allen!"

The sigh which followed these words touched Mr. Allen's sympathies. Mrs. Rentwell had four grown-up, unmarried daughters, all at home; and he had been so bold as to ask her to part with one of them. It seemed to him that she was making a great sacrifice; for, being a strong-minded woman, she had never betrayed such weakness before; and he took her hand kindly.

"Mrs. Rentwell," said he, "I appreciate your feelings."

"O, you can't, you can't!" she exclaimed, relapsing into a state of great affliction, and using her handkerchief energetically, — "nobody but a mother can!"

"At all events," rejoined Mr. Allen, "I shall never cease my efforts to repay you for your confidence in me, and for the great happiness you confer upon me, in giving your consent to our marriage. I feel ——"

"One thing," broke in the widow, explosively, "I beg and entreat of you."

"Only name it, dear mother!"

"It is this: don't separate Sarah Jane from her family. Don't take her away from us. Consider" — sobbing — "a — a — mother's feelings, Mr. Allen."

Mr. Allen was silent; — he appeared to be considering.

"Can't we all live together? Can't we take a comfortable house, — one that will accommodate us all?" asked Mrs. Rentwell, with a hopeful expression. "How beautifully we could live under the same roof; and what a happy home we could make for you and Sarah Jane!"

"Why — yes — certainly — I should think some such arrangement would be advisable," said Jonathan, with a look of painful apprehension; "but ——"

"O, thank you, thank you, Mr. Allen! You are so good!" cried the widow, overflowing with gratitude. "What a delightful home we shall have! Bless you! bless you!"

Mrs. Rentwell shook his hand, weeping profusely for joy.

Jonathan Allen went away as if he had the headache. There was evidently some uncomfortable matter in his mind. He was very happy in a general way, but in one or two particulars he was troubled. Meeting an intimate friend did not at all serve to clear away the clouds from the summer sky of his hopes.

Of all his acquaintance, Mr. Charles Price was the last man he would have wished to meet just at that time.

"Don't say a word," he hastily whispered, with a ghastly, guilty look. "I 'm afraid it 's too late now to follow your advice."

"You don't mean to say ——"

"Yes, Charley! — the old lady expects it, and I can't disappoint her. Sarah Jane expects it, too; and so do her sisters. They all expect it, you see; and I can't be cruel to them just at this time."

"Then I give you up, Jonathan," said Mr. Price, with a lugubrious look. "If you marry the whole family, never smile more!"

"Fie! you make the matter worse than it is. I shall take a decided stand, and be the head of the establishment. The girls will get married off in a little while, and in the mean time we shall make quite a happy family."

Mr. Price shook his head dubiously.

"You will be obliged to take a decided stand, at once, if you would have things move harmoniously your own way," said he, significantly. "Sarah Jane is a sweet and amiable girl, but she is easily influenced, as you know. Her mother is a headstrong, selfish, inconsiderate woman. Her sisters are frivolous, cold-hearted creatures; and the question is, are they the right persons to influence her?"

"As to that," replied Jonathan, smiling with a bright idea, "if I find affairs taking a wrong turn, it will be the easiest thing in the world for me to get a divorce from the whole family, except Sarah Jane. If the old lady usurps too much authority, if the sisters rebel, if there is any tyranny exercised over me or mine, — crack! I shall cut off all communication between us, without a remorseful scruple I shall unmarry myself from Mrs. Rentwell, Miss Rentwell, Miss Eliza and Miss Georgiana, in a jiffy. Do you understand?"

"I only hope you will find the matter as easy in reality as it appears to your imagination," laughed Charles. "Good-morning."

The wedding took place in the course of a few weeks, and, shortly after, Jonathan took Sarah Jane and her family "home."

"So," said Mr. Price, meeting him the day after

the removal, "you have finally married the whole tribe of the Rentwells, — mother and daughters."

"Yes," replied Mr. Allen, who was very jolly at the time, and did not care a fig for his friend's forebodings, "I am a regular Sultan. Show me a happier man, will you?"

"Be careful that you don't show me an unhappier one, before the honeymoon is over."

"Now, what an ill-natured fellow you are, Charles! But I see you have no idea of the perfect harmony that prevails in my new home. The old lady has kindly volunteered to take the general management of the household ——"

"So soon?" said Mr. Price, with a sly look.

"Why not? You see, my wife — how respectable and manly it sounds, though, Charley, to say *my wife!* — Sarah Jane is not accustomed to managing, and it is a great relief for her to think that her mother is to be with us, and direct affairs into an easy and natural channel."

"And the girls?"

"O, they are rejoiced at the new arrangement. We shall have some gay times, I and my family, Charles. By the way, when shall we expect a visit from you, at our harem?"

"Generous man!" exclaimed Mr. Price. "I would hold you up to the world as a model of mag-

nanimous Sultans! Have you no jealous apprehensions in taking me into the bosom of your family?"

"Eh? how so?"

"What if I should make love to one of your wives? Supposing my elegant address should touch the heart of the proud Miss Rentwell? What would you say, should the fair Georgiana be captivated by my whiskers? or, if I should be so happy as to win the affections of the widow herself? How would you suppress your just indignation, and swallow your wrath, if some fine morning you should learn that I had eloped with Eliza?"

"Considering the regard I have for you, Charles, I don't know but I would forgive you, in either case."

"You think you could perhaps spare *one* ——"

"Now, have done with your bitter sarcasm!" exclaimed Mr. Allen, with a feeble laugh of good-humor. "Say no more, but come to the interior of my harem, and judge of our happiness for yourself Come to-morrow night."

Mr. Price promised; and Jonathan went home singing.

"This is eosey!" he murmured, rubbing his hands as he entered the family parlor, where a beautiful fire in the grate shed a warm glow upon the high walls, the new furniture, and the happy faces of Mrs. Rent-

well and her four daughters. "But where — where is the seraphine?"

"O, dear Jonathan," cried Sarah Jane, running to him and looking him fondly in the face, "you won't mind, will you? — mother thought it would be better to keep it in our chamber ——"

"Up stairs?" said Mr. Allen, with a surprised look.

"Did you intend to have the seraphine kept down here?" asked Mrs. Rentwell.

There was an immense deal of meaning in the tones of her voice and in the expression of her face as she spoke. Was it possible that Jonathan could think of so absurd a plan as keeping the old seraphine in the parlor? Was that one of his ideas of propriety?

Mr. Allen smiled pleasantly. He knew Mrs. Rentwell was a very strong-minded woman, and that she could be dreadfully severe on the weak points of others. His desire to have his old musical companion in the parlor might be a weak point in his character. If so, he did not think it advisable to urge the matter. Accordingly, he said, in the most conciliatory tone he could command,

"Indeed, I had not thought that there could be any great objection to ——"

"The seraphine is an old box!" spoke up Miss Rentwell, with a slight curl of her lip.

"Don't you think it — might — look out of place in the parlor?" affectionately inquired Sarah Jane.

"Do you think so?"

"I don't know, dear Jonathan, I am sure. Mother said ——"

"We do think it would be out of place in the parlor," joined in Mrs. Rentwell, firmly. "You don't know how bad it looks, if you have not compared its worn mahogany with the new furniture."

"Besides," said Eliza, with a glance at her mother, as if for support, "I should n't think a parlor was furnished, now-a-days, without a piano."

"The girls do need a piano; but, about that, of course you will do just as you 've a mind to," added the mother. "Sarah Jane ought not to go behindhand with her practice."

"O, no, that is true," answered Jonathan, with a cloudy expression.

"We 've always had a piano," remarked Georgiana, the youngest of the family, "and it would be a shame to be without one now."

"Not a shame; that is a harsh expression, my dear," said the widow. "Of course, Mr. Allen will do as he pleases," she continued, significantly.

"I don't care; everybody has pianos," said Georgiana.

"And we will have one," cried Jonathan, generously, prompted by Sarah Jane's distressed look.

"Certainly we will have a piano. I should have made arrangements for one before this; but you had one in the other house, you know, and I supposed you would bring it with you; that is," said he, correcting himself, for fear of giving offence, "I thought it belonged to you, — I mean — I — I did n't know it was a hired one."

Mrs. Rentwell sighed, and looked sternly resigned; Miss Rentwell sneered; Eliza gave Mr. Allen an indignant glance; and Georgiana turned her eyes upon her mother, as if expecting some reply. Sarah Jane was more distressed than ever; and her husband grew very warm about the face, conscious of having inadvertently mentioned a delicate subject.

"I 'll have a piano sent home to-morrow," said he, cheerily, by way of giving a happy turn to his remarks, and preventing any misconstruction. "I should have done so before. Now I think of it, the chamber is the best place for the seraphine, is n't it, Sarah?"

He drew a chair to the fire. His young wife's face brightened as she laid her hand in his, and thanked him, with a grateful and loving heart, for his kindness; and sunshine stole upon the faces of the family.

"I 've good news for you, girls," said Jonathan, at the tea-table, as he passed the biscuit. "Guess who is coming to see us."

They all guessed, except Miss Rentwell, who probably thought guessing beneath her dignity. Nobody guessed right.

"Why don't you tell, and have done with it?" asked Laura, not very good-naturedly.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Rentwell," replied Jonathan, laughing.

"There 's no occasion; only this guess-work is kind of childish."

Laura glanced at her mother, who was pouring the tea. Mrs. Rentwell smiled, without looking up — as if she had said, "Mr. Allen has got a good hint, this time."

Sarah Jane, who was dishing the preserves, raised her eyes to her sister's with a pleasant smile, and told her, "she thought her dignity *very* becoming."

"'T would be well if you had a little more of the quality," said Laura, with a smile not quite so pleasant.

"Never mind your dignity," cried Georgiana. "Let 's hear who it is. A gentleman, I am sure — did n't you confess as much, Mr. Allen? Is he handsome?"

"And single?" added Eliza.

"I 've guessed!" exclaimed Sarah. "It 's Charles Price."

"So it is," said Jonathan.

"O, good!" cried Georgiana. "He 's very handsome."

"He 's very disagreeable," remarked Miss Rentwell.

"Everybody is disagreeable that don't happen to fancy you, and pay you all the attention in the world. For my part, I think he 's beautiful. When is he coming?"

"To-morrow night; and I think we will have a delightful evening. Charles is a fine musician."

"We shall have use for the new piano," said Sarah. "He is a splendid player."

"He thunders — he don't play," observed Laura.

"There! I knew Miss Sourface would have some fault to find," exclaimed Georgiana. "She always does, when she don't like a person. But you can't say he is not an exquisite singer?"

"Rather exquisite, I must confess," replied Laura, sarcastically. "His voice reminds me of a rusty door-hinge."

Jonathan was too happy to care much for anything that was said out of ill-temper by even the dignified Laura. He laughed, and asked the widow's opinion of Mr. Charles Price.

"I don't know any harm of him," she said, gravely. "But I should hardly have expected you to engage him for to-morrow night."

"Why not?"

"You know that our Sisterhood meets on Wednesday evening."

Mr. Allen's risible muscles were drawn irresistibly, by the widow's remark.

"I do not see how Mr. Charles Price and the Sisterhood can interfere with each other in the least," said he.

"O, certainly not, if you prefer to receive company when I am absent," very quietly replied Mrs. Rentwell, with a grim smile.

Jonathan hastened to disclaim the very shadow of so unworthy a motive.

"You know I would much prefer to have you at home," said he. "I shall always wish you to be here when we have company."

"If not, I suppose I can make myself comfortable somewhere else," rejoined the widow, not at all mollified; "only let me know when I am not wanted."

"O, mother! don't talk so!" pleaded Sarah Jane.

"It is not because I feel hurt, my daughter." Mrs. Rentwell sipped her tea. "I don't care, on my own account."

Nobody asked on whose account it was she felt anxious, and after a pause she resumed —

"I hope you have no desire to keep my daughters away from our meeting, Mr. Allen? They ought

to go; and it was at least inconsiderate to invite Mr. Price here on Wednesday evening."

"A thought of the Sisterhood never entered my head," said Jonathan, his spirits a little dashed. "But, never mind; I will see Charles to-morrow, and make different arrangements."

Eliza, Sarah and Georgiana, were opposed to the proposition. They would rather stay at home and have company than go to the meeting; but Laura sided with her mother, and Jonathan had nothing more to say.

On the following morning he saw his friend, and gave him a partial account of the circumstances of the case. Charles laughed, reminded Mr. Allen of his determination to take a decided stand as the head of the family, and cautioned him against suffering too much encroachment upon his liberties.

"Anything for peace," murmured Jonathan.

"Ho, ho! has it got to that?" ejaculated Mr. Price. "Your freedom is going to ruin faster than I had any notion of!"

The bachelor made his promised call some two weeks later, and found all Jonathan's family at home. He brought a friend with him; and the girls, in high spirits, prepared for a gay evening. The new piano was made use of to some purpose; everything went off well; and even Laura condescended to enjoy herself with the rest. One little

occurrence, however, towards the close of the evening, marred the happiness of the circle.

Mrs. Rentwell had some papers she wished to read to the young men. They concerned the prosperity of the Sisterhood of Universal Harmony, to which she belonged. At their last Wednesday evening meeting it was ascertained that the members could not much longer continue their united efforts to harmonize the world without an accession of strength. In plain terms, money was wanted.

Mrs. Rentwell interrupted herself, in the reading of the documents, to make these explanations.

"Of course," said she, "I shall not ask either of the gentlemen to give anything to the cause; but if, after I have finished reading these papers, which they will find exceedingly interesting, they should feel inclined to put their names down for any small sums, I would simply say that they may thereby be the means of doing an incalculable amount of good."

"Don't read these old papers now, mother!" cried Georgiana, impatiently.

Sarah Jane saw her husband's features writhing with mortification and perplexity, and was very much distressed. The two elder girls seated themselves quietly, and looked very serious and interesting; while Mr. Price drew down one corner of his

mouth, with a ludicrous expression, and partly closed an eye, for the express edification of his friend, Mr. Allen. Mr. Leslie, who had been playing and had stopped to hear Mrs. Rentwell, looked very blank for two or three minutes, then, coughing painfully in his handkerchief, turned again upon the piano-stool, and began to study a sheet of music with intense application.

Jonathan, perspiring, nervous and very red, tried to say something. His voice sank within him as often as he raised it to a preparatory "hem!" and, like the Ancient Mariner, Mrs. Rentwell had her will. Regarding Georgiana with a look of mild rebuke, she proceeded with her papers.

But at length Mr. Allen could endure no longer the queer expression of his friend's face. He made a mighty effort, and broke in upon his mother's stiff and formal style of reading, as she paused to turn a leaf.

"I think perhaps it would be as well to postpone the conclusion of the documents till another time, — would n't it?" he asked, with some pertubation.

"On a subject of so much importance, I am surprised to hear you speak with such indifference," coldly and cuttingly observed the widow.

"But I am afraid the gentlemen are not much interested," said Sarah Jane, coming to her husband's rescue.

Mrs. Rentwell looked up, with a very strong expression of inquiry.

"O, I 'm very much amused!" exclaimed Mr. Leslie, turning on the stool. "Are not you, Charles?"

"Why, rather so," replied Mr. Price, pinching Jonathan's arm.

Mr. Allen was roasting; perhaps Charles regarded him as a goose, and wished to ascertain if he was nearly done.

"At all events," said Jonathan, grown firm through desperation, "I am neither interested nor amused; but —" checking himself, conscious of having spoken too hastily — "I am a sort of heathen, I know."

Mrs. Rentwell gave him a grim look, in which she meant to express a great deal of severe and concentrated pity, and proceeded to read the papers. During the process, Mr. Price made Jonathan's arm black and blue.

"I will not go any further into the details of our labors," said the old lady, at length, to the great relief of her auditors. "You see what we have had to go through. We have been considerably persecuted, and no end of ridicule has been heaped upon us. But we intend to persevere, if the means can be obtained."

"I don't exactly see what the object of all this is," quietly observed Mr. Price.

"Our aim is indicated by our name. We are endeavoring to form the nucleus of a harmonious circle, which shall widen and expand until it comprehends all classes of society. We shall fuse all religions into one — the true religion."

"I see," said Mr. Price, gravely. "You aim to make the whole world feel and believe just as you feel and believe. A stupendous plan! And, as for harmony, there is no principle I love better and would do more to promote. Are not those your sentiments, Jonathan, eh?" with a terrific pinch. "I go in for universal harmony, and one religion. I subscribe twenty-five cents — cash."

Mr. Leslie gave the same; and although Mrs. Rentwell had strong suspicions that the young men were making sport of the cause, she smiled serenely and pocketed the money.

Thereupon, Mr. Leslie struck up the lively and simple air of "*I'd be a butterfly;*" Mr. Price and Eliza began to sing, and Georgiana began to dance.

Meanwhile Laura's countenance wore an injured look, and she conversed aside with her mother; but Sarah Jane and her husband, although rendered very unhappy by what had occurred, joined the company, with feeble efforts to be gay.

After the young men were gone, the widow took occasion to say she thought them rather insolent, but that she could not blame them, since they had been encouraged to be so by Mr. Allen. Jonathan compressed his lips, and, smothering considerable heat in the region of his heart, made no reply; but the remark led to a general discussion of the characters of Mr. Leslie and Mr. Price. Both suffered extensively by the free speech of Mrs. Rentwell and her sarcastic daughters. Mr. Price especially was the subject of a dreadfully severe criticism, by Miss Laura, given as an offset to Georgiana's praises, who declared that he was delightful, and that he had completely captivated her heart.

Jonathan and Sarah Jane withdrew to their chamber, where the latter had a good crying spell over the unpleasant occurrences of the evening. It took all her husband's good-nature to soothe her; so that he forgot his own mortifications, for the time, in his sympathy for her sufferings.

The next morning, however, he thought the matter over, and resolved that henceforth he would be master in his own house. He began on the new system at the breakfast-table. There was no coffee. Mrs. Rentwell's family having always been accustomed to tea, and nobody except himself caring for any other drink, no other drink was prepared,

although he had several times hinted strongly on the subject.

"I must have my coffee," he said, firmly. "Tea with breakfast seems to me as much out of place as ——"

"As white gloves at a funeral," added Georgiana.

"Exactly," rejoined Mr. Allen, cheated of his dignity by the sally. "You know I don't drink tea, mother."

"I hardly thought you would wish to be alone with your coffee," replied the widow. "If you care so much for it, of course you must have it."

Jonathan did not like the tone with which she spoke, but, seeing the color come in Sarah's face, he held his peace. From that time he had coffee, — that too, of a notable quality. It was like Chinese music, which is celebrated for being the worst in the world. Mrs. Rentwell must have been very ingenious to be able to concoct anything so bad. The result was that in the course of a week he decided to try drinking tea.

Mr. Allen would not have given up so easily, had it not been for the peculiar circumstances of the case. Sarah Jane had succeeded in convincing him that not one of the family knew how to make coffee; although he distinctly remembered drinking some very delectable cups of that beverage at Mrs. Rentwell's house, when he used to go there courting.

Strange as it seemed that the old lady should at that time have been so lucky in her attempts to make his favorite drink to suit him, and that such manifest disaster should follow all her subsequent efforts in that line, he did not like to distress his young wife with a full expression of his views on the subject.

He thought of employing regular help in the kitchen, in order to effect his purpose; but his income was small, and his family rather large, and to engage a cook expressly to make his coffee did not seem to be advisable. Accordingly Mrs. Rentwell triumphed, and tea was thenceforward the order of the morning.

Jonathan detested everything that had the appearance of meanness; else he would have attempted to reform certain other abuses, which involved an alarming consumption of funds. He had never anticipated that he would have the whole family to support. He could not afford such an expensive luxury; and Mrs. Rentwell, who knew his circumstances, had, in encouraging him to take the house, distinctly stated that she and the girls could manage to make his household expenditures less than they would be if he and Sarah lived alone. The widow had a little property, and the girls had been taught to do something to support themselves. But, somehow, everything came out of Jonathan's pocket;

nobody contributed to the general funds, except himself. As much money as the girls earned they laid out in dress, and private comforts; and Mrs. Rentwell thought she did her share in the capacity of housekeeper.

Even this Mr. Allen would have endured without murmuring, as long as his business warranted him in permitting the abuse, had he been able to purchase peace by submission. But Mrs. Rentwell's endeavors to promote public harmony resulted in private discords. She seemed to have entered into a league with her unmarried daughters against the welfare of Mr. Allen. Sarah Jane, who stood on neutral ground, in a most unhappy and perplexing position, they spared no pains or stratagems to bring within the influence of their designs. All day, when her husband was about his business, they filled her ear with slanders against his character; so that, when he came home at night, instead of entering a cheerful home, and taking a fond and happy wife to his arms, he found her eyes red and swollen with weeping, and her heart all irritated and inflamed from the rough treatment it had received.

Once a fortnight Jonathan used to attend the evening meetings of some secret society, of which he was a member. On one occasion, coming home late, he found Sarah Jane decidedly "out of sorts," as she afterwards confessed. When he spoke to

her she only pouted, and looked disagreeably sulky.

"Come, now," said he, sitting down by her side, and speaking to her in a kind tone; "I shall not let you go till you tell me your trouble. What is the matter?"

"Nothing," murmured Sarah, bursting into tears.

"It is absurd to say so, when you cannot contain your grief. Have I done anything to hurt your feelings?"

Sarah sobbed, but made no answer.

"Do, dear Sarah, tell me if *I* am to blame; for you know how readily I would remedy any fault—"

"No—you are not to—to blame!" sobbed the young wife; "only I—I thought you did n't care for me any more!"

Jonathan kissed her tenderly, and begged to know the reasons why she indulged so unjust an opinion.

"I thought you would not stay away from me so late, if you were not tired of me," she articulated, after making several ineffectual efforts to speak.

Jonathan could hardly refrain from scolding her for being so silly.

"You know I told you, before I went out, that I would rather not go; but you told me I had better. Don't you remember it?"

"Yes; but you stayed so late!"

"I told you I should, if I went."

"But," murmured Sarah, "I did not want to ask you not to go; it would have seemed selfish."

"It is needless to apologize or explain. Question your heart, Sarah, and you will learn how unreasonable your suspicions are. But you are not responsible for them. They have been put into your weak little head," he added playfully, "by the family. Tell me truly, — is it not so?"

He did not cease to urge her until she confessed all. Her mother had been warning her of the danger of losing his affections, if he fell into the habit of spending his evenings away from her. The poor child had actually feared that he was already beginning to seek such society as would tend to dissipate his love.

They had no difficulty then in making up their little quarrel; Jonathan reässured her, and she was very sorry for having been so silly. By a promise he had made her, in drawing out the confession, he was bound not to speak of the affair to her mother; and his indignation, like a worm, was left to eat into his heart.

This was unfortunate; for Mrs. Rentwell continued, with impunity, influencing Sarah to entertain unjust suspicions of him, and imagine causes of complaint. She put a thousand unhappy thoughts

into her head about his neglect, his selfishness, his brutality. Desires the young wife had otherwise never dreamed of were awakened by her mother.

Jonathan did not quite understand it; but he was too tender of his foolish little wife to inquire very narrowly into the origin of all her wants. Everything she asked for she was pretty sure to have, without much fuss, until a certain memorable occasion.

She was one evening feeling very unhappy about a splendid dress which had been recently presented to a young lady, — who was married about the time Jonathan became the head of the family, — by her tender husband. Mr. Allen had given her no such token of appreciation; and she was deeply grieved about it. Without stopping to inquire how much Mrs. Rentwell had to do with breathing the sentiments of envy and discontent into her mind, he hastened to present her with a pattern far more beautiful and costly than the one which had occasioned the unhappiness.

It fitted elegantly when made up, and Sarah was very grateful. Jonathan was no less pleased with it himself, until he saw Eliza make her appearance in it one Sabbath morning.

Mr. Allen understood then why Sarah declined to go to church. Eliza wished to wear her new dress. Had this been the first occasion of the

kind, he would have held his peace; but for the past few weeks the sisters had appeared to wear only Sarah's dresses continually.

"Is this right?" he asked of his young wife, earnestly.

"I did n't know it was anything very wrong," replied Sarah, in a petulant tone.

"Don't speak in that way," said Jonathan; "I've no idea of scolding you. But it seems to me that your sisters should be satisfied with living upon us generally, and wearing your ordinary dresses as if they were their own, without taking away from you my last gift."

"I never thought you would be so particular with my sisters," murmured Sarah, beginning to cry.

"Particular!" echoed Mr. Allen, impatiently. "Don't they run over me like mice? Have n't I paid out three times as much money for them as I have for you or me, since they have lived with us?"

"I would n't have believed you would begrudge it ——"

"Begrudge it! begrudge it!" Jonathan was beginning to quiver, and speak fast with excitement. "Have n't I suffered martyrdom with fortitude? Have n't I thrust my hand into the flames, and told

it to burn, smiling serenely? For mercy's sake, tell me if I am mean!"

"I did n't say you were; and I don't know why — why — why you should be angry with me."

"I am not angry; but you won't hear to reason, and I lose my patience. Because I am not willing the girls should trample us — or me especially — quite into the dust, you call me particular, and say I begrudge what I do for them. It is unjust!"

"Eliza only wanted to — to wear my new dress. Mr. Trimmer is going to walk to church with her — and her dresses are not good enough."

"Not good enough to wear to church? — or not good enough to bait a lover and catch a husband? I don't understand you!"

Jonathan spoke sarcastically, and Sarah burst into a passion of tears.

"You talk as though you thought I had deceived you, in order to get you," she sobbed, in a deeply-injured tone.

Mr. Allen compressed his lips, and strode across the room.

"Why will you misconstrue what I say?" he demanded, hoarsely. — "But let us drop the subject. You have made me forget that this is the Sabbath. Come, dear Sarah, let us have peace for one day in the week. These trials and troubles seem so trivial, compared with the worth of the

soul, that I am ashamed of myself. What folly to give way to petty causes of irritation, on such a glorious day as this!"

It was a beautiful winter morning; but the bright sunshine, and the clear, cold air, had no charms for Sarah. She continued to pout, in spite of all her husband could do; accordingly he left her, and went to church alone. On his return, his soul elevated and purified, and all the clouds cleared from his heart, he found her pouting still. Her mother had been with her, and carefully prepared her to be miserable during the remainder of the day.

From that time, Jonathan was never so ready to gratify all his young wife's wants. Living upon him, the sisters had become quite indolent, and it seemed always that whatever he purchased for Sarah was rather for them than for herself. He needed some different kind of encouragement to induce him to exhaust his income, and endanger his business.

The reign of anarchy now commenced in earnest. The family had no longer any difficulty in making Sarah believe that she was a neglected, injured, and cruelly-treated wife. There were no more quiet hours of happiness for her and Jonathan, even in the solitude of their chamber.

Mr. Allen had long since begun to spend a por-

tion of his leisure time away from home. When spring opened, he scarcely ever passed an entire evening with the family.

"You 'll kill me! I shall die if you neglect me so!" cried Sarah, passionately, one night when he came home late.

"I neglect you? I kill you?" repeated Jonathan, with a bitter smile.

"You never stay at home any more!" sobbed Sarah.

"The truth is, this don't seem like home to me, my dear. I don't live in my own house; I dwell in your mother's kingdom. Instead of home influence, we have a kind of despotic government, which don't suit me."

"I never thought my husband would hate my mother!" burst forth Sarah Jane.

"Well, lay the whole fault upon me, if you please!" replied Jonathan, in a desperate tone. "*I* can bear it! *I* am to blame, that we have n't a happy home! Why, I was driven out of the parlor long ago! Every time Mr. Trimmer comes to see Eliza, I am expected to abandon the room to promote courting conveniences. Whenever the other girls have beaux, they demand the same opportunities. Because I was stupid enough not to suspect that Mr. Saltzer came to see Laura the other

night, and sat in the parlor until nine o'clock, she feels bitter towards me to this day."

"That is no reason why you should neglect me!"

"But you will not give me peace, even here, in our own chamber. You are always complaining and finding fault with me. Men will seek entertainment away from home, if their home is not made happy."

For those cruel words Sarah thought she could never forgive her husband. She cried about them all night, and told all to her mother the next morning.

"Let me talk to him!" exclaimed the indignant Mrs. Rentwell.

Jonathan did not give her an opportunity very soon. He avoided the family as long as his conscience would permit him, then resolved to make one more effort to render his home endurable.

Since the affair of their subscriptions to aid the Sisterhood of Harmony, Mr. Leslie and Charles Price had refrained from visiting at Mr. Allen's house; but some time in April they agreed to come again, to gratify their wretched friend. Jonathan knew the girls would be pleased to see them, and had no scruples about engaging them for an evening.

Georgiana expressed great delight, when he

brought home the news. Laura and Eliza had beaux, and received the intelligence with less enthusiasm.

"They will come any evening this week," said Mr. Allen. "Shall we say Tuesday?"

Laura looked dignified, and tossed her head.

"Mr. Saltzer comes Tuesday evenings," cried Georgiana. "Miss Sourface thinks she must have the parlor."

"Very well," answered Jonathan, determined to be cheerful. "Say Thursday evening."

"Mr. Trimmer comes to see Eliza Thursday evenings," whispered Sarah in his ear.

"Why, then, let it be Wednesday, since none of you attend the meetings of the Sisterhood any more."

"Mr. Allen, I hope you will refrain from speaking disrespectfully of the Sisterhood," observed Mrs. Rentwell. "We have not yet given over our efforts to establish a Harmonic Circle; our friends have failed us, to be sure; but we have an object which encourages us to persevere. Henceforth, a few of the most active and influential members are to meet *here*, until we are again able to hire a hall."

"If I may be so bold," said Jonathan, astounded, "may I humbly inquire *when* the meetings of the Sisterhood are to be held in my own house?"

"On Wednesday evenings," replied the widow, "until further notice."

"Thank you!" rejoined Mr. Allen, his eyes burning very brightly, and his lips closing tightly upon his teeth.

"Why can't the gentlemen come Friday night?" asked Sarah.

"Because I happen to be engaged on Friday night."

"If you cared much to have your friends come, I should think you would give up any ordinary engagement," remarked Laura.

This was too much for Jonathan's patience. He burst forth into a hasty expression of his disgust at the servile submission which was expected of him. Sarah Jane went into hysterics, and Mrs. Rentwell came to the rescue.

"You are an ungrateful, unreasonable man!" she exclaimed, indignantly. "Was it for this I gave you my dear child? Is this the way you repay us for all we have done for you? Is this our reward for trying to make your home comfortable? Are these the thanks ——"

Mr. Allen stopped to hear no more, — he seized his hat. The house seemed to roar like a Babel behind him, as he turned down the street.

Jonathan did not return home until evening. He

then went directly to his room, but Sarah was not there, and he sought her in the parlor.

The widow and her daughters were all present; nobody looked up, on his entrance; and Sarah, who was at work on a dress for Miss Laura, while Miss Laura played the piano, bent over her sewing, looking very red, and very sad.

"Sarah," said Mr. Allen, mildly, "I want to speak to you."

Sarah did not look up. There was a pause, during which you could have heard a pin drop.

"Nobody will hinder your speaking," remarked the widow.

"Sarah, will you come?"

Jonathan did not appear to have heard Mrs. Rentwell's remark, and he spoke kindly, but firmly.

Another pause. Sarah trembling. Laura humming a gay air at the piano. Georgiana giggling.

Jonathan went forward, and took his young wife's hand. She arose, bursting into tears, and followed him.

"I am ashamed of you!" muttered the widow.

Poor Sarah sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry!" said Jonathan, soothingly, when they were alone. "Come — cheer up! I want you to take a walk with me."

"I don't want to!" replied Sarah, in a choked voice.

"Then go to please me."

And her husband put on her shawl and bonnet for her, without more words.

They went out. "I am not fit to see any one," murmured Sarah, drawing back when they had reached the door.

Her face was red, and her eyes swollen.

"You 'll do," said Mr. Allen, tenderly drawing her veil over her face.

"But where are you going?"

"For a little walk, which I think will do you good."

It was a pleasant night; and, after breathing the air of the streets a little while, Sarah became reconciled. Jonathan had not ceased to talk in the kindest and tenderest manner; at length, by some drollery of his, he startled a laugh out of the gloom of her heart.

"There!" said he; "now I think you are prepared to make a call."

He stopped, and rang at the door of a handsome house.

"Who lives here?" timidly inquired his wife.

Jonathan laughed, and looked very mysterious. A domestic came to the door, and he inquired for Mrs. Jones.

"O, the gentleman who called to look at the

rooms to-day!" exclaimed Mrs. Jones, recognizing Mr. Allen. "Walk right up."

Sarah turned very pale, and followed Jonathan with a sinking heart. Mrs. Jones introduced them into a handsome suite of unfurnished rooms; when, receiving the intimation that they would like to confer about them privately, she retired, and left them alone together.

"Do you understand what it all means?" asked Jonathan, drawing a smile upon Sarah's sad mouth with his thumb and finger. "Why don't you laugh? I thought it a good joke!"

"It is a very cruel one, I am sure!" exclaimed Sarah.

"Call it simply a serious one, my dear; and let us talk it over candidly. I find it impossible to live with the family any longer. I am coming here to live; that is, if you will come with me. Nay, don't speak,—you are going to say something hasty. I want you to think of this all night. See how you like the rooms; consider calmly what a miserable life we have been leading; and reflect how happy we might be together, if we were to live alone, in love and peace; then do just as you choose, only do not be influenced in the affair by your mother and sisters. It will make me very happy, if you will come with me. If you stay with them, I shall go to a hotel."

Sarah trembled, and cried all the way home. She did not sleep any that night, but in the morning she was much calmer than Jonathan could have expected. In the kindest manner he asked what she had concluded to do. Of course she cried again, and wanted a great deal of coaxing, and a great deal of sympathy, before she would decide; but at length she murmured,

"I will go with you ——"

Jonathan almost smothered her with kisses.

"But," she articulated, disengaging her mouth, "don't let our folks know anything about it until I am gone. They would tear me to pieces before they would let me go!"

"I'll arrange that!" cried the delighted husband.

They talked over their plans; and, in accordance with them, Sarah hastily packed up her private property before going down to breakfast. At the table she had not, in reality, much appetite; and, arising before the rest of the family, she returned to her room, put on her things, and left the house. Jonathan still remained at table.

"I shall not be home at dinner," said he, carelessly.

"Very well," replied Mrs. Rentwell.

"Nor at supper."

"Very well."

"In fact, you need not look for me to-night at all."

"Just as you please."

"Nor to-morrow," said Jonathan, with a slight tremor in his voice.

The widow was startled, but made no answer.

"And if," he continued, "anybody should come for the piano in the course of the day, let it go."

"The piano!" almost shrieked Miss Laura.

General consternation prevailed; in the midst of which Mr. Allen preserved his calmness admirably.

"And the furniture in my chamber, and the parlor-furniture, which I believe belongs to me," he continued, "I shall send for during the day. All the rest I leave to you, with my best wishes."

"What do you mean, Mr. Allen?" inquired Mrs. Rentwell, in a suppressed voice, and with a very white face.

"I mean that I have concluded to move my lodgings."

The widow tried to spread a piece of bread and butter with an appearance of indifference; but her fingers trembled, and the muscles of her hand were evidently very weak.

"What will the world say, to see you desert your wife in this way?" she asked, with an effort to speak calmly.

"O, Sarah is going with me," coolly replied Mr. Allen.

"Going with you? Impossible!" exclaimed the widow, rising abruptly from the table, and rushing to Sarah's room.

Jonathan did not await her return, but hastened from the house, leaving the girls thunderstruck and speechless

It is needless to describe Mrs. Rentwell's excitement, on discovering that Sarah was already gone. The house was a scene of confusion and dismay during the remainder of the morning. At ten o'clock a wagon came for the furniture. It was not until then that Mrs. Rentwell was able to learn what direction her daughter had probably taken. She inquired of the men where the furniture was going, and hurried, with anger in her heart, to Mrs. Jones' house.

But Sarah had not yet arrived, and she was not expected until evening. The widow's purpose was foiled; Jonathan had sent his wife on a visit somewhere, with perfect success; and Mrs. Rentwell returned home in a state of great agitation.

In the evening, Mr. Allen arrived at their boarding-house with his wife. The carpets were down, the piano and the seraphine were there, with the furniture, and comfort smiled upon them as they entered their rooms.

"Do you think you can be happy here?" asked Jonathan, fondly.

"O yes, — but I have been so naughty! How can you forgive me?"

Sarah wept sweet tears in her husband's arms. That was the happiest evening they had passed together in many, many weeks.

"We will have Price here, and Leslie, Wednesday evening, and invite the girls," said Jonathan. "How would you like that?"

"You are so kind and forgiving!" murmured Sarah. "I should be pleased; but they don't deserve it, more than I do."

"Never mind; they will be better in future. And your mother, — she can come and see you, — on one condition. If ever she throws out a suspicion, or a hint, injurious to me, don't listen to her. She will be careful not to do anything of the kind in my presence, I think. Only remember the past, dear Sarah."

The next day was Sunday; and Jonathan and Sarah enjoyed it as the Sabbath should be enjoyed. On Wednesday they sent invitations to the Misses Rentwell, to call in the evening. "Mr. Price and Mr. Leslie were to be present."

Only Georgiana came. Sarah and her husband treated her very affectionately, and made her heartily ashamed of her conduct towards them

while under the same roof. Like Sarah, Georgiana was naturally a good girl, and would have appeared so, aside from her mother's influence. She had long tales to tell of the old lady's mortification at the *divorce*, as Jonathan called his separation from the family he had married, which were cut short by the arrival of Mr. Leslie and Mr. Price.

There was great rejoicing over the change which Jonathan had wrought in his domestic affairs. Charles said he had abdicated his turban, fled from the harem, and become a Christian; and Mr. Leslie inquired concerning the prosperity of the Sisterhood of Harmony, with direct reference to the money he had given to the cause.

The evening was a happy one for all. Charles went home with Georgiana; who was so well pleased, and told so glowing a story of the reception she had met with, that her sisters took an early occasion to visit Mr. and Mrs. Allen. Mrs. Rentwell was not long in following their example, and Sarah was now perfectly happy; for, if ever another attempt was made to estrange her from her husband, she was able to resist it, and to maintain his honor and her rights.

To this day, Jonathan Allen is quite happy in his domestic relations. He does not much repent his early experience, for he appreciates love and

peace the better from the contrast; but he is earnest in his advice to all friends who contemplate matrimony that they should beware of — MARRYING A FAMILY.

MARY DARWELL'S GRIEF.

Mr. Darwell was a kind-hearted husband and affectionate father; but there were times when he appeared passionate, cruel, relentless,—when love for his family was forgotten, and the distress of his wife and children had no power to soften his heart.

These times never occurred except when he had been for many days absent from home, and returned from a scene of dissipation abroad, morose, irritable, and ill-humored.

Mr. Darwell lived on a neat little farm, situated about twenty-five miles from New York. He was much esteemed by his neighbors, and had the reputation of being an upright, generous man; although, three or four times a year, he was accustomed to meet his old companions in New York, and pass in revelling several weeks, spending his money lavishly, and indulging in ruinous excesses. At the end of that time, exhausted with his dissipation, remorse-

ful and sullen, he would go home to his family; never recovering his wonted cheerfulness until the pleasant society of his wife and children, together with habits of industry, had worn away the effects of long indulgence.

On one occasion, in midsummer, he had been absent from home two weeks, and his family were anxiously expecting his return; when, in the forenoon of a pleasant day, little Mary, his youngest child, espied him riding rapidly up the road.

As he dismounted from his horse, Mary ran out to meet him, and welcome him with a kiss; but the morose father pushed her rudely from him, and, with contracted brows, strode past her towards the house.

"Where 's Spot?" he asked.

"I don't know, father," replied little Mary, running towards the kennel. "He is near the house, somewhere."

Mr. Darwell called the dog, in a loud and impatient voice; but Spot was old, and, having grown deaf in his service, did not hear.

"That accursed dog!" muttered Mr. Darwell, angrily; "he is never to be found when he is wanted. Where is William?"

"In the field at work, I suppose," replied the girl, timidly. "What is the matter?"

"The cow is in the clover!" exclaimed Mr. Darwell.

"I will go and drive her out, papa!" cried Mary. "But here is Spot."

A large, shaggy, good-natured dog, with dim eyes and blunted teeth, came trotting up to his master, wagging his tail for joy. Spot was an ancient servant in the family; and little Mary loved the dog with all that fondness which children are sometimes capable of bestowing on favorite animals.

"Come along, Spot!" muttered Mr. Darwell, hurrying away.

Spot ran on before, and little Mary followed timidly, at a distance. The clover-field was not far from the house, and soon Mary saw the cow feeding on the delicious herb.

Then the sensitive girl remembered how Spot tore the cattle's noses and ears when set upon them, and thought she would rather drive the cow out of the field than see the faithful dog perform his duty so savagely.

"Papa! papa!" she cried, "don't set Spot on, please! Let me drive the cow out."

Mr. Darwell turned angrily on his child, and ordered her to return to the house. Mary went back sorrowfully; and, a moment after, she heard Spot's savage, angry bark. Looking around, she saw him jumping at the cow's throat while the

persecuted animal plunged madly, in terror, to avoid the dog's jaws.

It took but a minute for Spot to bring the cow to a broken fence, where she had entered the field; but here, instead of jumping out, bewildered with fear and pain, she ran off in another direction. The dog, unable to hold her on account of the decayed state of his teeth, chased her around the field, making her so wild that it was in vain for Mr. Darwell to try to drive her out.

"Curse such a dog as that!" muttered the angry man. "Here, Spot, here!"

But the dog was deaf, and did not hear. All Mr. Darwell's shouts were unavailing. Spot still worried the cow around the field, jumping at her throat, and tearing her ears, under the impression, doubtless, that he was doing his master good service.

Exasperated at the dog's deafness, Mr. Darwell ran to the house, entered abruptly, and, without speaking to his wife, whom he had not seen for so long, took down his rifle, that hung over the great fireplace in the kitchen.

Little Mary clasped her hands, and began to cry; for her father's angry manner filled her timid heart with fear. Mrs. Darwell, who knew her husband's sullen mood, looked on in tearful silence.

Conscious that something dreadful was about to

happen, Mary followed her father in the direction of the field. At a distance, trembling with childish apprehension, she saw him raise the gun, examine the percussion-cap, and take deliberate aim at Spot, who was still worrying the cow.

"O, don't shoot, father! don't shoot!" shrieked the poor girl. "Don't kill Spot!"

And, half distracted in view of the death which threatened her old favorite, — the faithful servant of the house, — she ran forward. Mr. Darwell, governed entirely by his angry impulse, heeded her not. She saw the flash of fire burst from the muzzle of the rifle; a sharp report followed; and, with a low, dismal, piteous cry, old Spot staggered away, and sank upon the ground.

"Here! take this to the house!" shouted Mr. Darwell, lowering his rifle, and throwing it down. "Quick!"

Mary could not but obey. With a heart bleeding with anguish, she ran to take up the rifle. As she did so, her eye fell upon the wounded dog, as he lay panting and bleeding on the turf.

"Quick!" said her father, again.

Mary ran away, and, rushing into the house, dropped the gun.

"What is the matter?" asked her mother, with anxiety and alarm.

"O, poor Spot!" sobbed Mary. "Papa has shot poor Spot!"

"Dear child!" said Mrs. Darwell, tenderly. "Don't cry!"

But little Mary was disconsolate; and her mother was herself so much affected that she could not refrain from tears.

After sending his child to the house, Mr. Darwell drove out the cow without difficulty, as he could easily have done at first, had not his foolish anger prompted him to require the services of poor old Spot.

Mr. Darwell was conscious of having acted in a brutal manner. This remorseful feeling, added to the pangs he felt before, in consequence of his dark recollections touching the time and money he had spent in ruinous, unsatisfactory dissipations, made him almost fiendish. His horse, which stopped to clip a spear of grass as he was leading him to the barn, he whipped unmercifully; and an inoffensive calf, that happened to be in his way, received an angry blow.

Poor old faithful Spot, shot whilst doing what he deemed dutiful service, was, all this time, left bleeding on the turf; and, as soon as Mr. Darwell had disappeared, little Mary, trembling and in tears, ran out to see if the dog was dead.

Reader, did you ever, when a child, behold a

dumb animal that you loved dearly dying a death of anguish? If so, you can imagine Mary's distress. Her soft, affectionate heart bled with unavailing sorrow, as she saw poor Spot moaning and gasping on the ground.

His mouth, his feet, and the weeds and grass all around him, were covered with his blood. With heart-rending moans he writhed upon the turf, staining it, whichsoever way he turned. The bullet had passed through his mouth obliquely, tearing his tongue and breaking the bones of both his jaws.

Perceiving that Spot was not dead, and gathering hope from what she saw, Mary ran to her mother with the news.

"O, I hope he won't die!" she exclaimed, fervently. "But, there, he suffers so much! Perhaps it would be better if he was dead."

She went back to her old companion, the playmate of her infancy and childhood. Spot had crept near the fence, leaving a crimson trail upon the grass. He was still moaning piteously; and his mouth was covered with a bloody foam. Fearing to approach him too nearly, Mary watched him at a distance, her sweet face wet with tears of sorrow, and her little hands clasped in agony.

"He is not dead yet," said she, returning to her mother. "Do come and look at him, mamma! Perhaps you can do something for him."

To satisfy the child, Mrs. Darwell followed Mary to the spot where the wounded animal lay.

"O, look at him, mamma!" cried the broken-hearted child. "Is it not too bad that he should be shot? O, it makes me sick to see his mouth bleed so!"

"Poor Spot!" sighed Mrs. Darwell.

"Mamma, will he die?" asked Mary.

"I am afraid he will," replied her mother. "His jaw is broken."

Lifting her streaming eyes to her mother's face, Mary artlessly inquired if the doctor could not mend it. Being answered in the negative, her sobs burst forth anew.

"I would not cry about it," said Mrs. Darwell, wiping a tear from her own eyes. "Spot could not have lived much longer. He is older than you are, Mary; and he has been almost blind and deaf for a long time."

And she led the grieved child back to the house.

All day little Mary occupied herself in watching poor Spot, and reporting his condition to her mother. Sometimes he would appear better, and she would run joyfully to the house with the news. More frequently, however, Spot would lie down gasping on the ground, and seem to be dying; and she would hasten to carry the mournful intelligence to her sympathizing parent.

At first, the poor child, gazing distractedly at the animal's sufferings, feared to approach him; but, as her sight grew familiar with the blood and foam which covered his mouth, and her ear with his low whine of distress, she ventured near; and when at last he turned towards her his suffering eyes, as if in prayer for relief, she patted him on the head. She started back with a cry, for her hand was stained with blood.

As Mary went to wash her hands, she thought Spot would be glad if she would also wash the blood away from his mouth. Accordingly she carried a basin of water to the place where the animal lay, and poured it over his wounds.

Mr. Darwell, meanwhile, was at work repairing such things about the farm as had suffered from neglect during his absence. To his son, whom he found industriously employed, he spoke unkindly, uttering unmerited reproofs; and with his faithful serving-man, Tom Marks, he found fault without reason.

When the men came home to dinner, Mary, with many tears, related to William the catastrophe of poor Spot. William was much grieved, and, through his closed teeth, muttered something about his father's cruelty, which Mary could not understand.

William took counsel with Tom Marks, and it was decided that they ought to kill the dog, to put

him out of his misery. But Mary, who could not bear the thought of Spot's death, entreated them to spare him.

"Don't kill him!" she pleaded. "He 'll get well, I hope, after all."

Mr. Darwell being still morose and ill-humored, nobody dared to speak to him of the condition of the dog; and thus the poor animal was left to suffer until night.

Just before sundown, Mr. Darwell, coming home from the field, passed the place where Mary still sat watching Spot.

"She is fussing with that dead dog!" he muttered, angrily.

Approaching to order her to the house, Mr. Darwell heard a very faint moan. He paused, and saw old Spot lying on the ground gasping for breath, and Mary gazing at him with a sorrowful face. A pang shot through his heart; for he remembered the fidelity and age of that old dog, and the attachment which had always existed between him and Mary.

The grieving child heard her father's foot-steps, and, with a timid, entreating face, she looked up and said,

"Spot is not *dead* yet, father!"

He could not speak. Turning quickly to hide

his emotion, he hurried to the house, leaving Mary with her old companion.

"What a fiend I have been!" he muttered, contracting his brows with hatred of himself.

He thought of the joy it had given him, in years gone by, to see the noble dog, strong, faithful and affectionate, watch by the cradle of the infant Mary; and to see him at a later day hold her little frock in his teeth, to steady her timid foot-steps, — endure her childish tyranny, licking the baby-hand that sometimes smote him angrily, and perform all her commands like an obedient, loving slave. He remembered how often he had laughed to see that dear child climb upon the animal's back, and, clinging to his collar, compel him to carry her about; and the tender care the dumb brute always had of her was fresh in his mind. No wonder, then, that the father's heart was filled with the bitterest remorse and anguish.

He entered the house, and in a kind manner greeted his wife, half apologizing for his harshness.

"I have been very unhappy," said he. "I have not felt well. Forgive me."

A moment after, he spoke of Mary and the dog; and Mrs. Darwell told him the whole story of the girl's sorrow and distress, her watching and anxiety, her hope and fear.

Shortly after, while they were conversing, Mary

came in with a sad brow, and, without a word, sat quietly down in her little chair in the corner.

"Come here, my dear," said Mr. Darwell, kindly.

Mary rose, with a countenance full of grief, and approached her father.

"My child," said he, with emotion, "what is the matter?"

Her little bosom began to heave with sobs, and big tears, starting from her red, swollen eyes, rolled down her cheeks. But she could not speak.

"My dear," pursued her father, in a trembling voice, "tell me what ails you."

"Spot is dead!"

The words seemed to burst from her heart, and instantly she was convulsed with weeping.

"Don't cry!" said Mr. Darwell, in a choked voice. "I will buy you another dog."

"I don't want another dog!" sobbed Mary.

"Why not, dear?"

"I could not love it as I loved Spot; and when I fed it, or played with it, it would make me think of Spot, and ——"

She could say no more; — and her father pressed her to his heart, which was full of love, remorse and pity.

On the following day, Mary saw old Spot buried under the tree not far from where he had died. For many months she remembered him with sorrow, and

watched the sunshine, the rain and the winter's snow, which fell upon the turf where the faithful old servant of her childhood lay buried.

But other associations caused Mary to forget her girlish sorrow; and among the tenderest of these was the unfailing kindness of her father, who was never harsh or cruel towards her, or any one, or anything again. So Mary grew up a happy, bright-eyed, affectionate girl, dearly beloved by her parents and friends, and loving every one. But she never knew, until years after the death of her dog, that this event was the occasion of the happy change in her father, who was never absent from his family any more.

MUTTON IN BRAMBLETOWN.

In those regions where wolves are numerous, it usually follows that mutton is proportionately scarce. In Brambletown, before the legislature of the state passed the present law relating to bounties on the slaughter of these disagreeable animals, it frequently happened that nothing in the shape of sheep or lamb could be obtained for love or money. All attempts to produce sufficient mutton to supply the demand for it were complete failures; and it was always with the greatest difficulty that even a single lamb, designed for Christmas or Thanksgiving, could be raised and fattened in farmers' kitchens. The care taken to keep silly sheep within sight of human habitations during the day, and in pens at night, was of little consequence. The wolves were sure to come in for their share, which was usually so exorbitant that there was nothing left for the farmers.

Mr. Bellamy, an enterprising agriculturist, and one of the most influential men in Brambletown, made repeated attempts to raise sheep, well satisfied that moderate profits in wool and mutton would richly recompense him for devoting a portion of his land to pasturage. But he had been no more successful than his neighbors; and at last his entire flock became reduced to a solitary sheep. All the rest had been so unfortunate as to excite the desire of rapacious wolves; and, instead of arriving at the dignity of chops and roast, they found wretched graves in the maws of their ferocious enemies.

The cosset remained. Luckily for him, he had been brought up "by hand," and never trusted out of the narrow door-yard, within the limits of which no wolf, however hungry, had ventured to intrude by daylight; and every night he had been shut up in Deacon Bellamy's wood-house, where nothing could disturb him. Knowing no fear, and having, I suppose, only vague dreams of the wolf, the peaceful lamb grew fat; and, even before it had reached maturity, its plump proportions and beautiful fleece delighted the eye of the farmer.

Now, like many children, this stupid cosset was often sadly inclined to indulge in prohibited pleasures which every sensible person knows to be hurtful. Having long since learned to jump, and having at a later day enjoyed a taste of grass beyond the

limits of his narrow pasture, it required continual care on the part of the Bellamys to keep him at home.

"He 's more trouble than he 's worth!" exclaimed the deacon, his patience being at length exhausted. "I would like to keep you till Thanksgiving," patting the lamb on his head, "but I see you will continue to jump, until some day you will jump into the jaws of a wolf, and that will be the last of you. You are your worst enemy, poor fellow! for you compel me to butcher you."

The young cosset had also contracted a bad habit of butting, which had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, until the younger Bellamys could not come into the yard without being knocked down by the ungrateful wretch; and even the deacon and his oldest son frequently, on getting over the fence, received unwelcome assistance from behind.

Thus the cosset persisted in his wrong actions, until he compelled his patron to cut off the thread of his existence (with a butcher-knife) just under his chin; a sad fate, which should serve as a warning to all bad boys who disobey their parents without considering that the latter know a great deal better what is good for them than they do themselves.

The deacon chose a cool afternoon in August to

perform the last act in the tragedy of the pet lamb. I pass over in silence the butchering, as I wish to avoid lacerating the feelings of the reader with the sad details of the scene, which only dire necessity and a love of mutton could have induced the deacon to enact. After the cosset had ceased struggling and gasping, he was laid out on a board raised about three feet from the ground, and then a group of Bellamys was gathered about him.

The younger children, with water in their mouths, if not in their eyes, held the legs of the cosset, while the deacon and his eldest son skinned them scientifically. These last duties to an old friend, I am compelled to admit, were cheerfully performed by all parties; not that they loved the cosset less, but that they loved mutton more. When the deacon had finished skinning the hind legs, the carcass was suspended in the usual fashion upon a gambrel, and the rest of the skinning accomplished. Other necessary matters having been attended to, the deacon proceeded to divide the flesh. There was nothing like narrow selfishness about Deacon Bellamy. He had said to his wife,

"I think we can get along with a hind-quarter of the lamb; and, as a taste of mutton will be very acceptable to our neighbors, suppose we divide the rest among them as equally as we can?"

"That is just like you, dear," replied the good-

hearted woman. "Do as you like; but allow me to suggest that a whole quarter should be sent to the minister."

"To Mr. Nolley,—to be sure, a good idea!" said the deacon.

Accordingly, the excellent man sent the two fore-quarters, in pieces as nearly equal as possible, to half a dozen of his nearest neighbors, reserving for the clergyman a portion quite as large as his own. It was dark, however, before the boys had accomplished their first half-dozen errands; and, the way to the clergyman's house lying through the woods, it was thought best not to send him his mutton until morning. The deacon feared lest the wolves might smell the meat, and, enraged that so small a portion should have fallen to their share, make up for the deficiency by eating the boys. The quarter in question was accordingly wrapped up in the skin, and deposited in the wood-house, on a board erected directly over the bed so lately occupied by the living cosset.

On the following morning the whole family breakfasted on mutton; and the boys, Charley and George, having finally had satisfaction of the lamb which had butted them so often with impunity, prepared to carry the minister's portion.

A large covered basket was brought for the purpose, and Mrs. Bellamy went to the wood-house

herself to see the mutton nicely packed, in order that it might look as inviting as possible in the eyes of the clergyman's family. Then, what was the consternation of the kind-hearted lady, on discovering that the quarter of mutton had disappeared!

"George!" she said, "call your father at once. Tell him the lamb is gone!"

And while George ran out in great haste, she cast her eyes round the wood-house, vainly hoping to see the meat in some other place, to which her husband might have removed it. The outer door had not been locked the previous night, it is true, and thieves might have entered; yet she could not conceive of such utter depravity as must exist in the heart of a man who could be guilty of stealing anything so sacred as a leg of mutton.

"What is the matter? Can't find the mutton?" cried the deacon, entering abruptly. "Why, goodness! — true enough! It has been stolen!"

And for once the deacon's benevolent countenance was darkened with a frown of displeasure.

"Well, there is no use in lamenting misfortunes," he said, after a pause, during which he had ascertained for a certainty that the mutton was gone. "May the sinner repent before the ill-gotten mutton digests! All we can do is to send an apology to Mr. Nolley."

"I was just thinking," rejoined Mrs. Bellamy,

"that the best apology we can send him is one of our nice new cheeses, which I know Mrs. Nolley will be glad enough to have in her family. There is one that will just go into the basket in place of the mutton, and I don't know but it will be quite as acceptable."

"I believe you are right," replied her husband. "Do you put up the cheese, while I write a word to Mr. Nolley."

Mrs. Bellamy required no further encouragement to go at once to the dairy, and select the finest cheese on her shelves, as a present to the minister. By the time she had laid it neatly in a cloth under the cover of the basket, the deacon had penned the following note:

"Rev. Mr. Nolley.—Dear Sir: Please accept the accompanying trifle, as a token of friendship and esteem. I had designed to send you a present which might have been more acceptable, but circumstances which I may explain at some future time have prevented me from doing as I would like. Yours, truly,

"Josiah Bellamy."

The two youthful Bellamys, Charley and George were now sent through the woods with the cheese in the basket, and the note in Charley's coat-pocket They were gone much longer than was necessary to do their errand, for some tempting blackberries,

growing on the borders of the woodland, would not let them pass without tasting them. However, they at length returned with their trousers wet with dew, and their lips and teeth stained with berries.

"Well," said the deacon, who happened to be at the house, "you have really got back. I was beginning to think the wolves had caught you."

"Mr. Nolley kept us waiting ——"

"Kept you waiting! Well, what did Mr. Nolley keep you waiting for?"

"For this letter, which he was writing," said Charley, promptly.

The deacon took the note, and read as follows:

"DEAR BROTHER BELLAMY: I don't know what could have been more acceptable than the nice, generous *piece of mutton* you have been so kind as to send me. In return, please accept my sincere thanks, and the trifling present you will find in the basket. Yours,

"ALONZO NOLLEY."

The deacon rubbed his eyes, and scratched his head.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Bellamy.

"Why, Mr. Nolley thanks us for '*the nice, generous piece of mutton we sent him!*' What does he mean? There is some difference between mutton and cheese."

"O, it 's a slip of the pen," replied the charitable

Mrs. Bellamy. "He was thinking of the mutton, — for everybody knows you killed yesterday, — and he wrote nice mutton, instead of nice cheese."

"It must be so," rejoined the deacon. "But I must say I was foolish enough to fear that — O, that was silly!"

"What?"

"I thought Nolley might have taken offence because we did *not* send him any mutton, and have alluded to it ironically, in order to hurt our feelings."

"O, fie! Mr. Nolley is not such a man as that. But here, what have we got in the basket?"

There was something done up in a cloth.

"The basket is heavy enough," said the deacon.

"O, goodness! — no wonder!" gasped Mrs. Bellamy, sinking upon a chair.

She had just raised the cloth, and dropped it again, as if she had seen a serpent. The basket contained a large flat stone!

The deacon became pale with consternation. He glanced first at the stone, then at his astonished wife, and finally turned sternly to the boys.

"Charles!"

"Sir."

"What does this mean?" demanded the deacon, severely.

"I — I don't know. We gave the basket to — to Mr. Nolley himself, with your note ——"

"And added an impertinent message of your own!"

"No; we never said anything, but, 'Here 's something father sent you,' — did we, George?"

"No, we did n't; and Mr. Nolley carried the basket into another room, after asking us to sit down and wait. Then, after a while, he came to us again with the basket and this letter ——"

"Tell me, is this the solemn truth?"

"Yes, sir," said Charles, with a look of candor.

The deacon sent the boys out of doors, and consulted with his wife.

"I was never so confounded in my life," he muttered, glancing again at the minister's note. "I *did* think Mr. Nolley was a good man, and a Christian."

"I am thunderstruck!" replied his wife. "What did you write in your note?"

"That I wished him to accept the trifle sent him, in place of a present which might have been more acceptable, that I had designed for him; and he writes back, 'I don't know what could have been more acceptable than the nice, generous piece of mutton.' O, what a disposition the man must have, to take offence because I sent pieces of mutton to the neighbors, and none to him! And my apology

must have been sufficient, I am sure. Then to send back a stone! I never can forgive him!"

"Now, deacon, this is hardly Christian-like in you," remonstrated the good woman. "It is very aggravating, to be sure; but remember that the best of men have their weaknesses. Instead of cherishing enmity against your brother in the church, go to him ——"

"Go to him!"

"Certainly, and ——"

"After what has happened? After he has insulted us?"

"Go and ask an explanation. It is your duty. Be a Christian!"

The deacon pressed his wife's hand. A gleam of sunshine cleared away the cloud from his brow.

"You always counsel well, — like a Christian!" he exclaimed, warmly. "I wish I was as good, as meek, as forgiving, as you are! But I feel better now. I will go directly to Mr. Nolley, and I won't be angry, either."

"Bless your kind heart, go! And, I 'll tell you what, deacon, it is always best to return good for evil. You must not go with an empty basket."

"O, after sending him a cheese, and receiving a stone in return ——"

"Good for evil, deacon! There is a little of the mutton left; we can do without it well enough."

"I understand you!" exclaimed the deacon. "I will carry Mr. Nolley what there is left, and tell him all; then, if his heart does not melt, I shall give him up as a hardened wretch."

Glorying in the kindness he had intended to do the minister, Mr. Bellamy took the basket on his arm, and went himself through the woods, to Mr. Nolley's house.

The deacon's face was all sunshine, as he knocked at the door. The minister's little girl appeared.

"Is your father at home, my dear?" he asked.

"He just went to ride with mamma and the baby," she replied. "Won't you come in and wait? He will be back soon."

Being quite anxious to see the clergyman, the deacon entered; and, the girl having run down to the road to see if her parents were coming, he thought he would carry the basket into the pantry himself.

If the deacon had already been considerably astonished that morning, his amazement was now increased a thousand-fold. For a moment he could not believe the evidence of his senses; but what he saw was no illusion. Upon one of the shelves, before his very eyes, lay the quarter of mutton which had been stolen from his wood-house!

The deacon staggered, breathed heavily, and in great trepidation examined the meat more closely.

He recognized it by a peculiar cut which he remembered making on the joint.

"May the Lord forgive the sin, as I forgive it!" he sighed. "But, since the hypocrite has taken by stealth that which should have been given him freely, I cannot leave him to enjoy the plunder. Besides, he must know that his crime is discovered."

And the deacon immediately placed the quarter in his basket, with the second present he had designed the minister. As he passed out of the door, he said to the little girl,

"I will not wait for your father. Tell him that I have taken the mutton which I found in his pantry."

The child stared at the deacon, and was dumb. The moment his back was turned, however, she burst into tears.

The deacon's heart was touched.

"At all events, the child is blameless," thought he; "she desires a taste of mutton, and she shall have it."

Returning immediately to the pantry, he took from his basket the small piece of meat, and placed it on the same shelf where he had found the stolen quarter. Then patting the child's head, and telling her to be a good girl, and not cry, he returned home with a heavy heart.

"Well, well, well!" he sighed, sinking upon a chair; "I am tired of the world now! I have lived long enough, — nay, a day too long."

And, to his wife's look of anxiety and alarm, he replied by lifting the cover of the basket, and revealing the mutton. It is impossible to describe her distress. She even shed tears, poor woman, over the minister's sin.

"I never knew before that humanity was so weak," said the deacon, sighing. "Whom shall we trust now? If a man who appears so good and kind can fall into such disgraceful sin, who is safe?"

"I am afraid to speak of it, it is so awful," murmured the excellent Mrs. B.; "never did anything shock me like this! But, for charity's sake, keep this terrible secret from the world. Think of the scandal which must fall upon the church, if the thing is known beyond our own bosoms. Leave the minister alone with his conscience, and let us pray that he may repent!"

The deacon thought this advice the best in the world, and resolved to follow it. The secret was accordingly kept, and the children were charged to say nothing about the theft of the mutton.

"I have found it," said the deacon.

"Where?" they asked.

"No matter, — in a place where nobody would have thought of looking for it," was the reply.

The meat was accordingly eaten by the deacon's family; but, in justice to Mr. and Mrs. Bellamy, I must state that not a morsel of it was tasted by them. They even lost their appetites merely from seeing it on the table.

The deacon, however, made up his mind to one thing, from which all the representations of his wife could not move him.

"I will most assuredly leave Mr. Nolley alone with his conscience," he said; "but, unless his conscience moves him to repent of his sin, and to confess it with a contrite heart, my own conscience will never allow me to sit under his hypocritical preaching again."

Both he and his wife expected that the clergyman would hasten to them to beg their forgiveness, and confess his fault; but, as he did not, they began to look upon him as a hardened sinner; and, when the Sabbath came, Mr. Bellamy, in a solemn tone, told his children that, as he wished to converse with them on religious subjects, they would not go to church.

Very much astonished, the family gathered around him, and listened to his teachings, which came from a heart filled with humility, piety and grief.

Such was the surprise of everybody, on seeing the deacon's pew empty on the Sabbath, that there was a general inquiry to know if his family was sick; and, in the evening, several of the brethren called at his house. To their anxious questions Deacon Bellamy replied, that it was not sickness, but other causes, which he could not explain, that had kept his family from the house of worship.

On the following Sabbath the deacon's pew was empty again; and now his strange conduct began to create severe remarks. Once more the church-members went to converse with him on the subject; but, as Mr. Nolley did not come, the deacon still kept his secret, unhappy as it made him.

On the third Sabbath, — which was communion-day, — the absence of the deacon's family created such a feeling in the church, that the poor man saw the folly of pursuing his present course of conduct any longer.

When told that Mr. Nolley had declined coming to talk with him, for some reason which he would not explain, Mr. Bellamy's patience was exhausted.

"Tell the people that I will be at the church-meeting on Friday," he said, in an agitated voice, to Elder Florson. "Then I will explain all, — provided Mr. Nolley is there!"

This strange reply excited the interest of all the church-members to such a degree, that, when Friday

came, there was a larger assembly in the vestry than had ever been known before.

The clergyman, looking pale and solemn, sat in his accustomed place, and Deacon Bellamy was likewise present.

There was some delay in the proceedings, in consequence of the presence of a man named Wolsey, who had for years rejoiced in the name of Wicked Wolsey, which he had gained by gross impiety, in blaspheming the Lord's name, and in hunting and fishing on Sabbath days. For some time, however, Wicked Wolsey had been observed to lead a different life, attending church-service three times each Sabbath, and prayer-meetings whenever they occurred during the week; and, after some discussion, the church suffered him to remain in the vestry, in consequence of an earnest desire he expressed to make a confession to, and ask counsel of, the minister and his flock.

After some business of small importance had been transacted, Deacon Bellamy was called upon for the explanation he had to make.

Slowly and silently he arose; and, after casting one sorrowful, appealing look at Mr. Nolley, proceeded briefly to relate what had transpired. A breathless silence prevailed; and his entire statement was heard with interest and amazement. The

audience was filled with consternation; and every eye turned to the countenance of the minister.

The moment the deacon sat down, the latter arose.

He was a young man, with a mild blue eye, and a benevolent expression, which had won the hearts of the entire congregation. Moreover, his amiable manners, and his apparent zeal in the cause of his Master, had inspired everybody with such confidence in his virtue, that it was expected the mere breath of his lips would blow away the fabric of error which had grown up in Mr. Bellamy's mind.

"I hasten," he said, with a sad smile, — and every heart ceased to beat, — "I hasten to confess a sin, for which I must beg the forgiveness of my brethren and sisters."

It is impossible to describe the sensation produced by this commencement. More than one countenance became suddenly blanched, and more than one breast labored with a groan of distress.

"It is the sin of pride," the clergyman added quickly, to the general relief of his hearers. "I have shrunk from a duty which has appeared to me humiliating; but I am now humbled, and hesitate no longer.

"I am grieved that Brother Bellamy, — for, after his truly feeling and Christian-like address, I cannot refuse to call him so, — I am grieved, I say,

that he is apparently laboring under an incomprehensible error. I give him the credit of having stated with candor that which he believes to be the truth, but in which I am sure every one present must feel that he has been strangely deceived.

"All I know of the matter, I will briefly relate.

"On the morning to which our brother has alluded, I was agreeably surprised, on receiving from him a quarter of mutton."

"Mutton!" murmured the deacon, starting from his seat.

"I cannot, to save my life," pursued the clergyman, "explain even to myself the strange perversity of Brother Bellamy, in calling that a cheese which was most assuredly mutton. I took it from the basket myself, and wrote the note in reply, which he has read to you. I wrote in a true spirit of thankfulness; and the trifle I sent back with it, the better to express my gratitude, was a *large family Bible*, which I enclosed in a strong wrapper, and placed in the basket. What has become of this Bible, I cannot tell; for no person, I suppose, can for a moment believe that the book can have been transformed into stone, as the cheese had previously been changed to mutton.

"Having sent the boys back with the basket, I went to ride with Mrs. Nolley, and was inexpressibly mortified, on my return, to learn that Brother

Bellamy had been at the house, and taken away the first piece of mutton he sent, leaving a much smaller piece in its place. The pride of which I have been guilty consisted in a repugnance I felt to having further communication with a person who could be guilty of what appeared to me to be a mean action."

The clergyman would have continued; but Deacon Bellamy, quivering with excitement, started from his seat.

"I don't know," he exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from his brow, — "I don't know which is insane, — Mr. Nolley or myself. One of us is, most assuredly. I never sent him any mutton; and his declaration that I did —— "

"I beg leave to relate what I know about this matter," said a voice in another part of the room.

It was Wicked Wolsey, — and in an instant every eye was fixed upon him.

"What have you to say?" said Elder Florson.

"Simply that I stole the mutton," replied Wicked Wolsey, "and that I am the cause of all this misunderstanding."

There was a murmur of satisfaction in the congregation; a gleam of sunshine flashed across Deacon Bellamy's features, and the minister smiled calmly.

"I stole the mutton," repeated Wicked Wolsey, in a humble tone. "Having heard that Deacon

Bellamy had sent portions of the fat cosset to several of the neighbors, I was angry because I had been neglected. This was very foolish, for I had never deserved anything of him except reproaches and contempt. But I did not think so then; and, determined to have a share of the mutton, I went at night, and stole the hind-quarter.

"But I was not permitted to carry it away in peace. I had scarcely got to the woods, when, hearing a noise, I looked, and saw directly before me in the dark thicket the glaring eyes of a wolf! I was startled; but, having a hunting-knife with me, I did not greatly fear a single attack; so I kept along on the border of the woods, until the animal set up a hideous howl, which was echoed by half-a-dozen wolves, that appeared to be but a little way off. Well aware that I could do nothing with a whole pack, I hastened to climb a beech-tree, carrying the mutton with me into the branches.

"I had scarcely reached a safe place, when the wolves began to gather around the tree, and I felt very uneasy to see their dark forms moving in the bushes beneath me, and to hear their howls. Thinking they would go away soon, I determined not to give them a taste of the mutton, which would only have made them the more ferocious; yet I had formed a plan to throw them the meat, and let them

devour it, in case I heard any persons coming to my rescue.

"But, to my dismay, the wolves kept around me until daylight. Just as I was going to throw them the mutton, in despair, they glared at me fiercely, and, uttering a few dismal howls of disappointment and rage, darted into the woods and disappeared.

"After waiting for them to get into the heart of the forest, I came down from the tree; but, not daring to carry home the mutton by daylight, I hid it in the bushes. I then went home; and, having explained to my wife the cause of my absence, and eaten a light breakfast, I returned to the woods with my rifle; not so much to hunt, as to have an excuse for keeping within sight of the bushes where the mutton was concealed.

"This, I should have said before, was rolled up in the pelt, as when I found it in the wood-house; but, on examining it, I saw that nothing could save it from the flies, if left in that position during the heat of the day. I was considering what I ought to do, when, hearing the sound of voices, I thought I was discovered. I lay perfectly still, however, and in a moment Deacon Bellamy's two youngest boys stopped in the bushes within a few yards of me, placed a basket on the ground, and went to picking berries. In a little while I could hear their voices at a distance; and, thinking I might

see what was in the basket before they returned, I crept cautiously towards it, and lifted the cover. Seeing a nice cheese done up in a cloth, I remembered that I was fond of cheese, and thought to steal it. I did not know, however, how I was to prevent an immediate discovery of the theft by the boys, until the idea struck me, that, should I put the mutton, which I had already resolved to abandon to the wolves, in place of the cheese, the boys might be deceived by the weight, and never discover their mistake until they came to dispose of their load; by which time I hoped to have the cheese safely hidden in the woods.

"This plan I carried into execution, remaining concealed until the boys had taken away the basket, without suspecting what I had done.

"I afterwards hid the cheese and the sheep's pelt in another part of the woods, and, taking a circuitous route, reached a position from which I could watch the boys as they came out of Mr. Nolley's house.

"To my surprise, they set down the basket again, in order to wander into the bushes for berries; and, having a curiosity to see if they had brought the mutton back with them, I approached unobserved, and, once more raising the cover of the basket, discovered something done up in a package. Conceiving this to be of some value, I was wicked

enough to covet it; and seeing a stone close by that I judged to be about the same weight as the package, I deposited it in the place of the latter, which I concealed in the hollow of a stump. I then hunted a little while in the woods, and returned home. But early in the evening, before the wolves came about, I secured the cheese, the pelt and the package, which I carried home.

"I now proceeded to gratify my curiosity in opening the package, which, to my astonishment and mortification, I found to contain a Bible. I turned over the leaves with disgust, for I hated even the name of the book; but my contempt was suddenly changed to alarm and remorse, as my eye fell upon the passages in Exodus: 'Thou shalt not steal;' and, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.'

"It seemed to me something more than a mere accident, which drew my eye to the commandments I had just been guilty of breaking. I felt that an over-ruling power had taken this strange method of leading me to repentance. I began to read, and all night I searched the pages of that sacred volume, finding myself condemned on every point, and writhing in the agonies of remorse."

Here Wicked Wolsey, having closed his singular

narrative, proceeded to relate his religious experience, which we will not repeat. Suffice it to say, that reading the Bible led him to church, and the excellent sermons of Mr. Nolley had been the means of converting him, and of inducing him to confess and ask the prayers and forgiveness of the congregation.

"For my part," said Deacon Bellamy, who was shaking Mr. Nolley's hand, with tears in his eyes, "I forgive you, John Wolsey, and pray for you. And I must take this occasion of publicly asking our pastor's pardon for my unjust suspicions."

"I can forgive you the more freely, since I look upon them as the most natural in the world," replied Mr. Nolley. "And here let me thank you for your exceeding kindness, and your Christian-like forbearance, until you had reason to suppose that I had forfeited all claims upon your regard. And as for our afflicted, repentant friend Wolsey, may Heaven forgive him as freely as I do! With your permission, Brother Bellamy, he shall keep that Bible, the bare sight of which, I doubt not, will henceforth be a sufficient safeguard against his falling again into sin."

The church-meeting that day proved to be the most interesting one that had ever been held. The result gave universal satisfaction, as it not only accounted for the missing mutton, and the deacon's absence from the Sabbath worship, but likewise

proved his great goodness of heart, and made manifest the worth and forbearance of the excellent minister, besides bringing John Wolsey to abandon his wicked ways.

Shortly after this event, Deacon Bellamy was sent to represent the people of Brambletown in the state legislature; and it was owing chiefly to his exertions that the famous Wolf Bounty Bill was passed, which resulted in a great slaughter of the enemy of the sheep, and had a marked influence on the mutton-market in Brambletown.

THE

MISFORTUNES OF BASIL GRAY.

It was the anniversary of Basil Gray's wedding-day. A beautiful summer morning smiled upon the lowly cottage which had now contained all his happiness and joy for two fleeting years. Taking the hand of his beloved Mary, while the sweet baby lay sleeping in the cradle, he led her forth into the garden, brushing the dew from the jasmines that climbed by the door-way, as he passed.

Basil loved this little garden the more, as it was mostly by Mary's own hand that the vegetables there had been planted, and the flowers trained to grow. He could see her spirit of neatness and taste even in the little paths, so beautifully laid out, and kept free from weeds. Her love had made that garden and that cottage dearer to him than princely palaces and rich domains; and he was fond of standing there proudly by her side, to sur-

vey the compact little paradise which they called home.

And never had Basil's soul been so exalted with hope and happiness as on that summer morning. The sun never shone with fairer splendor; the sweetest breath of spring seemed there again, heavy with fragrance, elastic with the essence of life; and the songs of birds filled the air with purest notes of joy. Basil's heart seemed to expand within his breast.

"How has a kind Providence smiled upon us, Mary!" he murmured, in tones all tremulous with fervent thankfulness. "Ah! you are the good angel of my life! Since a rare fortune gave you to me, everything has gone well with me. Why, three years ago this day, I was a sort of wanderer; that is, I had no home I could call my own. Now —O, Mary!"—

"Your industry, honesty and kindness, have been rewarded," said Mary, answering Basil's tender look with her large, affectionate eyes. "True, I have done my best to deserve your love; my devotion to you has made labor pleasant, and life sweet; but Providence would have been kind to you, had we never seen each other, — you are so good!"

"But I could never have known this highest happiness, Mary! You have chased the world all out of my heart. I have no thirst for wealth; I

envy, I hate no one; in a wilderness I should be happy with you and our darling. Ah! it is pleasant to look back two years! On the very day of our marriage, I bought this cottage, — this little farm. I had three hundred dollars, which, by some good fortune, I had been able to save from my earnings since I came of age. That I paid down with a good heart, trusting to Providence for health and strength to enable me to meet the other payments as they should come due. A year ago, some fairy had so well managed our finances, that we got together the requisite sum, without knowing hardly how we did it. To-day, we have another hundred, which I mean shall be endorsed on the mortgage before noon. In another year, I have no doubt but the same good Providence will favor us; and then we shall be out of debt, and this paradise will be ours indeed. People told me it was dear at six hundred dollars, when I bought it! I would not take six thousand for it to-day!"

The cries of the child, awaking in its cradle, called Mary into the house, and Basil followed her soon. The young farmer intended to do no more work that day than necessity required, but to enjoy the anniversary with Mary and their friends. Accordingly, while she was called to her domestic duties of the morning, he resolved to go and transact his business with Judge Bradwood, of whom he

had purchased his cottage, and to whom he was that day to make his second annual payment.

Basil Gray was soon attired in his becoming Sabbath-day dress, which consisted mostly of brown linen, not remarkably fine, but durable, and scrupulously clean. He wore a straw hat of Mary's own braiding, and white cotton hose of her own knitting. A white, smoothly-ironed collar, guiltless of starch, rolled graeefully away from his manly throat, over a loose black neckerchief, which Mary had tied into a pretty bow. More than this, he was cleanly shaved, and his rich black hair and whiskers, curling about his face, set off his noble features to advantage. In short, Basil Gray that morning appeared as handsome a young farmer as could be found in the whole country.

As soon as he was ready for a start, Mary went to the bureau, and introducing her hand dexterously into a sly corner of the topmost drawer, took out a small bundle of bank-notes. There was no necessity for counting these; for, on the preceding evening, when the last dollar was contributed to complete the sum, and when Basil had amused himself by casting, in various ways, the interest on the mortgage, the treasure had been handled and examined by the happy couple with more than miserly satisfaction, until the exact amount of dollars and cents was as

firmly fixed in their minds as their own ages and little Mary's.

The bundle of bank-notes, being composed principally of *ones*, with only a sparse sprinkling of larger bills, was found to be rather bulky for the pocket, and was accordingly bestowed in Basil's hat. The small change necessary to make up the exact amount of interest-money due he carried in his pocket. Mary had an eye to these ingenious arrangements, and, having seen them completed, gave her husband a kiss and a blessing, and dismissed him on his errand.

Basil went whistling or singing, with a heart light as a school-boy's on a holiday. Everything appeared to him beautiful, and fresh, and sweet, that morning. Happiness opened his heart; he loved the birds that sung among the trees, the squirrels that skipped lightly away on the brown fences at his approach, and paused to chatter at him from a distance, and even the butterflies he saw hovering on yellow wings around the flowers that bloomed on the road-side.

Basil's way lay through a small grove of elm, ash, and birch trees, bounded on the further side by a deep but narrow stream. He had already reached the highway bridge, when, hearing shouts of laughter down the river, he turned his eyes in that direction, and saw two boys at play on the rocks, one of

whom he recognized as the son of Judge Bradwood, and the other as a lad belonging to the neighborhood.

Basil felt himself singularly attracted by everything like happiness or mirth that morning. Instead, therefore, of keeping the road, after crossing the stream, he climbed a wall, with the intention of traversing the broad field which stretched away before him; for he could thus shorten his route to the judge's house, and pass near enough to the boys to bid them a good-morning.

Basil Gray afterwards said some good spirit must have put this happy idea into his head. It gave him the opportunity of doing one of those brave and generous actions in which such noble natures take delight.

The young farmer paused a moment to contemplate an audacious crow, which, apparently forgetting the fear of man that characterizes his race, dropped from the shadowy top of an ancient elm, standing alone in the field, and flapped his black wings within half a dozen feet of his face.

Basil thought the wise bird must have read his features, and seen how little the least lovely of the fowls of the air had to fear from his gentle disposition. However this might have been, the crow did not seem inclined to prolong the interview, but,

giving two short, shrill cries, returned to the branches of the elm.

But now other cries drew Basil's attention. Master Bradwood had disappeared from the rocks, and his companion, screaming with terror, could be seen running, as if for his life, across the field.

Struck with the certainty that some accident must have happened to Master Bradwood, Basil hastened to the spot. By this time the other lad, who had not apparently seen him, was almost out of sight, in the direction of the judge's house. The young farmer bounded upon the rocks, and beheld the occasion of his terror and flight. A hat of palm-leaf was floating down the stream, which whirled in eddies, and gleamed in the sunlight, as it dashed against the rocks. He knew Master Bradwood had fallen into the water, and sunk.

Our hero had but one thought aside from the rescue of his neighbor's son. Taking off his hat, and placing the bank-notes in it upon the ground, he plunged into the stream, where a bubbling and commotion in the water indicated that Henry was still struggling.

Fortunately, Basil was an expert swimmer. He seized the boy, and drew him to the surface. In consequence of the steepness of the rocks from which he had plunged, he swam with his charge to the

opposite bank, where it would be less difficult to get him out of the water.

After considerable blubbering and vomiting, Henry, who was a high-spirited boy, declared himself but little the worse for his drenching. His hat was then fished up, and, as he had enough of the water for one day, he thought it best to recross the stream in the usual way, on the bridge; in which decision he was joined by his preserver, on whom he was very glad to lean in walking.

Henry acknowledged that he must have drowned had it not been for Mr. Gray, and thanked the latter accordingly with great earnestness. Basil replied that his own happiness amply repaid him for getting wet, and promised to accompany the lad home as soon as he should have regained his hat.

The young farmer found this article of apparel where he had left it; but, as he stooped to take it up, his youthful companion observed that he changed countenance in a most extraordinary manner.

Basil was, in effect, overwhelmed with astonishment and dismay. His hat had not, apparently, been stirred from the spot where he had placed it; but the money — the bundle of bank-notes — was gone!

"What is the matter?" asked Henry, with feelings of apprehension.

Basil gazed a moment steadfastly into his hat,

which he held with both hands, then looked quickly around him, as if to discover the thief, and at last said, with a short breath,

"Somebody has robbed me!"

"Robbed you!"

"Yes; for there was a bundle of bills — over a hundred dollars — in this hat, when I left it here. I was going to pay your father."

"But," said Henry, looking all around, as Basil had done, "who could have got it? Are you *sure* it was in your hat?"

"As sure of that as that you were in the water," muttered Basil. "But it is strange; I don't see how any one could have even approached the rock without being seen, and the money could not have blown into the water."

Notwithstanding, both Basil and Henry looked in the water, as well as all around them on the ground, until the latter, feeling sick and faint, was obliged to sit down.

Basil observed this, and said,

"Well, the money is gone! There is no use spending our time looking for it, while you are suffering from your drenching. I will help you to the house, and, having explained my misfortune to your father, come back and see what can be done."

Henry was too unwell to say much about the matter, but he could not help observing Basil's dis-

tress, and begged him not to leave the spot as long as there was any hope of finding the money.

"There is no hope of finding it, until I know how it was lost," said Basil, sorely perplexed. "But yonder is your father, coming, I suppose, to find you."

"Ned Manley is with him, who ran away so, when I fell into the water," said Henry. "I presume he has been and told everybody I am drowned."

Judge Bradwood arrived, in great haste and excitement, and seemed immensely relieved to find that his son had been rescued. He thanked Basil earnestly, and pressed the wet Henry in his arms, as if to wring him out.

"But," said the boy, "Mr. Gray, in saving my life, has met with a great misfortune."

Basil, called upon to explain this, did so to the best of his power. By this time, he had recovered his equanimity, and was able to make a calm statement of the fact; to which he added, good-humoredly,

"How the money has been spirited away, I can't conceive; but I believe it has been taken from me because I was too happy, and had no thought that sorrow or disappointment could ever again approach me or mine."

The judge was a hard, stern man of the world.

He fixed his cold, gray eye upon Basil, as if he would have read his heart. Unfortunately, he could neither peruse nor comprehend such hearts as Basil's. Even at that time, he was capable of suspecting the honesty of the brave and generous man who had saved the life of his son.

"It does not seem to me that I understand this story," he said, with the same look. "You say this lad ran from the spot without seeing you; — *he* could not then have taken the money; nor is it possible any one else could have approached these rocks, and got off again, without being seen by you."

"I think so myself," murmured the farmer.

"Now, the wind could not have blown the bundle out of your hat ——"

"No, it could n't be the wind ——"

"Then I think you must have made some mistake," said the judge, in a significant tone.

Basil was too honest to understand those words or that tone. He had no idea that his statement was doubted. He felt only the misfortune of losing a little money. This grieved and perplexed him; to have known that his *honor* was at stake, would have almost broken his heart.

He requested the judge to give a few days' grace on the payment then due, which he was unable to meet on account of his misfortune.

"I am never hard upon an *honest* man," said the judge; and, having once more thanked the preserver of his son's life, — more coldly, however, than at first, — he took the boy in his arms, and carried him home.

Basil sat down upon the rock in a meditative mood. He would have been very unhappy, had he not been comforted by the consciousness that he had met with his loss in the performance of a good action. Much as he rejoiced, however, over the rescue of Henry from drowning, he could not help feeling sorely perplexed and troubled. Twice he unconsciously took off his hat and looked into it, as if it was impossible for him to realize that the money was not still there.

At length Basil arose, and, with a sigh, and a parting glance at the rock, set out to carry the strange news home to Mary.

The latter, observing his approach, ran out to meet him, and was greatly astonished to find him wet in person, and thoughtful in mind.

The young wife urged him to change his clothes before telling his story, she being one of those rare women whose domestic affections are more powerful than their curiosity.

But Basil had no fear of taking cold; and, sitting down by Mary's side, in the door-way, through which

the sun shone brightly, he related what had happened.

It is needless to attempt to depict the young wife's wonder and surprise. As soon as she could recover from this astonishment sufficiently to speak calmly, she consoled her husband by praising his generosity and courage in rescuing Henry, and assuring him that good, and not evil, must reward so worthy an action.

"I am sure," said she, "this mystery must some time be explained, and the money recovered. In the mean time, Mr. Bradwood cannot but be lenient towards us, and wait for his pay without even exacting interest on this sum you have lost."

"He could not do otherwise, I know," replied Basil. "He is called a hard man, but I do believe him just."

The young man's countenance, however, was still downcast. The truth is, recollecting and pondering over the judge's words, the possibility had appeared to his mind that he might not put perfect faith in his assertions. Basil could not breathe these thoughts to his wife, whom he knew they would cause to shudder with horror; but, saying that he thought it best to go once more to look for the money, he removed his wet clothes, and soon after left the house.

Having placed her rooms in the neatest order, and

made ample preparations for dinner, Mary was performing the delightful task of dressing her child, when Basil again returned.

She uttered a cry of alarm. Those who had seen him only at the time when, singing in the fulness of his joy, he went forth two hours before, would not have recognized him now. His features were deathly pale, his manly brow contracted, and the light of his eyes darkened with passion.

"My dear Basil!" exclaimed Mary, springing to him with the child in her arms; "what has happened? Do not, I pray, let this little loss trouble you! Speak to me, Basil!"

The young farmer pressed his wife and child to his heart, while his strong chest heaved, and his noble eyes filled with tears. Mary felt a drop on her hand.

"O, my dearest, kindest husband!" she murmured, in a voice broken by her emotions, flinging her arms about his neck; "is there any sorrow which I should not share with you? Tell me, then, what troubles you, and let me help you to bear it!"

"Anything, but this!" muttered Basil, through his closed teeth. "Do not urge me! You must not know how my heart has been wrung."

His voice shook with passion; his features were contracted almost fiercely. Mary was terrified, and

he saw that she could not be more painfully moved, were he to confess all.

"Be calm, then, and you shall hear," he said. "You shall know how grossly your husband has been insulted by one at whose hands he certainly deserved better."

"Insulted!" articulated Mary.

"Yes; and it is a wonder that these hands did not tear out the tongue that uttered the suspicion of dishonor! I was tempted to do it; I trembled from head to foot; I even held the miscreant by the throat; but I flung him from me in contempt! The brave judge!"

Basil laughed with bitter scorn.

"Not Judge Bradwood!" said Mary, in alarm.

"Judge Bradwood, indeed! I could have torn him piecemeal!" exclaimed Basil, his manner changing suddenly. "For, will you believe it, he insinuated that I had lied about the money!"

Mary wrung her hands.

"Yes, and he hinted — he durst not speak it openly like a man — he hinted that, having saved his boy's life, I supposed he would allow me to impose upon him, for fear of appearing ungrateful! O, Mary!" said Basil, completely overcome with his emotions, and bursting into tears; "how could I, how can I bear this wrong?"

Beyond all conception of value is the jewel of a

good and noble wife! If Basil had never known Mary's worth before, he must have acknowledged it then. Forgetting herself entirely, she endeavored, by her pure and strong affection and touching sympathy, to lead him to shake off his trouble, overcome his grief, and place his trust in Providence for a happy termination to his distress. It was a beautiful and affecting sight, to see her rule him by her gentle influence, until the clouds on his brow dispersed, and the sunshine of a smile overspread his features.

"God bless you, dearest!" he said. "You have shown me how foolishly I acted. Why should I let injustice trouble my heart, whilst *you* are left to me, and our little Mary, and I am sure of your love?"

In a little while he appeared quite cheerful. Although he had no appetite for dinner, he did not appear despondent, but conversed freely with Mary upon the course to be pursued. In the afternoon some invited friends came to visit them, and I am not sure that his trouble would have been suspected, had he not seen fit to relate his story. He still spoke with bitterness, however, of Judge Bradwood; and Mary was sorry to see it.

Basil was gratified to observe, that, so far from appearing to doubt a word of his narrative, his friends expressed their wonder at the mystery, and

their sympathy in his misfortune. On the following day, however, opinions of a less favorable nature became rumored about, and reached his ear. Little as he cared for the world, in comparison with his wife, he could not but experience a pang when the conviction that the judge's influence must weigh heavily against him flashed more vividly upon his mind.

Time realized his worst apprehensions. He soon read in the faces of his neighbors suspicions touching his honesty and honor. One man, James Shuttle, had the audacity to joke him about the "trick" he "attempted to play off on the judge." This was the unkindest cut of all, for Basil had accounted Shuttle a friend.

Meanwhile, the judge, firmly believing his debtor guilty of an attempted imposition, and exasperated by his violence, made no scruple of publicly proclaiming his opinions. These reached Basil's ear. He saw that nobody gave him credit for a generous action in saving Henry's life, but that everybody appeared to coincide with Judge Bradwood. His philosophy was not equal to such injustice. He afterwards confessed that, had it not been for his wife's counsel and consolation, he must have been driven to the verge of insanity.

About a week after the unhappy anniversary, Basil received a notice that the instalment then due

on the mortgage *must be paid.* Mr. Bradwood had borne with him as long as he thought proper to do so; and it was intimated that his debtor's evasions could not serve him longer.

Basil crushed the paper in his strong hands, and muttered through his teeth,

"This is too much! As there is justice in heaven, Judge Bradwood shall suffer for this!"

"I beseech you, do not use such language!" pleaded Mary, affectionately. "What have you?"

"A fresh insult,—wrong upon wrong!" exclaimed Basil, fiercely.

Mary glanced her eye over the note.

"But, 'vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord," she answered, turning her eyes tenderly upon Basil. "This is indeed a grievous wrong, yet it is not for man to avenge what God permits. O, I know you could not harbor such a thought against your neighbor!"

Basil became more calm. Mary continued; and in a little while he answered her cheerfully,

"Bless you for putting better thoughts into my heart, dear wife! I am now resolved I will return good for evil, even to those who have given evil for good. It is hard to think that I should be pressed for that which I lost in saving the life of this man's son; but the debt shall be paid."

Mary trembled as she saw her husband arise with

calmness and resolution depicted on his features. She feared some desperate act. But Basil, reading her thoughts, reässured her.

"I shall commit no rashness," he said. "I see but one way to meet this demand without parting with our home, and that way I shall adopt."

"You will borrow?"

Basil smiled bitterly.

"I shall not expose myself to insult, Mary. At this unhappy time, when my neighbors — God forgive them! — have lost their faith in my honesty, I could not have the heart to ask a loan of my best friend. No! — but there is Felix."

Felix was a beautiful colt, which had been presented to Basil by a former employer, on his wedding day.

"You will not part with him!" exclaimed Mary.

"What can I do?" replied Basil. "True, he was a present; — he is the only horse I own; but, at the same time, he is the only property I can dispose of. More than once Judge Bradwood has offered me one hundred dollars for him, which I have always refused. But now he must go."

"Dear Basil, you are right!" exclaimed Mary. "It is hard to part with Felix, but I trust he will again come back to you, when this terrible mystery

shall have been explained, your money found, and your character cleared from suspicion."

Basil smiled sadly, and shook his head. And a few minutes later he might have been seen leading his colt Felix down the road which he travelled so joyously on the morning of his wedding-day anniversary.

Basil led Felix up the avenue before Judge Bradwood's elegant residence, and tied him to a post. At that moment Henry, now quite recovered from his experiment at drowning, came out to meet him, and greeted him kindly.

"I hope," said the boy, with tears in his eyes, occasioned by Basil's coldness, "I hope you don't feel hard towards me, because I have been the means of making you suffer?"

All Basil's ill humor gave place to warm emotions. He took the boy's proffered hand, and tears filled his eyes.

"God bless you, dear fellow! — why should I feel hard towards you?" he asked. "I don't consider you the cause of my misfortune, although but for you it might not have happened to me: — but, were I to be stripped of everything in the world in consequence of my plunge into the river, I should never regret having done so to save your life! What are you crying for?" he continued, gayly. "Look, I have brought this noble colt for you; that

is, provided the judge will take him in place of the money I lost. He is well broke, and you will delight to ride him."

Henry raised his tearful eyes with a reproachful look, but he could not speak; and, endeavoring to stifle his emotions, he turned away.

"If the judge will come to the door, I 'd rather not go in," said Basil. "If you will speak to him, I will stand by Felix."

He stroked the animal's neck, and embraced him affectionately, whilst Henry entered the house.

"What 's the matter?" asked the judge, looking at him sternly.

"Dear father," said the boy, throwing his arms around his neck, "I want to ask you one favor; and, if you will grant it, you may take all my playthings, and I will not ask you for another toy, nor anything of the kind, in a year."

"What 's the meaning of this?" asked the judge, with contracted brows.

"Basil Gray — the man who saved my life — is at the door," replied Henry. "He has come to pay you; but he has lost all his money, and so he has brought his horse, his fine, beautiful colt that he loves so well, and he says you can have him now, though he would never sell him before."

"Well, sir?"

Mr. Bradwood spoke sternly; for, much as he

loved his son, he was angry when he thought differently from himself.

Henry continued:

"All I want, all I ask is, that you should take the colt, and give Mr. Gray a receipt in full ——"

"O, I shall not hesitate to do that!" interrupted the judge.

"Then say to him, 'Mr. Gray, I believe you are an honest man; the colt is yours,— take him.' Only do that, dear father ——"

"You are out of your head!— you don't know what you ask!" muttered the judge, pushing the boy from him.

Henry bowed his head, and left the room sadly and in silence.

The judge ordered Basil to be shown into the house.

The young farmer entered, and met the judge with a look so steady, and so expressive of noble courage, that the latter could not but feel that he was in the presence of an HONEST MAN.

"I have come to you on business," said Basil. "My colt, Felix, is tied in the yard. I have concluded to accept your offer for him."

The judge turned to his desk, and began to write. In a minute, he gave Basil a piece of paper.

"This makes one hundred," said the latter, as he

extended his hand. "I trust you will wait on me for the interest, which in a few days ——"

"You will see I have given you a receipt for interest and all," interrupted the judge. "I think the colt is well worth it."

Basil looked at the judge in astonishment.

"This is unexpected," said he; "but I thank you. It will make my loss somewhat easier to me, although that is nothing in comparison with the unjust suspicions which blacken my character. You, Judge Bradwood," continued Basil, warming, "have done me wrong! You may not have designed it; but you *might* believe the word of an honest man, when he declares, before Heaven, that, notwithstanding his unfortunate loss, he has neither hoped nor desired to avoid paying you every farthing that is your due, only he has asked that you would not press him, but give him time to recover from his misfortune. Judge Bradwood, this is all I have to say."

While Basil was speaking, the judge did not raise his eyes from the carpet, upon which he was drumming nervously with his foot; and when his visitor had finished, and was turning to go, he neither made reply, nor so much as moved in his seat. Basil's lip curled. He turned his back and left the house. Felix gazed after him, as he walked

down the avenue, and uttered a low whinny, as if to call him back, or bid him good-by.

Basil could not help heaving a sigh at parting with his favorite; but his heart was lightened by the consciousness of having done right in making the sacrifice, and he went home whistling and singing by the way.

"We will be happy now, Mary!" he said, hopefully. "I will not let this affair trouble me more."

So he went to work with a good heart, trusting to time to clear up the mystery which had involved him in such misfortunes.

His manly conduct, in giving up his horse Felix to his creditor, had produced on the latter an unexpected effect. He could not help thinking now that Basil Gray was an upright man; and, oppressed by by a sense of wrong, his heart was softened towards him, and in speaking of him he was less severe. This circumstance favored a revolution of public opinion in Basil's case, and in a little while his old friends appeared to come back to him, and nobody spoke of the mysterious loss of his money, but to express their wonder and their sympathy.

This change was highly gratifying to Basil and Mary, who now scarcely gave their misfortunes a thought of regret, since it was only money of which they had been robbed. They labored industriously, hoping that before another year they would have

their little farm clear of debt, and believing that their trials were at an end.

But in this they were sadly mistaken. A greater calamity than had yet befallen them lurked like a viper among the flowers of their path. A more fearful mystery involved them in its shadows.

A mild day in October was drawing to its close, when Basil, who had business with a neighbor across the river, walked leisurely down the road, which I have already described.

The sun had gone down, and the glow of fire was fading on the masses of clouds which towered in the western sky, when the young farmer crossed the bridge. Here, in a meditative mood, he paused for an instant, to look back upon the sombre woods through the deepening shadows of which he had just passed, and down at the waters which swept with hoarse murmurs beneath the rude structure.

Having cast his eye towards the memorable rock, — which now appeared dim and dark in the distance, — and heaved a sigh of impatience at the thought of the unexplained mystery of which he had been the victim, he was passing on, when his attention was attracted by a crackling sound beneath his feet.

Basil might have been a couple of rods from the bridge, when he stooped to ascertain the cause of the noise. He had evidently crushed some brittle substance; and, picking up a few fragments, he dis-

covered them to be glass. Judging, from their appearance, that they might have once formed the crystal of a watch, he looked more closely along the ground in the twilight, and perceived a small, dark object lying on the side of the road. He took it up. To his surprise, he found it to be a pocket-book.

It was now too dark to examine its contents, and Basil accordingly placed it in his pocket. Having looked still further, and discovered nothing, the young farmer was proceeding on his way, when he was met by the neighbor whom he was going to visit, accompanied by young Henry Bradwood, and one of his father's laborers.

Basil did not recognize them at first, and was therefore silent, until Mr. Shuttle accosted him.

"Ho! Gray, is that you? Have you seen the judge?"

"Judge Bradwood?"

"Yes."

"I have not," answered Basil, briefly, not liking to speak of that man.

"O, Mr. Gray," exclaimed Henry, running up to him, "father rode Felix away this afternoon, and now Felix has been seen galloping by Mr. Shuttle's house with an empty saddle, and we are afraid some accident has happened."

"The horse came from this direction," said Mr. Shuttle. "You must have seen him."

"I saw a man ride by my house some half an hour ago," answered Basil; "but, as I was a good way off, in the field, I don't know whether it was the judge or not."

"It must have been," put in Williams, the hired man. "And he has been thrown from that colt. I told him he 'd better be careful how he rode him, for he has a way of shying at about nightfall, and the judge is no great horseman."

At that moment Basil remembered the broken crystal and the pocket-book. The latter he produced, exclaiming,

"I am afraid what you say is true. I picked this up in the road, not a dozen rods back."

"It 's father's!" exclaimed Henry, with emotion.

"Do not be distressed," said Basil. "This might have fallen from your father's pocket; but, as he was not with it, I take it he is not so much hurt but that he has been able to walk off — probably across the field."

"Then he is home by this time," rejoined Henry, much relieved. "But let us examine the ground where you picked up the pocket-book."

By this time they had reached the spot, and, looking along the road more carefully than Basil had done before, they discovered traces of some

object dragged over the ground. The dust, too, was found to be moistened into mud in spots. Suddenly Henry uttered a cry of horror.

"It is blood!" he exclaimed, — "blood!"

"Nonsense!" answered Williams. — "But — it does seem like it! And here is where a — a *body* has been dragged away from the road!"

Basil had forgotten all the wrongs he had suffered, in his anxiety to learn the fate of the judge. Along the side of the road ran a shallow ditch, now dry, but which, in wet times, poured its waters into the river. He was the first to trace the trail down this ditch, toward the stream. Shuttle, however, sprang before him, and, directly beneath the jutting timbers of the bridge, at the very edge of the water, he discovered the body of the judge.

"Here he is!" shouted Shuttle, in an agitated voice, too much frightened to lay his hands upon the body.

Henry ran to the spot.

"O, father!" he shrieked, throwing himself upon the senseless form of the judge. "Look up! — speak to me! — dear, dear father!"

As there was no word nor motion in reply, the poor boy lay sobbing upon his father's shoulder.

Basil raised him gently, and, speaking calmly to his companions, directed them to ascertain if life was extinct. This they were both too much agitated

to do. Accordingly, giving Henry into Shuttle's charge, he himself laid his hand first on the brow and then on the heart of the judge. Afterwards, raising his head in his arms, he sprinkled his face with water from the stream. In a moment, the judge appeared to revive, and actually got upon his feet. With a wild laugh, Henry sprang forward to throw himself in his arms; but the judge staggered, and would have fallen headlong, had not Basil supported him.

"Are you much hurt?" asked Basil.

"I?—hurt?" echoed the judge, reeling again. "No, indeed! I am not afraid of the fellow, with all his bull-dogs. He would kill me, if he could; but I don't care for him."

"Who would?" asked Basil.

"That fellow Gray," replied the delirious judge. "He has sworn vengeance, and I don't blame him; but I've baffled him so far, and I'll risk him in future!"

"O, father!" cried the terrified boy, "*this* is Mr. Gray? Don't you know him?"

"Know him? Yes, I should think so! He is Hawkins, the Quaker. He is opposed to strife."

Henry uttered a cry of horror, and covered his face with his hands. The Hawkins whom the judge took Basil to be, had been dead ten years.

"What do you call him Gray for, you little

imp!" exclaimed the delirious man. "Gray would throw me into the water as quick as he would eat his dinner, and nobody would blame him either."

"I will not let him hurt you," said Basil, humoring the conceit. "You will go home with me, won't you?"

"Yes, Mr. Hawkins, and much obliged to you. I 've been standing on these steps, waiting for the stage, all of two hours. But how are we going to travel?"

"By rail-road," said Basil.

"That will do. I won't patronize stage-coaches any longer. Won't it be a good thing when balloon steamers are invented?"

"Undoubtedly."

"But let me tell you one thing in confidence, Mr. Hawkins! There 's danger from these balloon steamers! By the way, would n't it please that fellow Gray to have me fall out of one, and strike somewhere in the Maelstrom, or the Indian Ocean? Ha! ha!"

"I think you have fallen from something already; you appear to be hurt," said Basil, who had now, with Shuttle's assistance, got the judge into the road.

"The truth is, I jammed my fingers between a couple of pesky icebergs!" muttered Mr. Bradwood, "that 's all. Look," — holding up his hand, which

was covered with blood, — "don't you think I am entitled to a pension?"

Williams, meanwhile, had gone with all speed for a vehicle to convey the judge home. Henry remained with Basil and James, whom anxiety would not permit him to leave alone with his father. Evening was now advancing, but the moon was up, and by its light the blood could be seen coursing down the judge's face from a wound in his head. Hoping to check the blood, Basil tied a handkerchief about his temples, while Henry mechanically carried in his hand his father's hat, which he had found hidden in a corner of the fence.

In a little while Williams returned, and Bradwood, talking wildly all the time, was taken home by the hired man and James Shuttle, whilst Basil went for the nearest physician.

Having done his duty, and transacted with Mr. Shuttle the neighborly business which had taken him from home, Basil returned to relate to Mary what had happened. The latter was deeply interested, and, expressing her satisfaction that no worse calamity had befallen the Bradwoods, inquired the cause of the injured man's being found in so singular a position by the bridge, and so far from the place of his fall.

"In his deranged state, consequent on his injury, he must have crept there," replied Basil; "for I

can't, for a moment, entertain so absurd a suspicion as Shuttle suggested, that there was an attempt at robbery, and perhaps murder."

"Horrid!"

"Horrid, indeed; and I am glad few people are so stupid as James Shuttle."

Entertaining this honest opinion, Basil was destined soon to be more than ever horrified and astonished.

On the following day, when Mary was alone with her child, two men rode up to the garden fence in an open buggy, and, while one remained in the vehicle, the other entered the house.

Mary recognized a neighbor, named Holburn, whom she invited to be seated, and of whom she inquired concerning Judge Bradwood.

"The judge is in a bad state," replied Holburn. "His skull is fractured, and he has quite lost his senses. Dr. Morton gives only faint hopes of his recovery. Excuse my haste, Mrs. Gray; I wish to see your husband."

The embarrassed tone in which the last words were spoken aroused Mary's apprehensions. She readily told where Basil was to be found, but added, quickly,

"I hope there is not going to be any trouble in this matter?"

"I hope not," said Mr. Holburn.

Bowing stiffly, he walked back to the road; and having spoken with his companion, they tied the horse to the fence, and set out together, in the direction Mary had indicated, to find Basil.

Mary turned pale, and clasped her hands in silent prayer; for she remembered that Mr. Holburn held the office of constable.

Oppressed with vague forebodings of evil, she waited anxiously for the return of the men from the field. She strained her eyes gazing along the brown hillside; and when at length she saw three, instead of two, advancing amid the stalks of corn, her heart sank within her, in spite of her better reason.

Mary's first glance at her husband, discovered to her that trouble had come upon him. He was not skilled in concealing his emotions. His haggard countenance was a picture of his dismay. Approaching his wife, however, he attempted to appear unconcerned, and said, as calmly as he could,

"I have got to go with these men a little while, and, perhaps, shall not be back to dinner. Take care of little Mary," he added, in a tremulous voice, while he bent over the child, and, kissing it, let fall a tear upon its fair cheek. "Good-by!"

"O, I see — I see it all!" ejaculated Mary, clinging wildly to Basil. "O, when will our misfortunes be at an end!"

"Soon, I hope," murmured Basil. "This matter will be easily explained."

"O, I know it! It must be so!" exclaimed Mary. "But — it is horrible!" she added passionately. "I can have no patience under such wrongs as this! Yet, God's will be done!"

"Amen!" faltered Basil.

He took his wife's hands, and, looking tenderly and sorrowfully into her eyes, bade her be of good heart until the storm of trouble was over. She threw herself, sobbing, upon his neck, and clung there until he gently put her arms asunder, and tore himself away.

Basil departed with the officers, leaving the broken-hearted Mary distracted with fear, anxiety, and grief.

Alas! the young wife's worst fears were destined to be realized. It would seem that Satan had obtained permission to try that happy family with affliction, and that he was pursuing his power to extremes.

Basil was taken before a justice, and examined under suspicions of robbery, and attempted murder! Had not his character for honesty and uprightness been well known, there might have been some grounds for the charge. "Circumstances" were certainly against him. Judge Bradwood, still deranged, and trembling on the verge of the grave,

was in no state to give an explanation of the manner of his hurt. The only injury he was supposed to have suffered was a blow on the head, which had fractured his skull. This might have been occasioned by a fall from his horse; but the hypothesis threw no light on the circumstance that he was found at a distance from the spot where the catastrophe had evidently taken place.

Basil's explanation of the manner in which the pocket-book came into his possession was not considered perfectly satisfactory. There was another fact adduced to show that some foreign agency was involved in Judge Bradwood's misfortune. The crystal of his watch was found in fragments, but the watch itself had disappeared, — guard, seal, and all. People, wise in their own conceit, alleged that, although Basil had thought proper, after examining the contents of the pocket-book, to give it up, because there happened to be little money in it, he had probably taken the trouble to conceal so valuable a watch until such time as he could dispose of it with safety. It was also attested that Basil cherished feelings of enmity towards the judge; and the inference was drawn that rage at seeing the latter mounted on the colt Felix prompted the perpetration of the crime.

It is useless, however, to attempt an exposition of the circumstantial evidence brought forward, as

an offset to Basil's straight-forward, candid narration of facts. It is sufficient to state the unfortunate result: he was committed to the county jail.

Poor Mary was crushed with this calamity as with a thunderbolt. When the intelligence was communicated to her, she fell in a swoon; and for three weeks she was bodily and mentally prostrated with fever and delirium. Her life was at one time despaired of; but, owing to the kind care of friends who came to administer to her distress, and attend to the wants of her child, she recovered at length, and summoned all her strength to surmount the terrible affliction which had come upon her family. Had she been alone in these, she might have sunk into the grave; but she thought of her imprisoned husband, and of her helpless child, and strength came to her, as if from above.

When the Autumn had put off her garments of gorgeous hues, and the sweet melancholy of October had disappeared at the approach of November's dark and desolate days, — when the cold breath of night congealed into dreary frosts, and the naked woods were filled with moaning winds and drifts of withered leaves, — Mary, pale and thin, as if the chilling gloom of the waning year had dealt with her unkindly, went, for the first time, to visit her husband in prison.

The county jail was two miles distant; but a

neighbor having offered her the use of his horse and wagon, and volunteered as driver, the unhappy woman resolved to take her child with her, to cheer the father's heart.

It would require a readier pen than mine to depict Mary's sensations on approaching the jail. She had thought of what Basil must suffer, in the loneliness of his prison, deprived of her society, and groaning under the opprobrium of the charge against him, until her crushed and bleeding heart would have deemed her life a sweet sacrifice to lay down, to right his wrongs, and to relieve him of his burden of misery.

The prison door was opened. Basil, haggard and emaciated, tottered forward with a stifled cry. Mary, fainting with the excess of her emotions, fell into his arms, and for the space of more than a minute lay breathless, motionless, almost lifeles, on his breast.

For a long time she was speechless; but words of passionate endearment, and tears of gushing tenderness falling upon her cold cheek, revived her. She murmured a blessing, and sobbed convulsively on his bosom.

"And here is my little darling, too," said Basil, drawing the child towards him. "O, Mary! my dear, dear wife! I am happy to-day, in spite of all I have suffered! I heard of your sickness,—I

have been tortured with anxiety, — but God has spared you, — we meet again, and I am thankful!"

If to a mere spectator it is an affecting sight to see tears gush from a manly heart like Basil's, what must have been the effect on a wife of deep affections, and self-sacrificing love, like Mary? A shower of tears burst from her own eyes; she embraced her husband with the most passionate tenderness; and in broken accents she assured him of her love, and of her gratitude for the privilege of being with him again. After this she felt refreshed, and became more calm, so that she was able to converse rationally, and like the noble woman that she was, about all their trials and afflictions.

Basil could not help smiling kindly at the words which were so characteristic of her piety and goodness, when she said, wiping her eyes, and fixing them lovingly and hopefully on her husband,

"After all, it is better to suffer wrong than to commit it. With clear consciences, we can bow meekly and uncomplainingly to sorrow. With God on our side, we may defy injustice, and all will be made right in the end. Something tells me, dear Basil, that the time is not far distant when we shall be able to look back with satisfaction to these dark days of trial; — meanwhile, we will not be sepa-

rated. I shall be with you, and we will not be unhappy."

"Ah, my little philosopher!" said the prisoner, embracing her fondly, "we shall not be unhappy together here! But I will allow you to spend only a portion of your time within these gloomy walls. To see you often will be a sufficient blessing to inspire me with patience, hope and Christian trust, until the angel of Truth shall roll the stone away from this tomb, and let in his heavenly light."

Basil was interrupted by the jailer, who came to inform him that another visitor earnestly claimed admittance, to bring him joyful news.

"Who is he?" asked the prisoner.

"Young Henry Bradwood," replied the jailer, "He says you will be glad to see him, even though he must interrupt your present interview."

"He is a fine lad, — I will see him," said Basil.

A minute later, Henry bounded to the prisoner's side, and clasping his hands, exclaimed,

"It 's all right, now! The mystery is cleared! In five minutes you will be free! The orders are on the way, now, to set you at liberty; but I *had* to come on before to tell you!"

"The mystery cleared!" cried Basil, his features lighting up, — "about the lost money and all?"

"The lost money is found, — it 's all right! it 's all right!" repeated Henry, beside himself with joy.

"Then heaven be praised!" articulated Mary fervently. "This is the happiest news I have ever heard! O, Basil! the stone is rolling away!"

She yearned to embrace her husband; but regarding the presence of Henry, she forbore, giving vent to her feelings by clasping her child, with tears of thankfulness.

Meanwhile, Basil urged Henry to explain; and the glad boy, recovering breath, related his story in effect as follows:

"Last night, father awoke out of a sound sleep, and surprised his watchers, Mr. Ellsley and Mr. Foote, by speaking in a different tone from that to which they had been lately accustomed. He asked for a glass of water, and then desired to know if Felix had been caught. He was told that Felix was safe in his stall; when, pressing his hand to his brow, as if trying to recollect something, he said, 'Either I dreamed it, or else I had a fall last night. My head is confused; but I believe it is something besides a dream. I was riding over the bridge, by the grove, just at sundown, when a crow darted down and flapped his wings in Felix's eyes so suddenly, that he shied in fright and threw me from the saddle. What happened afterwards I can't remember; only I have a faint recollection of burning up with thirst, and dragging myself towards the river for water.' The watchers thought father

was raving, and would not let him talk. But in the morning, when they told me what he had said, I felt a hope that his reason had returned. I was convinced that such was the case, when I went to converse with him, and found that he remembered nothing of what took place during his delirium. He did not inquire for Friend Hawkins, as he had called you, but he wished to know if he had been brought home insensible the evening before. He repeated the story about the crow; when, I don't know how, I all at once remembered the bird I partly tamed a year ago, and which went off, we never knew where. Then it came into my mind all about a saucy crow I often saw near the river last summer ——"

"I remember him!" exclaimed Basil. "He flew almost into my face, the morning when I lost my money!"

"It 's the same!" cried Henry. "The thought flashed across my mind that he was at the bottom of all the mischief which has been done. So much excited that I hardly knew what I did, I ran down to the river. Fortunately, I saw what I believed to be the same crow flying, with something in his claws, to the top of the old elm, which stands in the field. I decided at once on what ought to be done. I called Williams from his work, and we went together to cut down the tree. But he objected to this

without father's permission; and, impatient as I was, I had to wait until the long ladder could be brought from the house. Williams went to the top of this, and then climbed to the branches. A few minutes after, a perfect shower of sticks, nails and dirt, fell to the ground. Williams was tearing open the nest. At length, when I was looking up anxiously, he shouted, 'Look out for this!' and down came what looked to be a bundle of rags. I picked it up; it was Williams' handkerchief, in which was tied up a heap of bank-bills, all torn and rumpled, and mixed with feathers and leaves. And this is n't all," continued Henry, joyously. "When Williams came down, he took out of his pocket father's watch, with the guard and seal still attached!"

While Henry, in relating his story, was still dancing around with excitement, and while the happy couple were listening to the joyful news, the door of the prison-room again creaked on its hinges, and the jailer reäppeared, holding a paper in his hand, "by virtue of which," he said, he had the gratification of "proclaiming Basil's freedom."

Mary could now refrain no longer, but fell into her husband's arms, clasping his neck, regardless of the eyes of Henry, the jailer, and Mr. Kelpit, the sheriff, who was waiting to carry the happy family home in his carriage.

And here our story properly ends, for here end

the misfortunes of Basil Gray. It would be a pleasure for me to dwell upon the blissful entrance of the little family into their beloved cottage, and to discourse of the fountains of happiness which from that time welled up to calm and cool their thirsty hearts. I should also delight to describe how Judge Bradwood, recovering from his injury, recognizing Basil's honesty, and feeling conscious of having dealt hardly by him, begged that he would forgive his injustice, made him a present of Felix, and, voluntarily cancelling all further obligations to which the young farmer was held by the mortgage, became his firmest friend. How Mary, patching up the bank-notes which had been recovered, and exercising her industry and ingenuity with such success that nearly eighty dollars were saved, placed the sum at interest for the benefit of little Mary. How all the old friends of the Grays renewed their allegiance, while new ones awarded Basil the meed of their esteem, and everybody regarded him as a sort of hero. How the mischievous crow met with a tragical fate, by getting into a trap; and how, years after, the noble Henry loved "little Mary," wooed, and won her for his wife. But I think it much better, on the whole, to just hint at these things, and leave them to the imagination of the reader.

MRS. DALTON'S TRIALS.

Mrs. Dalton's greatest fault was a want of decision. It was very rare that she had the courage to express an opinion boldly in opposition to a person with whom she was conversing; so that Mr. Dalton, by way of reproach, used to call her his "little coward."

Mr. Dalton himself was a man of great firmness of character, and this weakness of his wife sometimes exhausted all his patience. But he was very fond of her, and, instead of reprimanding her severely, he usually followed up her faults on that score with a little harmless ridicule, which had, probably, as much effect as less playful treatment might have had, but which failed altogether of curing her of her indecision.

Mrs. Dalton could not say "No" when a tradesman urged her to purchase an article, whether she liked it or not. The baker used to impose upon her

shamefully, and the butcher had the audacity to send her inferior pieces of meat, and charge her the highest prices. If she timidly suggested that the steak was not as good as she wished to purchase, the fat fellow in the white apron would politely beg leave to convince her of her mistake, assuring her that no better meat could anywhere be found; so Mrs. Dalton would take his word, and the meat, and make herself miserable all the morning at the thought that Mr. D. would be sure to find fault with his dinner. If she went out shopping, she made the worst bargains you could imagine. If she thought an article abominably dear at the price, and timidly hinted the fact, the smooth-tongued salesman, looking right into her cowardly little heart, would smile at her *errors of opinion*, and indulgently give her leave to alter her judgment, with assurance that the goods were actually selling at a sacrifice. So Mrs. D. would, with much fluttering and hesitation, consent to have the article sent home, although fully convinced that she would not like it, and half suspecting, all the time, that the salesman knew she was a little fool. Then, poor Mrs. Dalton hated to go shopping! She was always sick after it — the agitation was too much for her; and those gratifying exclamations of friends, who examined her purchases, "How dear!" "I never heard of such imposition!" "Where *did* you

buy this stuff?" were sure to keep her in a state of nervous excitement a week afterwards.

But the lesson had no lasting effect; although she had courage one morning to tell the milkman she did not want any more of his liquid at five cents, and would not have it, which resulted in obtaining better milk in future at four cents; and although she summoned resolution to send away, empty-handed, three begging impostors, who had been robbing her from time immemorial; still she found her old habit of indecision returning upon her, and she was soon as easily persuaded as ever.

At length came her greatest trial. Mr. Dalton was absent from town, on business, and she always felt less confidence in herself when he was away than on ordinary occasions. The butcher took greater liberties than ever; the baker sent her unsatisfactory loaves, curtailed of their just proportions; and old Solomon, a speculator in "cast-offs," took that occasion to come down upon her for certain old boots and coats which she knew Mr. D. expected to wear a great deal more before throwing them aside, but which Solomon would prevail upon her to dispose of for a few coppers. These money-loving rascals had some fear of Mr. Dalton's thunder when he was at home, for they had heard it more than once; so they were sharp at taking advantage of his absence.

But I spoke of Mrs. Dalton's greatest trial.

As ill luck would have it, Mrs. D.'s domestic left her on the morning after her husband went out of town. The girl did not leave because she was dissatisfied with anything; for it was a well-known fact, Mrs. D.'s domestics had, time out of mind, been in the habit of doing exactly what they pleased, except when they crossed Mr. D.'s arrangements. But Sarah left for some unknown cause, without giving warning, and Mrs. D. found herself without any help.

Mrs. D.'s family being small, and Mr. D.'s income not large, they usually kept only one girl; and it was now quite important that Sarah's place should be filled immediately.

"I know a girl has lived with Mrs. Burbank," said Sarah, condescending to pity Mrs. D.'s distress. "She wants a place now; and, if you like, I can speak to her about you."

"I wish you would, Sarah," said Mrs. D.; "send her to-day, if possible."

Sarah kept her promise, and before noon a large, bony Irish girl, neatly dressed, and with the air of a person who had seen a great deal of the world, and felt her own importance in it, made her appearance.

"Ye 're wantin' a hilp, I undherstand," said the girl, with a rich brogue.

"Yes," said Mrs. Dalton. "Are you the girl Sarah spoke to me about?"

"I am that same; she sed ye wanted a hilp, so I coom'd in to see yez, though it 's my rule to let people coom to me. What do yez ixpect yer hilp to do?"

Mrs. D. named the different branches of domestic usefulness in which she desired her "hilp" to be proficient, and which Miss Flannigan — as she called herself — declared to be within the range of her capacity. Miss Flannigan's wages were then considered, that personage demanding at least one-third more than Mrs. D. had ever paid.

"We can't afford as much as that," said she.

"An' it 's very poor ye must be, shure, if ye can't afford to let a person live. If ye call that too much, I don't know what ye call too little. It 's too hard ye are, inthirely, if ye can't allow a hilp as much as she earns."

Mrs. D. tried to summon sufficient courage to say that if Miss Flannigan could not engage her services on reasonable terms she was at liberty to depart, but Miss Flannigan's forbidding aspect overawed her. "I can take her on trial," thought she, excusing herself for suffering the imposition on the score of immediate necessity. "Then, when Mr. Dalton returns, we can dismiss her, if we like."

So Miss Flannigan was taken on trial, and that day her services began.

It took Mrs. D. a good part of the day to show Miss Flannigan what to do, and how her work was to be done. But she was remarkably perverse; she had a way of doing things herself, and Mrs. Dalton was not just the sort of person to convince her that her own opinions were not always the best. Miss Flannigan appeared strongly desirous of having her own way — and she had it.

Considering Flannigan a very long and awkward word to speak, — too coarse without the *Miss*, and too formal with it, — Mrs. D. wished to know the new domestic's given name.

"Shure, that 's uv no consiquince," said the girl. "*Ye can call me Flannigan!*"

"Well, Flannigan," said Mrs. D., in a timid voice, "I told you to set the table for *four*, and you have set it for *five*."

To this mild suggestion Flannigan gave no manner of heed. Mrs. Dalton, already beginning to fear her displeasure, chose to remove the extra plate herself, rather than speak again. Imagine, then, her astonishment, when Flannigan coolly took the plate and put it back in its place on the table. It was some time before she could speak; but at length she found courage to say:

"You must have misunderstood me. I said set

the table for four. There are only four of us to sit down when Mr. Dalton is away."

"Shure I undherstand ye," replied Flannigan; but the plate remained.

Mrs. Dalton came very near finding courage to be angry, at this instance of cool perverseness; but Flannigan looked so very stern and authoritative, that the poor woman thought best to hold her peace.

"I said you need not put the cakes on the griddle until tea is ready!" cried Mrs. D., with more than usual energy, as she heard the unmistakable hissing of the batter. "Did you hear?"

"Shure, I 'm not thick uv hearin'," muttered Flannigan, coolly pouring another ladleful over the griddle.

Mrs. Dalton looked through the kitchen door, and saw her. No impudence had ever so completely overwhelmed her as that of the perverse Flannigan. She could not say a word.

"The wretch!" thought Mrs. Dalton; "I will send her away in the morning!"

But as yet Mrs. D. had only a very faint conception of Flannigan's coolness. When the whole truth rushed upon her conviction, she could scarcely credit her senses. It was when the design of the fifth plate on the table became evident. Flannigan placed a fifth chair before it. Mrs. D. trembled; she had taken her accustomed place — the children

were in theirs — and Flannigan occupied the fifth chair!

Mrs. D. turned very pale.

"I did not intend —" she murmured, in an agitated voice. "We want a domestic to wait upon us at table — not to eat with us."

"What 's the objickshun, if I kin wait on ye jist as well?" said Flannigan.

"But you can't; we want you to cook the cakes while we are at table, so that we can have them hot —"

"An' have n't I cooked 'em already?" demanded Flannigan. "If ye expect me to take 'em right off the griddle an' put 'em into yer mouths for ye, it 's expectin' too much intirely. An' then, if ye think ye are too good to sit at de same table wid me, ye 're too good fur me to work for, — that 's all."

What an excellent time it was for Mrs. Dalton to say, "if she did not like her service, she could depart as soon as she liked"! But Mrs. D. had not the courage. She only wished Mr. D. was there; and concluded that, as nobody but her own family was present, she would allow the encroachment for *once*.

On the following day Flannigan sat at table with the family at breakfast, dinner and tea, and had her own way in everything. Mrs. D. was miserable.

"Thank Heaven," she said to herself, "Mr. D. is coming home to-morrow."

But then she dreaded to have him come. How could she confess her weakness to him? In what a rage he would be, to find her governed by an Irish domestic, who, because Sarah had told her she could do as she liked with Mrs. D., and because some families she had lived in had allowed her to sit at table with them, claimed this as a right! Mrs. D. tried to summon enough courage to send Flannigan away before her husband came home, but she could not; and Mr. D. arrived while Flannigan held undisputed sway.

It is probable that Mrs. Dalton would have requested him to send Flannigan away, without telling him all, had not one of the children preceded her, and drawn Flannigan's character to the life.

"She sits down with us at the table, and won't mind a word mamma says," exclaimed the child.

Mr. Dalton was very angry; he had never been so severe with his wife before. She shed an abundance of tears, and promised not to be so weak any more.

"You are sure you will not?" said Mr. D.

Mrs. Dalton was certain she would be more firm.

"Very well," said her husband. "I am glad

of it. I shall expect, then, you will send Flannigan away, without any interference on my part."

"I?"

"To be sure — since you are going to be more firm!"

"O, I never could do that, she 's such an awful creature!" exclaimed Mrs. Dalton.

"O, then your promise does not amount to anything," replied her husband. "Very well; I shall not send her away, nor will I sit down at the table so long as she remains in the house. Not that I object to eating with an Irish girl; but, if you hire persons to serve you, it is their business to do it, and keep in their places."

Mrs. Dalton was in great perturbation. She *knew* that what Mr. D. said he meant; and that there was no way for her to do, but to send away Flannigan. Much as she dreaded the latter, she dreaded her husband's displeasure more; and this nerved her to the task.

"Flannigan," said she, with her coward little heart in her throat.

"What 's wantin'?"

"I think," pursued Mrs. D., with a long breath, "I can dispense with your services."

Flannigan stood aghast.

"You can go," added Mrs. Dalton.

"Go, Ma'am! Which d' ye mane?"

Mrs. D. plucked up all her courage. She was determined that Mr. Dalton should know that she could be severe sometimes. So she said, loud enough for him to hear, in the next room:

"You can leave. Don't do any more; you do not suit me. That is what I mean."

Flannigan was brought down from her soaring height in an instant. As long as Mrs. Dalton was weak, she was lofty; now that the former exhibited a little true firmness, she had not a word to say. She laid down a dipper she was holding in her hands, without a word, put on her bonnet, and went up stairs to pack her trunk. In ten minutes she was gone, never to return.

"You little tiger!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton, rallying his wife; "I had no idea you could be so savage! You have conquered Flannigan, and driven her from the field! Now, it was not such a terrible thing, after all, was it? And why can't you always do a *just* thing with as much courage?"

A *just* thing — there was the secret of it! Mrs. Dalton armed herself with that thought, and determined never to hesitate again to say or do anything which *justice* to herself or others required. She has met with many trials since, and she is sometimes weak; but she never suffers herself to give way to her fault, as she did in her dealings with Flannigan

LILY BELL.

AN OLD HOUSE-KEEPER'S TALE.

I NEVER saw so sweet and lovely a child as Lilias Bell, or Little Lily, as she was always called. She was the idol of our village; and well do I remember how often I — then just entering my teens — used to arrive late at school, having wandered out of my way to go down the street in which she lived, and hold her only a minute in my arms.

How proud Mrs. Bell was of her darling! How happy it made the mother's heart, to know how dearly her idol was beloved! I was a great favorite with Mrs. Bell, for no other reason, I suppose, than because I worshipped her child. She loved everybody that loved Lily.

Picture to yourself, dear reader, a fresh and happy face, a light, transparent complexion, cheeks like blooming roses, blue eyes sparkling with gladness,

lips like an opening rosebud, a white neck shining through a flood of flowing auburn curls, dimpled arms, and the prettiest plump little hands in the world; — also, imagine the clearest, most musical, laughing silver voice, which ever rung with the joy of a childish heart, and you may have something like a just idea of little Lily Bell.

And such a sweet disposition as she had! Her soul was all sunshine. She seemed made to love, and to be loved, — to be happy, and to make happy the hearts of others. Ah! how often have I watched her, smiling sweetly in her sleep, until my heart has ached with loving her!

But a cloud arises between me and this bright vision of my youth. A shadow of sorrow dims the picture of happy innocence which "hangs in Memory's hall;" and it is with a sigh that I recall the sunny smiles of little Lily Bell.

But this is not telling my story.

Lily was an only child. The family of the Bells was small; consisting only of the child's parents and a maiden sister of Mr. Bell, who lived on the most friendly terms with her relatives. Of these three little Lily was the worshipped idol.

As I remember Miss Lucinda Bell, she was not a very agreeable person. Yet she had a good heart, and those who knew her best esteemed her most

highly. She had a thin, unpleasant face, on which time had recorded about forty winters.

Some people wondered how Mrs. Bell could "get along" with the spinster living under the same roof. I think the case was plain. Lucinda adored little Lily.

Certain it is, the old maid had her way in everything, and everybody appeared satisfied. There was also a reason for this. Mr. Bell had, by a series of misfortunes, lost nearly all his property, and — his sister was rich. She gave her brother's family a home in her own house; and it was generally understood that little Lily was to be her heiress.

In this way the Bells lived very comfortably, and very peaceably, it is to be presumed. There were no disputes. The most perfect happiness and harmony prevailed, little Lily being the golden link which united all hearts.

Such was the azure sky which smiled above our darling, when a black cloud arose into it, with shadowy wings, which darkened all the flowers growing in her path.

I have never been able to ascertain precisely how that chilling cloud took its origin. It burst forth in the shape of a *family feud*. The deadly displeasure of the spinster had been awakened by her brother's family. Her heart congealed into ice. Her woman's will towered up like a mountain of adamant. Even

little Lily felt the withering frowns of her Aunt Lucinda's mortal anger.

People said the spinster had accidentally overheard a conversation between Lucius and his wife, in which they had spoken of Lily's future, and alluded to the prospect of her inheriting the property of her aunt.

This was not all. Lucius, it was said, spoke of the inheritance as a certainty, provided Lucinda never married; and his wife had thereupon laughed at what she termed the ludicrousness of the idea, that the spinster, with her old-maid face, would ever find a husband.

No woman is so plain, or so utterly devoid of vanity, that ridicule of her personal appearance will not find a tender spot in her heart. Nothing else could her sister-in-law have said to give Lucinda such mortal offence.

For a few minutes that peaceful home seemed invaded by a tempest. Laura's apologies, — her pleading for pardon, her assurance that she had meant no harm, — were all of no avail. Lucius attempted in vain to calm the storm. Even little Lily's tears and terror had no power to soften the sternness of Aunt Lucinda's wrath.

The result was, that in a little while Lucius left the house, and, with a pale brow and compressed

lips, walked hastily to the office of Mr. Lynde, one of the wealthiest men in the village.

Mr. Bell was so fortunate as to find the landholder's confidential clerk in the counting-room, and, without ceremony, proposed the business on which he had called.

Mr. Bell desired to take a new house, which Mr. Lynde had just completed, situated within a stone's throw of that which the Bells then occupied, belonging to the spinster.

The new house was a beautiful village cottage, constructed in what is termed, in country places, the Gothic style, and painted brown; and although the architect had taken wide liberties with the style in question, it was nevertheless an attractive residence. Mr. Bell had frequently said, in jest, that when he quarrelled with his sister — who ever supposed such a thing would happen in the course of human events? — he should live in that cottage; and now his prediction, made in play, was destined to be realized in earnest.

The lease was made out that very day; and, although informed that the walls of the new house must still be damp, Lucius immediately made preparations for moving his family.

Lucinda, after the explosion of her indignation, called a carriage, and, packing up a few things, solemnly declared that she would never again sleep

under the same roof with her ungrateful relatives. She was now gone; and Lily's parents, full of grief and trouble, made ready to depart from the house of her whom they had offended.

I remember well how everybody was astonished when Mr. Bell's furniture was seen going into the Gothic cottage. That very evening the whole village rang with the incredible rumor. I was one of a number of little Lily's devotees who passed through the street expressly to see whether the report had any foundation. It was too true. The Bells were moving. The *lily* was to be transplanted to another bed. On the following day Lucius' family became established in their new house, and the inexorable aunt returned, in stately loneliness, to her hollow, gloomy habitation.

I have often pictured to myself the sensations of Lucinda at that time. Methinks I see her now, passing through the low gate, and along the flower-bordered path which leads to the vine-shaded door. The summer noontide sun shines brightly, but its life-diffusing light is not for her! The breezes from the verdant hills and the forest's cooling shade play with the ancient ribbons on her bonnet (who, in all our village, would not have known that bonnet a mile off, among a hundred?), and with the scanty curl which always hangs in just such a position on the old maid's cheek; but no breezes can cool the

fever of her breast. Alas! she knows too well what a hollow, dreary house she is entering. She had thought she could return with the same heart of steel which prompted her to leave her own roof; and she could, perhaps, did she not at this moment remember that always before, when she has been away, the joyous laugh and sunny face of little Lily has welcomed her back gladly at the door. There is no Lily there now; no little arms outstretched, no ready kiss; and to the heart of the old maid all the earth is dark, and hollow, and cold.

She passes beneath the shady grape-vine screen, and across the threshold. Only the face of the domestic meets her eye. What a chilling, unlovable face Lucinda, for the first time, discovers it to be! She hates the domestic, whom she never hated before.

"They are gone," says the menial, thinking to dispel that ominous frown by pleasant news.

What a mistake! What a look of rage and hatred answers the ill-timed words! The disconcerted girl glides timidly away. The old maid is alone.

And now sorrow takes the place of anger. Lucinda throws her bonnet on one chair, with a desperate gesture, and sinks with clasped hands on another. Yesterday there was a bureau in this vacant corner. It was Laura's bureau. A heart-

rending sigh shakes the thin form of the spinster. Glancing at the wall, she notes the light square space that marks the spot from which her brother's picture was lately removed. A tear glistens in her eye. Here, here in the ceiling by the door, is the low nail where little Lily's bonnet always hung, when Lily was not at play out of doors. Lily could just touch that nail by standing on her toes. Lucinda remembers the darling's childish glee when for the first time she reached it with her tiny fingers. There is no bonnet there now! The old maid's lips quiver. She turns quickly, and looks for the beautiful child-picture, that had its place on the wall behind her. Instead of Lily's portrait, she sees a square, white spot on the paper. The old maid is sobbing.

The domestic looks through the aperture of a door which she has opened softly, and sees her mistress sitting there, her face covered with her hands, and her hands covered with streaming tears. She is afraid to speak; and, closing the door softly as she opened it, the girl retires. Half an hour after, the door opens again. You could catch a glimpse of the domestic's face behind its shadow. With a feeling of awe, she sees that her mistress has not stirred. There she sits, her hands clasped over her face, and still wet with tears. The silence almost frightens the poor girl; but the silence is not half so terri-

fying as the grief-burthened sigh which suddenly swells up from the death-like stillness of the spinster's bosom, and fills all the chamber like the presence of a ghost.

The face disappears, and the door closes again. After the lapse of another half-hour, it reöpens, and you might see a steaming urn and a white cloth laid on the table beyond.

"Tea is ready."

The girl speaks boldly, for Lucinda has lifted her hands from her face, and her eyes are dry, and she is gazing steadfastly at the carpet. She has conquered her weakness. She will be strong now, she thinks; and, as her resentment is just, so shall her resolution be firm.

"Tea? — of course."

Lucinda knows no reason why she should not have a good appetite. She cheerfully follows Delia. Yes. she will do justice to the toast.

Her resolution fails her. There are places vacant which were never vacant before, when Lucinda sat down at that table. Little Lily's high chair, — where is it? Ah, Lucinda! thy heart throbs humanly yet! Go back — go back into thy chamber, and let thy bitter tears flow freely!

That evening Lucinda sat in the deepening twilight, musing sadly. An hour passed; night reigned silently, the moon shone through the casement, and

she sat there still. Then came a feeble rap at the door. The spinster had sent Delia away, that she might be alone; so she herself arose to admit the visitor. On the steps, spotted with the white moonlight and with the quivering shadows of the leafy grape-vine arch, stood a young woman, — a stranger, — holding before her a broad, square object, which she extended towards Lucinda.

"What is this?"

"Please, ma'am, a picture Mrs. Bell says was taken away by mistake, as it belongs to you, ma'am."

"A picture?"

"Yes, ma'am; little Lily's."

Lucinda seized it eagerly.

"Are you Mrs. Bell's domestic?" she asked.

"Yes, ma'am; and Mrs. Bell sends her compliments, and would like to have you call, if so be it 's convenient."

Lucinda coughed; — after a pause, she inquired,

"How is little Lily?"

"Please, ma'am, she 's took a bad cold going into the new house; and it 's very bad for the poor thing, — them damp walls is, ma'am."

Lucinda carried the picture into her chamber. She had not forgotten that it was her own money that had paid for it, and that Lucius had acknowledged it to be her property; but how little could

she have expected it would be yielded to her, now that a separation had taken place? She felt grateful, as she gazed upon the beloved face, and once more her heart yearned toward the family of her idol; but the fatal words Laura had spoken, and her husband's laugh, were remembered, and their sting was felt. No! no! she could not forgive them! They loved her not! It was only her property they desired, and that ——

The spinster would, at that moment, have set fire to her own house, had she thought her ungrateful relatives would ever enjoy its shelter again.

On the following morning, Lucinda, haggard with sleeplessness and grief, sat down at the breakfast-table alone. Instead of eating, however, she only sighed, and sipped a little tea (Lucinda abhorred coffee), and looked dreamily at the cloth.

"Delia," she said, in a low voice.

"What, ma'am?"

"Do you know Mrs. Bell's domestic?"

"Yes, ma'am; Susan King."

"Well, Delia, if you see her to-day," said Lucinda, "you may ask how little Lily is; but you need not say I wished to know."

Delia understood her mistress; and, anxious to please her, — for nothing Delia dreaded like Lucinda's frowns, — she managed to see Susan King that very morning.

The spinster sat in her vacant room, where Lily's picture once more hung in its place; and the sun shone through the casement and through the arch of vines above the door, and joyous birds sang merrily without; but to Lucinda all was gloomy and lonely within. Her hand had fallen listlessly upon her sewing, and she was gazing vacantly at the sunshine on the floor, when Delia entered.

"Little Lily is quite sick, this morning, ma'am; and Susan King says that Mrs. Bell says that the doctor says ——"

"Have they called the doctor?" interrupted Lucinda, with a look of anguish.

"Yes, ma'am, — Dr. Sawyer; and he thinks Lily will get along, if they 're keerful of her; and it was a very bad thing, he says, going into that house when the walls was damp."

The old maid uttered a sharp cry of pain.

"Shall I get you the camfer, ma'am?" asked Delia; "you are looking pale this morning, ma'am."

"Go to your work!" said Lucinda, sternly.

Lucinda wished to be alone; but scarce was Delia gone when a village gossip entered. Mrs. Smith was overflowing with rumors, surmises, sympathy, and scandal. She thought Miss Bell had been shamefully insulted by Mrs. Bell; she considered both Lucius and his wife ungrateful wretches; and her opinion of them was nothing new, either; for

she could have told Lucinda long ago "how it would turn out." This was not all. Mrs. Smith could gratify her friend by relating remarks somebody had heard somebody say Laura had made, touching certain weak points in Lucinda's character, even when she — Laura — was eating her — Lucinda's — bread.

All the old maid's resentment was revived. Mrs. Smith's apparent sympathy prepared her ear for the scandal; and the scandal stung her into fury. Ah! poor Laura Bell! how was thy character torn into shreds and tatters by her whom thou hadst offended, albeit unintentionally, and by her who, even then, was as much thy friend as the friend of her upon whose weakness she was playing!

Mrs. Smith accepted Lucinda's urgent invitation to dine with her, and they parted sworn friends. Lucinda had never liked Mrs. Smith so well; but I imagine she would have suffered a violent change of sentiment, had she known that, after dining with her, the gossip drank tea with Laura, and repeated to the latter the worst things her sister-in-law had said of her, exaggerating facts, and even fabricating falsehoods, for her purpose.

But, although Mrs. Smith's sympathies were as much with Laura as they had been with Lucinda, she was not so successful in provoking the young woman's ire. Laura thought it natural Lucinda

should be bitter against her, and she forgave the spinster in her heart. Besides, little Lily was ill, and how could there be room in the mother's breast for anything but anxiety and sorrow?

A cry of distress seemed to run through the village with the rumor of little Lily's illness. The Gothic cottage was thronged with anxious inquirers after the darling's health. I was there twice a day, at least; everybody went there, except Lucinda. Sympathy with Laura's affliction turned public opinion very much against her sister-in-law, who was ridiculed, hated, and condemned. Even I, when the darling's cough smote upon my ear, felt wickedly inclined towards her "cruel aunt," and bitterly exclaimed against her conduct.

And it was indeed piteous to see how the young and happy creature was changed. Her joyous laugh rang out no more; there was no longer the rosy glow of healthful life upon her cheek; her sweet eyes sparkled no more with innocent mirth. Yet she never complained. O! it was melancholy to see how the young, warm-hearted child endeavored to seem cheerful, smiling with her pale face and sad blue eyes.

Well, — I must pass over in silence the days and weeks of anguish we suffered, as Lily faded, — faded, — growing worse and worse, as the summer sun sank in the southern sky. We had hoped she

would be better soon; we had firmly believed she would recover; for we would not think that so much beauty and innocence could wither like an opening rosebud stung by cruel frosts — wither and die!

But, at the approach of the melancholy Autumn, with its hazy skies, brown fields, and trees gorgeously arrayed in gleaming crimson and gold, then our hearts fluctuated daily between warm hopes and chilling fears, like the alternate heat and cold of the autumnal noons and nights.

One mild October day little Lily was better than she had been for a week; and, as she wished to look out upon the fading earth, Laura buried her in pillows, and drew her arm-chair near the window, where she could feel the sunshine on her pale brow.

Then Laura, with her heart all torn and bleeding with anguish, bent over her, while her tears dropped warm and fast upon her darling's face.

"Don't cry, mamma!" said little Lily, tenderly. "Dear mamma, don't cry! See — see how pretty the sunshine is on that tree! What makes some of the leaves so bright and red?"

"The leaves are dying, darling," replied Laura, in a choked voice.

Lily looked thoughtful.

"I wonder if I am going to die!" she asked, after a pause.

Laura kissed her frantically, with streaming tears

"Mamma, now I know why you cry!" said Lily. 'You think I am going to die! You used to tell me sometimes about little children dying and going to heaven. Will I go to heaven, if I die?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Laura, her tones quivering with the fervor of sublime Christian faith. "You will go to heaven, my darling."

"And see the angels there, — the angels with white wings?"

Laura could not reply for sobbing.

"O, I don't want to die, and go away from you!" murmured the child, clasping her mother's neck, and sobbing there; "but I will see you in heaven some time, won't I, — you, and dear papa? And will all the friends we love be there? O, I think it will be happy! But I hope there will be flowers in heaven. Say, mamma, are there flowers in heaven?"

"My child! my darling!" sobbed Laura, "how could I — could I lose you? Yes — yes, there are flowers in heaven!"

"Yes, mamma! I know it. The flowers are all dead now, you told me yesterday, when I wanted some. I did not know they would die. But, if they die, they go to heaven, I am sure! The flowers are good; and all good things go to heaven; just as we go there when we are good. Tell me, mamma, do you think Aunt Lucinda will go to heaven?'

"I hope — I pray — I believe she will!" exclaimed Laura.

She was startled by hearing a groan. She turned quickly, and saw a tall figure standing on the threshold.

"My sister!" exclaimed Laura, eagerly.

Lucinda turned and fled.

But the spinster's heart was softened. She did not flee in anger. She had come to see Lily for the first time in the Gothic cottage; and, standing on the threshold, her soul had been humbled, purified of the sin of anger, and melted to tears, by what she had now heard. She wished to weep in secret in her own chamber But, whilst Laura was still gazing at her retreating figure, from the window of the cottage, she turned again; for the yearning of her heart proved stronger than her pride. With sobs, and gushing tears, she threw herself at Laura's feet, and begged to be forgiven.

Poor Laura's heart was broken. She clasped her in her arms, and wept upon her neck.

"It is for you to forgive me!" she said, sobbing. "It was I who gave offence with thoughtless words, although God knows how I loved you even then!"

"I have forgiven you, — forgive me!" murmured Lucinda. "Forgive my foolish anger, — my sinful vanity, — my cruel revenge! Love me, — love me, Laura, love me!"

It is impossible to depict the surprise of Lucius, on entering the house, to find his sister there, sitting by Laura's side, and holding close, close to her heart the dear form of little Lily, whose pale face and sad blue eyes smiled sweetly, as she lay on Lucinda's bosom.

"Don't wonder at seeing me here!" said the old maid. "I kept away as long as I could; but my heart is not so strong as I thought it was. I knew my little darling was sick, — I was told she was made so by sleeping in this new house; my conscience reproached me for driving you here, — and — and — forgive me!" said Lucinda, weeping as if her heart would break.

There was bitterness in the heart of Lucius; and for a moment he stood with a stern brow on the threshold.

"Dear papa!" said the soft voice of little Lily, "love Aunt Lucinda! She is a good aunt, and mamma says she will go to heaven, and be with us there. Do love her, papa!"

"Sister," said Lucius, his lip quivering with emotion, "I do forgive you! This is no time to cherish enmity, and I thank heaven that your heart has been softened, even at this late hour. Ah! Lucinda, Lucinda!" he added, with suppressed passion, as if his soul burned with the memory of

wrongs, "had you shown this charity before, this bitter affliction might have been spared us!"

Lucius hid his face, bending over his dying darling, while his whole frame shook with grief.

There was a great wonderment in the village when it was known that a perfect reconciliation had taken place between Lucinda and her relatives, and that the spinster had declared her resolution never to leave little Lily's side. The news formed fresh food for gossips; but never were hearts so far removed above the power of scandal as those which now beat with sorrow and sickened hope within the Gothic cottage.

Notwithstanding the tenderest care of her parents and aunt, little Lily faded, faded, faded still, as the autumnal skies became more dull and dark. The white October frosts, which painted nightly all the ground, and the bleak winds of November, which rudely tore away and blew along the earth the last of the withered leaves that clung fluttering to dreary boughs, served to chill her more and more. She was like the last of the tender sisterhood of flowers. Not all the grief and agony of mortal hearts could save her, — else she had been saved.

It was late in December, that, one gloomy morning, the deep tones of the mournfully-tolling bell smote upon every heart in our village. Methinks

I hear them now, solemn, monotonous, vibrating in the December air, —

> "With a deep sound, to and fro,
> Heavily to the heart they go!"

Heavily — yea, heavily! burdened with grief unutterable, sorrow and despair too weighty for the human soul, — for little Lily, the darling, the flower of beauty, innocence, and love, — SHE WAS DEAD!

O! never shall I forget with what a feeling of loneliness I looked out, that dull December day, upon the church-yard, and saw the old sexton walk slowly through the black gate, with his pick-axe and spade. He shovelled away the crusted snow from a narrow space, then struck his pick into the frozen ground. What desolation in the thought that she — our darling Lily who now lies cold and white in her shroud — must be buried beneath those hard, heavy, icy clods!

The following day was Saturday. On Sunday there was a funeral. Beneath the pulpit, in the solemn church, there was a little coffin; and near by sat Lucius, with his wife and sister. Never can I forget the anguish of these mourners! Their souls seemed to be henceforth the habitation of sorrow only. But why describe — why attempt to describe such grief?

After the funeral sermon, the little coffin was

unclosed, and old and young gathered around it to gaze on the white face of the Lily of our village for the last time. There she lay, too beautiful for earth, smiling sweetly even in that endless sleep of death.

The sexton had removed from the opening of the little grave the boards he had placed there to keep out the snow; and now the tight coffin was closed again, — the mourners had taken their last look of the dead, and little Lily was lowered into the cold, dark ground! The clods fell with hollow echoes on the coffin-lid; and, with hearts choked with affliction, which seemed too great to bear, the mourners went home from the resting-place of their idol.

But, had not the good preacher assured them of what their hearts already knew, that they would meet her again in heaven?

And in a little while the grasses of another spring were growing above the mouldering inhabitants of the church-yard; and there were flowers planted on one little grave, and watered with the tears of Laura and Lucinda; and the flowers bloomed and the sun shone warmly upon that little grave, and the birds sang sweetly around; all nature proclaiming that joy, and not grief, should frequent the lowly bed of little Lily Bell.

From that time, Lucius and Laura lived with their sister; and their hearts were closely knit to-

gether by fellowship in affliction. And even when the violence of grief was passed, and their souls had become calm, they lived together the same. Two other children — a sweet girl, and a noble-hearted boy — came to make them forget the lost one; but still remembrance fondly turns to the past, and is kept fresh by the sweet picture which hangs in its old place in Lucinda's cottage, — the beautiful portrait of little Lily Bell!

THE CROSS HUSBAND.

Mrs. Carswell had been married but little more than a year, when a friend dropped in upon her one morning, and found her convulsed with weeping.

"My dear Laura!" exclaimed Mrs. Marston, in astonishment; "how happens it that you, who were the most cheerful, light-hearted of maidens, have become an unhappy wife? Has your brief experience in married life been so bitter?"

"O no!" replied Laura, drying her tears, and endeavoring to appear cheerful. "I have been happy, — I am happy, I assure you. My husband is the best of men, — he loves me, — and our dear child is a great source of joy and comfort. O, no, my experience has not been bitter!"

"I am glad to hear it!" rejoined Mrs. Marston; "but it seems so strange to see you weep! Why, before you were married, your heart was as light as a robin's in spring. You were all smiles; and,

I believe, you never knew what it was to shed tears in sober earnest."

"True," said Laura, smiling faintly, "I was a gay and thoughtless creature. I believe I was too happy. I ought to have been made to know something about the cares of life before marriage. As it was, I entered matrimony as a child flies joyously into a garden full of flowers, only to find there are sharp thorns among the roses, and bees with dangerous stings among the sweet thyme."

"In what have you found the sharp thorns and spiteful bees of married life to consist?"

"Nothing worth naming, — nothing of importance," replied Laura, blushing. "Indeed, I ought not to think of my little troubles."

"But what are these little troubles?" insisted her companion. "Come, I shall give you no peace until you tell me; and I am a great teaser, you know, when I choose to be. Does Mr. Carswell spend his evenings away from home?"

"O, no!"

"Does he flirt with other ladies?"

"No, indeed. He is very attentive to me. He never visits or attends the theatre without me."

"Perhaps, then, he is too attentive; husbands sometimes are, I am told, though I am sure the accounts we have of such mortals must be altogether fabulous."

"I think so."

"It must be, then, that Mr. Carswell does not provide well for his family. But I know he is not penurious."

"Penurious!" exclaimed Mrs. Carswell; "he is the most generous man alive! I have everything I could desire."

"Ah, it is the extreme which troubles you," said Mrs. Marston. "I see, — your husband is too extravagant. In his eagerness to make you happy, he neglects to pay the butcher and baker; and frequent visits from certain unwelcome acquaintances annoy your sensitive nature. It is, indeed, very provoking to have one's attention called a dozen times a day to some small bill."

"I beg of you, don't suspect Mr. Carswell of any such neglect," interrupted Laura. "His bills are all promptly settled."

"Then your domestics torment you. If they are ill-natured, or stupid, or lazy, or dishonest, turn them away."

"I have been very fortunate with my girls, I am happy to say."

"Then do tell me what troubles you have; I can think of nothing else. I should say you were the happiest woman in the world, if I had not caught you crying."

"I tell you I am happy. I have no trouble, —

that is, no serious trouble, — except when Mr. Carswell appears — I can't explain myself; but you know, I suppose, men are not always in good humor."

"Ha, ha! I have got it at last!" cried Mrs. Marston. "I see it, — so your husband is cross sometimes, is he?"

"O, not exactly cross, O no! Indeed, he is very kind-hearted; but he has got into a way of finding fault with everything, — that is, everything except me; all this, too, without knowing, half the time, what he says. He scolds about the cooking, without suspecting how much he hurts my feelings; for I oversee it myself, and try hard enough to please him," added Laura, while tears gathered in her eyes.

"In short," rejoined Mrs. Marston, "he is a downright cross husband."

"O, no!"

"Yes, he is; don't attempt to defend the wretch. But if, as you say, he loves you, and finds fault more from habit than any settled ill-will, he is not past all help. I have known men like him. They are naturally petulant, but they generally have no idea how cross they sometimes are. They can govern themselves if they like, though; they are not incurable."

"My dear Mrs. Marston," said Laura, with an

earnest face, "you really appear to understand my case; and, if you can suggest any method of curing George of this fault-finding, you will remove the only obstacle in the way of my perfect happiness."

"Ah, my dear Laura, you don't understand the men quite as well as I do! To root the rank weed out of your husband's heart, you have only to convince him that it is there, and demonstrate how very hateful it is. Now, if you say to him, kindly, 'George, don't, I pray you, find fault with everything,' he will reply, — kissing you, perhaps, — that he never finds fault without reason, and go on, thoughtless as ever, venting his spleen at everything."

"But you would not have me reprove him in an unkind manner?"

"No, indeed; that would make him worse still. I say you must *demonstrate* to him the hatefulness of his habit of fault-finding."

"But *how?*"

"Why, when he finds fault, you must help him. If he scolds at his coffee, you must show a disposition to throw it out of the window. If he complains of a cold room, you must shiver and shake, and scold the girl for not keeping a better fire. When he calls the bread heavy, you must suggest the idea of using it as clock-weights, to save the expense of lead. In short, you must altogether

out-fret him; find ten times as much fault as he does, and drown his voice in the petulant tones of your own. Show him how perfectly miserable you can make each other; give him a foretaste of the beautiful bedlam you can create for him if you try. Thus you will set him thinking; and he must agree that the fault which appears so uncomfortable in you is quite as far from seeming amiable in himself."

Laura was much amused by her friend's singular counsel; but she was not fully convinced of its safety, until Mrs. Marston declared herself in serious earnest, and instanced a cross husband who had been cured in the manner she so warmly recommended.

After a long discussion on the subject, Mrs. Carswell expressed her willingness to follow her friend's advice, but seemed to doubt her ability to play the character it would be necessary for her to assume. Mrs. Marston, however, succeeded in persuading her to make the attempt; and, having favored her with full instructions how to act, bade her good-morning, and gayly took her leave.

Mrs. Carswell awaited, with some anxiety, her husband's return to dinner; and, when he at length arrived, it was not without many misgivings that she remembered her resolution to meet him in the same humor he himself was in.

It was a cold, raw day in November, and it so happened that Mr. Carswell was unusually cross.

"Such wretched weather!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands, and scowling; "and this room is as cold as a barn."

"Jane," said Laura, "why don't you keep a better fire here? Pile on the coal. We are freezing."

And she quietly rocked the baby, while her brow seemed overshadowed by some great trouble.

"Isn't dinner ready?" asked Mr. Carswell, in a petulant tone.

"Nearly,—it will be ready in a few minutes," replied Laura.

"It is two o'clock," said her husband, referring to his watch. "When a man comes home to dinner, he does not like to be kept waiting."

"Why is not the dinner ready, Jane?" said Mrs. Carswell. "You know that two o'clock is the hour we dine at."

"Yes, ma'am," said Jane; "but by the clock it wants five minutes to two."

"The clock is too slow," growled Mr. Carswell.

"The clock is too slow," repeated Laura, in a louder key. "Why don't you see to such matters, Jane? Set the pointers along five minutes, and be sure you never keep the dinner waiting again."

Mr. Carswell cast a furtive glance at his wife.

Having always been accustomed to hear her apologize whenever he found fault, and endeavor to excuse the domestics, he hardly knew what to make of the change. However, he said nothing, but led the way to the dining-room in silence.

Jane was left in charge of the baby, and Susan the cook attended the table.

"Soup!" said Mr. Carswell. "Why, it's hot as fire! Soup should never be put upon the table in such a state."

"No," added Laura, sharply. "Do you mean to scald people, Susan? Never put fire on the table again."

"Tasteless stuff, too!" muttered Mr. Carswell, daintily touching the spoon to his lips.

"Insipid!" cried Laura, impatiently. "What sort of mess do you call this, Susan? It tastes like the broth of stewed leather."

Mr. Carswell could not help smiling at the conceit; but, at sight of Laura's long face, his countenance changed immediately.

"Are you ill to-day?" he asked.

"Ill? No!" replied Laura.

"What is the matter, then?"

"Nothing, — only things don't go exactly to suit me."

These being the precise words George had hundreds of times used in answer to similar inquiries

from his wife, he paused with the spoon midway between his mouth and the plate, and looked her full in the face, in great surprise.

"What does not suit you?" he asked.

"Why, the same things that do not suit you, I suppose, — the soup."

"The soup is not so very bad, after all, — it only required a little salt."

"So I perceive," observed Laura, unable to repress a smile.

Mr. Carswell's humor seemed to improve, until he had occasion to apply the carving-knife to the roast beef, when his countenance changed.

"Done to a crisp!" he exclaimed; "and Susan knows I like my beef rare. My dinner is spoilt!"

"Susan!" cried Laura, "why did n't you burn the meat to a cinder, and have done with it? You might as well put a coal on the table. I never — "

"Ah!" interrupted George, in a pleasant tone, "it is not so bad as I expected. It is rare, come to get into it."

"So it is!" said Mrs. Carswell, smiling.

George seemed, for a moment, diverted from his annoying habit; but presently he exclaimed, peevishly,

"What wretched potatoes! They are not fit to eat. I never saw such water-soaked things

before. What is the reason we can't have our potatoes cooked better?"

"Sure enough, why can't we?" said Mrs. Carswell. "Why do you put such heavy balls on the table, Susan? They are as watery as melons. If you do not know how to boil potatoes properly —"

"My dear," interrupted George, "I am inclined to think it is not in the cooking. The potatoes were not good in the first place."

"Why were they bought, then?" demanded Laura. "We might as well invest money in poison parsnips. Potatoes that are not fit to eat are worse than none at all. Here, Susan, take them away."

"But, my dear," cried George, in a tone remarkably pleasant, "I think some of them may be good. Now, here is one quite mealy indeed."

"I can't see any difference in them," observed Laura, in a significant tone.

George colored very red, and found no more fault until the apple-pudding was brought in.

"It is spoilt!" said he, throwing himself back in his chair. "The crust is as heavy as lead."

"Heavy!" echoed Laura; "it is like so much grafting-wax, — tough and indigestible as a saddle. Who do you think is going to eat such a mess of boiled dough and chopped apples? Throw it —"

"My dear," said George, in a conciliatory tone,

"I think a part of this side of it may be palatable. Why, it appears quite light. The apple is very nice, and —"

"I beg of you, don't eat it to save it," replied Laura, pettishly. "But, if you think you can manage to do anything with it, help yourself."

George did help himself, and discovered that on the whole the pudding was a very creditable affair, and thrice did he have occasion to replenish his plate from the condemned dish.

Mr. Carswell was heartily ashamed of having found fault with so good a pudding, and felt such anxiety to keep Laura in good humor the rest of the day, that not another word of complaint escaped his lips before leaving the house.

At evening, however, when he came home to tea, his petulance had returned, and he commenced finding fault with a smell of burnt crusts which invaded his nostrils.

"It is Susan's carelessness," exclaimed Laura. "What is the girl about? Jane, go and tell her that, if she cannot toast the bread without filling the house with smoke, the sooner —"

"I hardly think that Susan is to blame," interrupted George.

"Who then?"

"I — I don't know that anybody is."

"There must be somebody to blame when we are annoyed," observed Laura. "Is tea ready, Jane?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Jane.

And the tender pair proceeded to the tea-table, where the cloth was spread in a very inviting manner.

So firmly fixed had George's habit of fault-finding become, that he complained of his tea almost before he tasted it.

"It's a pity we can't have a good cup of tea occasionally!" murmured Laura, indignantly. "Susan, take away these slops! Try again, and see if you can't make something fit to drink."

And, without saying "by your leave," Laura reached forth, took away her husband's cup, and emptied its contents into the slop-bowl, at the same time pushing the tea-pot towards Susan with a look of impatience and disgust.

Laura was playing her part capitally. George became alarmed.

"Don't be too hasty, my dear," said he; "taste the tea, and see what you think of it."

"There is no need," returned Laura. "I can take your word for it. You know what good tea is; and when you say the tea is bad, it is enough. It must be bad."

"But—"

"O, it 's useless to smooth things over. When the tea is bad, we may as well speak plainly about it. I don't mean to tolerate insipidity any longer. Do you hear, Susan?"

Susan was as much astonished as Mr. Carswell himself. But she said nothing, — neither did he, — although he was compelled to wait five minutes for the return of the tea-pot.

This time, in consequence of Susan's haste and confusion, the tea was really insipid, but somehow George found it excellent. A conciliatory humor has a remarkable tendency to quicken one's talents for discovering imaginary perfections in things most poor and unworthy.

Accordingly, George found no more fault at the tea-table; but, on entering the sitting-room, he undoubtedly forgot himself.

"What an atmosphere!" he exclaimed. "It is like going into an oven. What is the use of keeping a room so hot?"

"I suppose Jane meant to roast us," added Laura, fanning herself violently. "Throw open the doors, Jane. The baby, poor thing, is cooked brown already. You could bake pies here. Do give us a breath of fresh air!"

And Laura raised the window and sat down by it, as if on the verge of fainting.

George ran to her in alarm, drew her away, and

closed the window, staring at her as if he deemed her insane.

"You would catch your death-cold," he exclaimed. "The chill night wind blows in —"

"It is better than roasting," complained Mrs. Carswell.

He bit his lips, but said nothing. The doors were closed, and the amiable couple did not find themselves uncomfortable, even with a little more fire in the grate.

For two hours George and Laura sat together, luxuriating in domestic peace and comfort, and conversing in the most happy manner.

At length Laura took up a magazine, to read aloud to her husband. In a clear, musical voice, she read the opening chapter of an interesting story, which was so pleasantly and truthfully written that George listened as to a charm, his features glowing with pleasure, and his beaming eyes fixed lovingly on Laura's face.

Just as she was commencing the second chapter, the baby began to cry, filling the house with the shrill pipings of its little voice. Of course Laura, ever ready to leave everything to run to her darling child, and drive its fears and troubles away with endearing kisses, stopped reading, and started to her feet.

"What a bother!" muttered George. "It seems

to me that child is crosser than ever, lately. It never gives us a minute's peace."

Laura remembered the part she was playing at a most fortunate moment. Dashing her magazine upon the table, with an impatient gesture, she knit her pretty brows, and exclaimed,

"I should think it might be quiet *once!* Why can't it sleep when we are enjoying ourselves? Where is Jane, I wonder, that she is not here to take care of it? But I suppose it will always be so. Children are the curse of married life! What people marry for I don't know! The prospect of a generation of squalling brats is very delightful! I 'll send for a supply of paregoric before another night, and give it as freely as milk. I won't be tormented this way much longer."

George was prodigiously astonished at this unexpected burst of passion. Then he became frightened, believing her insane. But her over-acting was at last so apparent, that her ill-humor was no longer a mystery. Something like the truth flashed upon his mind.

"It strikes me that you find fault with everything, to-day," said he.

"Have n't I a right to?" retorted Laura. "Can't I complain as well as you? I 've left the duty of fault-finding to yourself long enough. Now I am going to help you. I shall do my share of it

in future. If it is comfortable for one to complain, it must be twice comfortable when we are joined together. We 'll see just how pleasant a home we can make of this!"

Mr. Carswell burst into a roar of laughter. Laura, wholly unable longer to sustain her part, in which she had astonished herself as well as George, relapsed from the furious into the mirthful, — from tragedy into comedy, — and laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks and fell upon the face of her darling child, which, all the time she was uttering her mad complaints, she had been holding tenderly to her heart.

On the following morning at breakfast, George praised the buckwheats, pronounced the beef-steak delicious, and drank an extra cup of coffee, declaring his inability to resist the temptation of its excellent quality.

At dinner, the shrimps were cooked exactly to his taste, the chicken was the most tender and savory in the world, and all day the rooms were found to be of a most comfortable temperature.

Thus things continued three days, when Mrs. Marston favored Laura with another call, and inquired about the success of her plans.

"Ah," said Laura, "I can never express my obligations to you! George has really learned to control his temper, as I knew he would as soon as

he was aware how hateful his habit of fault-finding had become."

Mrs. Marston was rejoiced at her friend's happiness; for Laura was troubled no more with a cross husband.

But I hope that no fault-finding men who read this sketch will impose upon their wives the necessity of following Laura's example.

THE BLUE EYES.

STANDING before a magnificent mirror, in the light of brilliant lamps, a young and radiant creature regarded her reflected image with a smile of pleasure. In a ball-dress of singular taste and elegance, her silken brown hair falling in luxuriant curls about her snowy neck and glowing cheeks, her graceful bosom heaving with every breath she drew, and her white, delicate and slender hands glittering with jewels, — truthfully might the poet have said of her, "beautiful exceedingly!"

There was beauty in the symmetry of her form, — beauty in the sweeping arch of her brows,— beauty in the finely-chiselled mouth, Grecian nose, and brilliant teeth; but, above all, was there a strange, touching, captivating beauty in the pure azure of her large, soft, lustrous eyes.

She smiled, I say, as the faithful mirror flung back to those beaming eyes the light of their own

beauty; and through those lovely lips were breathed the half-articulate words —

"If *he* will not love me, *others* shall, at least!"

But at that moment the smile faded from her lips, a sigh heaved her breast, and the shadow of an intrusive thought darkened those eyes of blue.

"If *he* will not love me!"

She repeated the words; and, sinking upon a chair, pressed one of her hands upon her brow. When she removed it, those large eyes flashed out with a deeper blue, and a wilder lustre, through the glittering crystal of a tear. This she dashed away, and, arising majestically, rang for an attendant.

"Has Mr. Sandford returned yet?"

"He just went into the library, ma'am," replied the woman who appeared.

A moment after, she of the blue eyes opened small door which formed the entrance to the apart ment whither her husband had retired. He was sitting by a table, nervously fingering the folds of a newspaper, which he appeared little inclined to read. Mrs. Sandford paused on the threshold. The stern and forbidding expression of her husband's gathered brows scarcely left her courage to address him.

"Philip ——"

At the sound of that low and gentle voice, Mr.

Sandford raised his head, and lifted his eyes from the newspaper, to meet the shrinking gaze of his wife. He started, and his lip curled bitterly, as her radiant beauty flashed upon his vision.

"You are going, then?" he said, in a suppressed tone.

"Yes Philip," she replied, blushing deeply. "Mr. Lawrence and Lucy are going to call for me."

"Very well," muttered Mr. Sandford, compressing his lips, and dropping his eyes to the newspaper.

The blue eyes flashed. With a toss of her curls, Mrs. Sandford turned, and was about leaving the room, when a better impulse seemed to take the place of her momentary resentment.

"I hope you are not displeased, Philip——"

"Displeased! Why should I be? I believe it 's now-a-days considered very absurd for husbands be displeased with anything their wives may oose to do!"

"Mr. Sandford!"

"Why should you for an instant fancy that I am displeased? True, you care nothing for my society; you prefer the glitter and the glow of a ball-room to the comforts of your household; you choose to leave your child — our child — to the tender mercies of a nurse; but such are the ways of the world, and, of course, I shall not fall into the vulgar fault of making any complaint. Even though you

prepare for balls without so much as asking my advice ——"

"Philip! Philip! I have not — I have *not* deserved this!" cried Mrs. Sandford, with a passionate gesture.

"O, be calm — be calm!"

"Be calm! O! *you* can *well* say 'be calm,' when you drive me frantic with your coldness, your irony, your hateful sneers ——"

"Sophia!"

"Well, well! I *will* be calm! I have nothing to blame myself for, and I will not be vexed!"

"You have nothing to blame yourself for!" repeated Mr. Sandford, slowly, in a deep, significant tone. "Certainly not! Now-a-days, a wife should never think of consulting her husband before making up her mind to go to a ball at all hazards."

"I cannot bear that, sir, with either patience or calmness!" cried Sophia, vehemently. "You wrong me, sir, you know you do! I should never take any important step without consulting you, were it not for your sarcasm, and your bitter taunts. This afternoon I was on the point of consulting you, — of asking your permission, before making up my mind to go to the ball, — but your manner, your forbidding aspect, disheartened me. Then I felt that you loved me no longer, — that you did not *care* whether I went or remained at home·

and so I held my peace. You paralyze my tongue with your indifference, and then you blame and reproach me for not speaking."

"I believe, Sophia, a wife would never hesitate to mention a project to her husband of which she thought he would approve. It is, then, plain that you knew I would disapprove of the step you are taking, and that — *you have no regard for my feelings.*"

To this stern reproach Sophia made answer, impulsively,

"Why should I regard your feelings more than you mine? You disapprove of everything I do. You would have me satisfied with your coldness, nor ask for nor desire anything more. But I cannot submit to such tyranny, and I *will not.*"

And she burst into a passion of tears.

Mr. Sandford's features contracted with an almost fierce expression. His teeth closed angrily, and glittered through his curling lips, while, unconsciously, his fingers tore the newspaper into fragments. For nearly a minute, he regarded Sophia with his blazing eyes, in silence. Notwithstanding her beauty and her tears, he was angry still. Yet he was not cruel, — he was not cold. Devotedly, passionately did he love that beautiful, warm-hearted, capricious wife. It was what he deemed her injustice, in accusing him of coldness, that had

roused his resentment; for he could not see the cause she had to consider him cold. Proud, sensitive, *reserved* in his feelings, he had always concealed his anguish on witnessing his wife's love of pleasure; for he could never bring himself to betray his jealousy of the admiration she everywhere received, and seemed so much to love. His reserve she construed into indifference; and she imagined that his displeasure, when she mingled with the society of which he himself was not fond, was the result of a selfish and domineering disposition, rather than of love. This misunderstanding was the cause of all their unhappiness; for, while Sophia laid all the blame upon her husband's selfishness and want of affection, he felt that her love of pleasure, and her disregard for the comforts of home, were the faults which ruined his peace. Therefore, loving her as he did, he was wrought almost to fury by her reiterated charge of coldness; and, after witnessing her tears for some time in silence, he said, in a bitter tone:

"It would be no wonder if I did *not* love you, since you care so much more for the admiration of the world than for my happiness. Your conduct is enough to drive all the love out of my heart."

Sophia raised her blue eyes, which flashed through her tears. She remembered the time when but the first crystal drop swelling under those fringed

lids had the power to soften her husband in his sternest moments; and, contrasting the past with the present she gave utterance, on the bitter impulse of the moment, to the thought which had entered her heart as she stood before the mirror:

"Although *you* do not love me, there are those who *do;* and, since I am nothing to you, I may as well make the most of their society."

"Indeed!" said Philip. "Then permit me to advise you to dry your tears, else the light of those eyes, which are to bring admiring lovers to your feet, will become dim!"

"By your tone," answered Sophia, with a sneer, "one would judge that you would gladly have it extinguished altogether."

"Heaven knows it would have been for my happiness had it been so before, like an ignis fatuus, it lured me to my ruin!"

"Why don't you pray heaven, then, that I may be struck blind?"

"I can almost find it in my heart to do so!" muttered Philip.

With an angry and scornful gesture, Sophia swept from the room. Her eyes were soon bright and lustrous as ever; — her maid placed another jewel on her arm, according to her directions, and five minutes after, she was on her way to the ball, resolved to win all the admiration in her power. Meanwhile,

Philip sat with his chin resting on his palm, absorbed in thought. The last hasty words which had escaped his lips awoke remorseful reflections, and he felt, for the first time, with any degree of force, that there was much fault on his side, as well as on Sophia's.

"She did love me *once*," thought he: "sometimes I feel that she loves me still. Perhaps, if I was more frank and cordial with her, she would be so with me, and we would live more happily together. I *must* govern myself better; I must *never again* allow myself to speak with haste and passion, as I did just now. I will try kindness to wean her from the dissipations of society; and this night I will begin. I will sit up for her, and ask her forgiveness for my harsh and hasty words."

Mr. Sandford certainly loved Sophia, with her graceful person, her transparent complexion, and her tender eyes of blue; and good reason had he "sometimes" to feel that she loved him still. She was one of those creatures with whom love is a necessity; and when her idol — for such her husband was — threw off the cold mantle of reserve, and appeared himself, she was all affection and devotion. But she loved society better than he, and she was as incapable of comprehending his indifference to it, as he of appreciating her fondness for balls and parties. And she loved her child

too, the darling Sophy, although she could leave her, to participate in the pleasures of the world. I will not say that, during the three years of her married life, Mrs. Sandford's disposition had not suffered from the evil influence of unhappy domestic relations contrasted with the follies of gay society; but as yet all her better feelings were not smothered, nor had vanity usurped the place of the most disinterested and pure affection, — as we shall see.

Sophia had not been an hour in the ball-room, before the radiance of her brow began to be overshadowed by frequent and fitful clouds of sadness. The reflection that she had left her husband angry and unhappy, and that she was not altogether blameless in their last and most serious quarrel, would intrude upon her gayest moments, causing the bright smile to fade from her lips, and the light of pleasure from her blue eyes. In the graceful whirl of the waltz, she became abstracted, and often she accompanied the merriest music with sighs. Her friends, unaccustomed to behold her anything but gay, supposed she was ill, and treated her with the kindest attentions; but these only added to her sadness, in reminding her of its cause.

"You are really suffering, Mrs. Sandford," said Mr. Amsden, a gentleman with whom she was on terms of friendship. "If you wish to return home, my carriage is at your service."

Sophia thanked him, with a smile, but politely declined the offer. No sooner had she done so, however, than she regretted her decision, and her melancholy returned with ten-fold force. Weary of attempting to appear gay, she at length resolved to presume upon Mr. Amsden's friendship, and ask the favor which he had before so kindly offered.

Accordingly, she sought out Mrs. Lawrence, whom she accompanied to the ball, to inform her of her resolution; after which, she cast her eye about for Mr. Amsden. Not discovering him anywhere, but supposing he would soon make his appearance, she proceeded to the dressing-room; and, after putting on her things, she again endeavored to find him, but with no better success. Impatient, and unwilling to trouble her friends, she confided the cause of her embarrassment to no one, but, after waiting a few minutes for Mr. Amsden, and making some inquiries for him, she glided from the hall, and tripped lightly down the broad stairs.

Sophia was a creature of impulse. Unwilling to return to the ball-room, and reflecting that her home was only two streets distant, she unfortunately formed the rash design of proceeding thither alone. It was not until she was in the street that she discovered that it had been raining. The water struck through the thin soles of her shoes in an instant,

She turned back in haste, but, instantly reflecting that she would be less liable to take cold, if she ran immediately home, than if she returned to the dressing-room, or stopped to call a carriage, she turned again, and tripped rapidly along the street. The unhappy woman had proceeded no more than half way, however, when it recommenced raining in torrents. She was soon completely drenched; and, it being a December night, she was likewise thoroughly chilled. Alarmed by the storm, she ran faster than ever, regardless of the eyes which followed her in astonishment. A stranger offered her his umbrella, but, fearful of insult, she refused it, and kept on amidst the rain. At length, in considerable trepidation, she reached her own door. It was well she arrived as she did, for, at that moment, the street-lamp before the house seemed suddenly to be extinguished. Surrounded by darkness, frightened, faint and sick, Sophia felt for the bell-knob, and rang violently. A strange feeling in her head oppressed her, and she leaned against the door for support.

Impatient, terrified by the darkness and the storm, she rang again almost immediately. A moment after, the door was opened, and she fell into the arms of a domestic. Startled by the wholly unexpected appearance of Mrs. Sandford at that hour, and in so strange a manner, Margaret uttered a cry of surprise.

"Hush!" said Sophia, recovering herself. "Don't disturb Mr. Sandford. I do not wish him to know that I have been so imprudent. But why — where — where is the hall-lamp? How could you be so careless as to let it go out? Help me up stairs; and, Margaret, do you take care that such an accident never happens again. It is dark as a pit here!"

The domestic gazed at her mistress in amazement.

"Sure," said she, "the lamp is burning very well; and I am sorry if I does n't plaze ye."

"Margaret!" answered Sophia, in a tone of irritation and displeasure, "what do you mean? You are really too impudent to be tolerated. Why do you tell me the lamp is burning, when the hall is certainly so dark that I cannot distinguish a single object?"

"Indade, Mrs. Sandford, I spoke nothing but the truth; and ye must have lost yer rason to say the lamp does n't burn, when sure ——"

"Margaret!"

"What, ma'am?"

"Cease this absurd talk! I will not hear it There *is* no light!"

The domestic once more stared at her mistress in the greatest astonishment; but, perceiving how pale she was, and imagining from the strange expression

of her large blue eyes, that she must have lost her senses, she dared not utter another word. She conducted Sophia directly to her own apartment, where a bright coal fire was burning in the grate, and a lamp glowed on the table.

"Margaret! Margaret!" cried Sophia, wildly, holding the domestic's arm, "tell me truly, — is there a light *here?*"

Afraid to dispute with her mistress, whom she now regarded as quite insane, and terrified by her wild manner, Margaret, instead of replying with words, led Sophia to the fire, and placed her hand near the glowing coals.

"O, God! have mercy on me!" cried Mrs. Sandford. "I — I feel the heat, but I see no light! Margaret! my *eyes!*"

And with a low moan she sank in the arms of the terrified domestic, who placed her on the couch, and ran in frantic haste for Mr. Sandford. Philip was writing in the library. Startled by the abrupt entrance of Margaret, he looked up in surprise.

"What is the matter?" demanded he, rising abruptly. "Speak! What has happened? What noise is this I have heard? Is the child ill?"

"No; Mrs. Sandford ——"

"*She* has not returned?"

"She is in her chamber!"

Under the conviction that something terrible had

happened, Philip rushed to his wife's apartment. He found her lying upon the couch, with her hands clasped over her eyes, and uttering low moans, which went like death-knells to his heart. He flew to her side, and throwing his arms around her, discovered that she was drenched with the cold rain.

"Sophia! Sophia!" he murmured from his overcharged, trembling heart, — "where have you been? What has happened? Speak to me!"

Mrs. Sandford answered only with the same low, piteous moan.

"If you love me, speak, my own Sophia! Relieve my suspense. Tell me, what has happened?"

"O, Philip! Philip!" moaned the unhappy wife, "you have your wish!"

"My wish? What do you mean?"

"My eyes! O, my eyes!"

"Your eyes!" echoed Philip, chilled with vague terror. "There has nothing happened to *them!*"

"Philip!" murmured Sophia, in a voice which seemed to fall faintly from a heart smitten with the sickness of despair and death, — "Philip — I AM BLIND!"

Mr. Sandford seemed for a moment petrified with consternation.

"Sophia, it cannot be!" were the words which burst from his lips, as soon as he could speak. "I

know it cannot be! You are not *blind* — not BLIND!"

"O, Philip! I cannot see you! All is darkness before my eyes. O, it is awful, awful to be — blind!"

Mr. Sandford rushed to the chamber-door. The terrified Margaret was waiting without.

"Call Thomas!" exclaimed Philip. "Be quick! Send him in all haste for Dr. Duncan."

He returned to his wife. He clasped her in his arms. He touched with passionate tenderness those large blue eyes, the light of which had been his light of love, but which rolled in darkness now. Frantically he bestowed on her the most endearing epithets, and entreated her to say that she could *see*. That man of deep feelings, who usually appeared so cold and reserved, was now all passion, all impulse, like a child. Sophia, who had never before known the depth and strength of his love, felt a ray of joy steal in upon the darkness of her soul.

"Philip, you *do* love me!"

"O, how *much!* My best, my dearest wife! you have doubted my love, I know, for I have been unkind to you; but I *have always* loved you devotedly, and you will forgive me! Forgive my harshness, my cruelty, and, O my wife! forgive my last words, thoughtlessly spoken, as we parted this evening!"

"I forgive you, — from my heart I do; for I know, I am sure, you *could* not wish me blind!"

"Could I, — O, could I, when your eyes are dearer to me than my life? Yet I was cruel to you, Sophia! and did this calamity fall alone on me, I should know it was a judgment from heaven. But my sin could have no evil influence on one so pure, so good, as you!"

"I have been very wicked!" murmured Sophia. "I have been so vain, so unlike a true wife, a dutiful mother! But bitterly have I repented this night. I could not be happy, when I remembered how unkind I had been to you. I could not wait for our friends, but I came alone — on foot — to ask your forgiveness!"

Philip could only murmur, "My Sophia! my own wife!" and clasp her to his heart. Meanwhile, he had administered some warming medicine, and removed her wet clothes. He now waited anxiously for the arrival of Dr. Duncan; but during the delay he did not neglect to console her with his affection, and cheer her with the hope that her blindness was only transitory.

It is probable that both Philip and Sophia indulged this hope. Great, therefore, was their anxiety for the arrival of the family physician, who was a man of unusual experience and skill, and who, they felt, would be able at once to put an end to

their suspense. At length he came. Philip grasped his hand, and, with a hurried explanation, led him to the bedside of his wife. If Sophia's anxiety to hear his decision was great, Philip's amounted to dread, and was painful in the extreme. A fearful silence prevailed, whilst Dr. Duncan considered the symptoms, and examined those large blue eyes. He turned to address Mr. Sandford, aside.

"I beg you not to conceal anything from me!" said Sophia. "I can bear to hear the truth now better than at any other time. I am prepared for the worst. Then I pray that you will keep me in suspense no longer, but tell me at once whether I am really blind, or whether I suffer merely from some temporary disorder of my system."

"Mrs. Sandford," replied Dr. Duncan, "I will be candid with you, as I have always been, since I can rely on your firmness and good sense. *Your eyes alone are affected.*"

Philip became frightfully pale, while Sophia only sighed.

"But she is not permanently blind?" questioned Mr. Sandford, with prayerful eagerness.

"My friend, I will not deceive you. She has suffered a paralysis of the optic nerve, apparently so complete that I doubt whether her sight will ever be perfectly restored."

Philip was silent with despair. His lips quivered

and he pressed the hand of his unhappy wife, while his heart was so full of sorrow that he could not articulate a word.

But it is painful to dwell upon this portion of our story. The *light of the blue eyes* was extinguished, and we will draw a veil over the two hearts which sympathize so deeply in their sorrow. For many days Philip never left the chamber of his wife. He seemed to have no longer a thought of earth, except that which concerned the alleviation of her distress. Never had his deep and entire affection for her been so apparent, and, if there be any consolation in a husband's devotion, she must have been consoled. On the other hand, never had her heart been so full of love and gratitude for him.

It was not long before Sophia became reconciled to her lot. She learned with a sweet and serene joy that, with nothing but the love of her husband and her child, she could be happy. The kind attentions of her friends, who came to sympathize with her in her affliction, were gratefully received, but they were nothing in comparison with Philip's devotion, which gave her so much strength to endure the dispensation. And she seemed to conceive a new tenderness for her child, in which, although she could not behold its beauty now, she took more pure delight, as she strained it to her heart, than she had ever felt before.

It must not be supposed that no efforts were made to restore Sophia's sight. The most skilful oculists were consulted, none of whom could do anything for her, or give her any hope.

And now Philip gazed upon those large blue eyes, and, knowing that they could never behold him more, or look upon the beautiful earth, or drink in the light of the glorious sun again, loved them with a strange yearning; with a child-like tenderness and idolatry; with a deeper, purer, less selfish devotion, than they could ever have inspired with all their former soft and lustrous beauty. Languishing beneath their long, dark fringes, they were more than ever now the light of his happiness.

It was touching to witness the solicitude with which the devoted husband sought to compensate the fair sufferer for her loss of sight. He was never tired of reading to her, until she was tired of listening; and well did she love the tones of his voice, which gave to poetry a finer beauty, and to romance a greater charm. Then, in the spring-time of the year, Philip conducted her into the midst of sweet verdure and fragrant flowers, and painted to her warm imagination the beauties she was not permitted to behold. She inhaled the fresh and delicate odors of the spring; she felt the flowers upon her cheek, and Philip's hand in hers; she heard the tones of her child's beloved voice, mingling their

music with the notes of the singing birds, and she was happy, very happy.

"I *am* happy," she would say, — "happier than when the eyes of my body were opened, and the eyes of my heart closed; but now, Philip, could I only gaze once more on you and on our child, my earthly bliss would be perfect!"

Two years glided away. Sophia lay motionless, almost lifeless, on a couch amidst the deep shadows of the curtain's sweeping folds. Another soul had been ushered into the world. Little Sophy had a brother now, and Mrs. Sandford had another object to love. Ah! how the mother's heart yearned towards that object — the child of her blindness — which she could not see!

The mother's lips moved with a feeble murmur. Philip bent over her to listen to her faintest words. Immediately after, he gave some hurried directions to the attendants, and the babe was placed on its mother's breast. Her heart overflowed with indescribable tenderness.

"O, Philip!" she murmured, "if I could only SEE it!"

She raised the fringes of her large blue eyes, which opened with a strange expression. A cry of joy escaped her lips.

"Philip," she said, "I see — I see the light!"

"You see!" he cried; "you see! Sophia, *do* you see?"

"Yes,—thank God,—I see the light! I see you, I see my babe, dimly, but yet I see! O, God be praised!"

And forth from those blue eyes gushed tears of rapturous joy, which Philip, thrilled with indescribable ecstasies, fondly wiped away.

"O, Sophia!" he murmured; "this happiness is too much—too much! Can you *indeed* see?"

She could, she could!—she saw him, she saw her babe again, and almost fainted with excess of joy!

Strange as it may seem, Sophia's sight had thus unexpectedly returned. Those blue eyes saw again; dimly at first, it is true, and never perhaps with all their former clearness and strength, but still they saw; and the happiness of Sophia and Philip was complete.

It were superfluous to add more to our story. The reader can imagine the continued devotion of Philip, and the fondness of Sophia for his second child, with whose birth were associated the most tender and joyful emotions.

Yes, the light of the blue eyes was restored; but her soul's vision, which had been born of her physical blindness, also remained. She had learned where the real happiness of a true wife and mother is to be

found; and henceforth, although she still enjoyed the society of her tried and attached friends, she seemed to live only to beautify and cheer her household hearth.

THE JOURNEY FOR A WIFE.

One fine morning in June, Albert Fairchild selected from his wardrobe his most beautiful suit, and from his bureau a goodly supply of linen; and, with a countenance glowing with joyful anticipation, commenced packing a capacious valise, and making other preparations for a journey.

Mr. Albert Fairchild was going to visit a young lady, of whom it is necessary that we should say a few words before proceeding with our story.

Josephine Marvin resided, with her parents, in a village which we shall call Pekin, in order not to offend the modesty of its inhabitants by using the real name of the locality; and out of this village she had never journeyed far, except on three occasions. She had made three visits to relatives in town, with whom she had spent months at a time. Here Mr. Albert Fairchild saw her, admired her, and ended by loving her devotedly. Satisfied with

her beauty and excellence, he offered her his hand; but she said, "You must come and see me at my home, and become acquainted with my parents, before exacting an engagement from me; for it may be you will not like them, and it is possible they will not fancy you; in either case I should hesitate to accept your gracious offer."

Miss Marvin had returned to Pekin; and now as already stated, Albert was intending to visit her family. Confident that Josephine was inclined to favor his suit, and blessed with a tolerably good opinion of himself, which told him the Marvins would not object to either his station in life or his personal appearance, he set out on his journey in excellent spirits.

The first forty miles he accomplished by railway-steam, in the space of two hours. At a small town in the country, he found himself compelled to wait for a stage-coach to convey him to the village of Pekin.

Impatient to proceed, Albert became ill-humored, and grumbled at the necessary delay. To while away the time, he drank a cup of coffee, ate a penny's worth of pea-nuts, read a few paragraphs in a newspaper, and walked the parlor-floor of the wretched inn with impatient strides.

"Are you going to Pekin?" asked a quiet voice.

He glanced at the speaker, who was a middle-aged gentleman, in a loose drab coat, a well-developed waistcoat of worn and faded velvet, and a hat that had evidently been useful for years; and who presented a rough and careless appearance altogether.

Now, Albert had one fault, which is a common one with travellers. He had no desire to make himself sociable, or even civil, in the company of strangers. If an unknown person asked him a question in the politest manner, he was sure to answer shortly, or give no answer at all. Moreover, his motto, when travelling, was "Every one for himself;" and this he made his invariable rule of action. A proposal to put himself out of his way to accommodate a stranger he would have ridiculed as the height of absurdity.

Knowing this disposition in our hero, the reader will not be surprised when told that, instead of giving a simple affirmative answer, or even a responsive nod, he regarded the rough-looking man a moment in silent disdain, and passed on without a word.

But the old gentleman with the drab coat and faded velvet waistcoat, in spite of his rough appearance, evidently possessed a patient and good-natured disposition, which was not easily to be disturbed.

Without appearing to notice Albert's incivility, he quietly remarked, as he came in his way again,

"You are going to Pekin, I should judge?"

"What if I am?" growled Albert.

"O, nothing," answered the old gentleman, with a good-natured smile; "only I'd advise you to book your name for a seat in the stage at once, if you have not done so; for I have no doubt but there will be half-a-dozen more passengers than the coach can accommodate."

Now, Albert had not booked his name, and he ought to have thanked the old gentleman for his suggestion. So far, however, from manifesting any sense of obligation, he replied with an insulting "Hem!" and abruptly turned upon his heel.

In effect, he found that there was but one seat in the stage-coach left unengaged, and that an outside one; and he had scarcely booked his name, when two other gentlemen came up in haste, manifesting much disappointment on learning that there was not room for them in the next stage. Albert was, therefore, fully conscious that he owed his chance to the old gentleman whom he had treated so rudely.

He placed his valise on the floor in the public room, and, lighting a cigar, sat down by his property, to beguile his impatience with smoke. He had been thus employed but a few moments, when

the old gentleman in the velvet waistcoat came and sat down at his right hand. Albert looked at him through wreaths of smoke, as if the old gentleman had been nothing but smoke himself, of a disagreeable quality, and puffed away without noticing him further.

"Will you be so good as to give me the time, sir?" civilly asked the old gentleman, glancing at Albert's showy fob-chain.

"Give you what?" muttered Albert, as if he had not understood; at the same time puffing a volume of smoke in the good-humored face of the old gentleman.

"The time, if you please, sir. Is it eleven o'clock?"

"I don't know," replied Albert, without deigning to look at his watch.

A moment after, the young man moved his chair to another part of the room, and sat down, his back turned towards the drab coat and velvet waistcoat.

The stage-coach drove up shortly after; and, having discharged its passengers and changed horses, made ready for the return route to Pekin.

Albert and another traveller occupied a seat designed to accommodate three, directly behind the driver. Both were slender men, yet they managed to spread themselves so as to give the seat the appearance of being full. The stage was nearly

ready to depart, when the old gentleman in the drab coat came out of the tavern, with a heavy carpet-bag in his hand, and looked inquiringly at the outside passengers.

"Room for another up there?" he asked, smiling at Albert.

"We're crowded now," responded the young man, sharply.

"You will have to get up there, sir," observed the driver, addressing the drab coat. "That seat ought to accommodate three."

"Then I suppose I must take my chance with the rest of you!" cried the old gentleman, with a good-humored laugh, as he climbed upon the stage. "Sorry, young gentlemen, to trouble you to make room," he added, as neither Albert nor the other traveller attempted to move; "but I believe I am entitled to a seat here. Ha! tight fit, is n't it?"

The old gentleman, who, as we have intimated, was rather corpulent, appeared to take no notice of the young men's unaccommodating manners, but settled slowly and deliberately upon the seat between them, compelling them, in order to avoid an unpleasant pressure, to contract their dimensions, and give him his share of the room.

"This is an imposition!" cried Albert, to the driver.

"What is an imposition?"

"Look for yourself. This seat is too short for three men of ordinary size, and this corpulent fellow will crush us!"

"Dear me! I hope not!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "I should n't like to do that, I declare! But it is a close fit, is n't it? Ha! ha! too much flesh is inconvenient, to be sure."

"Men over twenty-six inches broad should buy two seats," muttered Albert.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the good-humored traveller. "I don't know but we fat fellows ought to pay for the extra room we occupy."

"You ought to have some regard for other travellers!" said Albert; — advocating a principle, by the way, which he never considered himself.

"That is a fact," replied the proprietor of the velvet waistcoat "We have no right to disregard the feelings of others. I believe I must diet my corpulency, for the benefit of society; but we will be obliged to get along the best way we can to-day, for my substance is rather solid. Ah, I 'm sorry to discommode you! I only wish, for your sake, I was smaller."

This last remark was followed by a good-natured laugh from all the outside passengers, except Albert, who had become decidedly sullen.

The stage-coach now rolled heavily off with its load, the driver cracking his long whip, and urging

his horses into a rapid pace. For some time neither of the outsiders spoke, each appearing busy with his own thoughts. At length the old gentleman in the drab coat, whose patience, it seemed, nothing could exhaust, and whose even temper nothing could ruffle, remarked, addressing himself to Albert,

"This is really a fine day, sir. Were you ever in this part of the country before?"

"No," was the abrupt reply.

"Don't you think it a fine region? Observe those hills, which the spring has spread with green carpets; and remark how beautiful yonder forest looks in the sunshine! This is an excellent soil for a variety of agricultural purposes; well watered, as you perceive, by a river, which you may see glimmering through yonder clump of fine peach-trees."

The only reply that Albert gave to these observations was, we are sorry to say, a really piggish sort of grunt!

"You may travel the country through," pursued the velvet waistcoat, "and you will not find a more beautiful and fertile district than this."

"—m!" grunted Albert.

"The character of the inhabitants, too, stands high. They are a plain, common-sense class of people, but they are distinguished for their hospitality and genuine politeness."

"—m!" grunted Albert.

"We are now in Pekin," pursued the old gentleman, after a long pause. "There is a fine tavern over the hill."

These remarks caused Albert to start; but, too proud to betray an interest in anything the old gentleman said, he maintained a studied silence.

Thus he accomplished his journey. Like too many travellers, he disdained to appear sociable towards strangers, little knowing how much useful information is sometimes gained, — how much one's insight into human nature is improved, — how much good feeling may be cultivated by the use of common and familiar politeness among people met in stage-coaches and hotels.

Arrived at the tavern, and little caring what became of his excellent friend of the velvet waistcoat and drab coat, Albert leaped off the coach, and ordered his valise carried to his new apartments. While dressing himself with great care, the young man forgot his ill-humor in the glowing anticipation he entertained of a speedy and happy meeting with Josephine. Having partaken of a slight repast, he engaged a buggy to transport him to Mr. Marvin's residence.

The boy who went with the buggy drove up before a spacious and elegant white house, which had a remarkably neat and comfortable appearance.

"This is Marvin's," said the boy. "The big

gate is locked, or I would drive in; but you can pass up this right-hand path, which will take you right to the door."

Albert gave the boy a shilling; then, leaping lightly to the earth, he entered the grounds by a smaller gate, and, with a beating heart, hastened to meet his Josephine.

As he was passing up the avenue, a circumstance occurred which occasioned him considerable mortification. A laboring man, in a slouched hat and tow frock, who was at work around some young plum-trees near the house, turned, as the young man approached, and discovered the familiar features of his old friend the corpulent gentleman, of velvet waistcoat memory.

"Such," thought Albert, — passing on without deigning to notice the good-natured man, — "such is the impudence of people in the country! This common serving-man, having, by some means, obtained permission to leave his work for a few hours, gets into respectable company away from home, and endeavors to establish himself on a friendly and sociable footing with gentlemen! Now, suppose I had been familiar with him; what a fine thing it would be to meet him, at last, in his true capacity! I wonder if I shall suffer from his impertinence in Mr. Marvin's house?"

With these thoughts running through his brain,

Albert struck the heavy knocker, and brought an Irish girl to the door. He was shown into a neat parlor immediately, where he had not long to wait for Josephine.

To describe the meeting of the lovers would be to write a great many things which it is well enough for young people of tender sentiments to say, but which do not sound quite so well repeated to less passionate ears. Suffice it, that both Albert and Josephine were very happy to meet again, and that the former took great delight in praising Mr. Marvin's residence, while the latter was quite as well pleased at hearing it praised.

"You have, really, a lovely home, — so quiet and tasteful, Josephine," said Albert, "that my heart sinks within me when I think of my audacity to hope you may some day leave it for me! But your parents, — I am anxious to see them."

"O, you shall soon be gratified. I am proud of my parents, Albert! They are plain people, but so good!"

"Just the sort of people to suit me!" said the enthusiastic lover.

Mrs. Marvin entered presently, and he was not disappointed. He immediately set her down as the paragon of elderly ladies, and was admiring her genial countenance and unaffected manners, when Josephine announced her father.

Albert arose suddenly, and turned to greet him with becoming reverence and civility. Reader, O reader! can you imagine the young man's consternation and despair, when he saw coming into the door the drab coat, velvet waistcoat, and familiar countenance, of his corpulent stage-coach acquaintance?

"Mr. Fairchild, father," said Josephine.

Albert felt himself about sinking through the floor.

"I — I believe — " he stammered, "we have — met before!"

"Ha! my young friend of the stage-coach!" exclaimed the old gentleman, giving his hand a hospitable shake. "Certainly, we have met before!"

This was like heaping coals of fire upon Albert's head. His face burned with shame, and his tongue stammered with confusion. Making a very awkward and ineffectual attempt to say something civil, he sank upon a chair with sick and ghastly looks, which frightened Josephine.

"Indeed," pursued the old gentleman, as if he remembered nothing of Albert's rudeness, "I am happy at meeting you again so soon. How do you like the appearance of Pekin?"

"O, we — well!" stammered Albert.

"Glad to hear it! And the appearance of the inhabitants?"

"O, very — very well!"

"Indeed! I was afraid you would have no fancy for us plain people."

Thus the old gentleman went on, conversing in the most easy and amiable manner, as if it was his only study to entertain his guest. Albert listened with a faint heart and an upbraiding conscience, feeling keenly the contrast between the old gentleman's excellent nature and genuine politeness, and his own ill temper and incivility.

In a short time Josephine's parents withdrew, and she was left alone with her miserable lover. Albert threw himself at her feet, and there, refusing to rise, he confessed his ill treatment of her venerable parent, and besought her both to forgive him and intercede with her father for his pardon. Astonished and shocked at first, Josephine knew not what to think or say; but, to relieve the agony of her repentant lover, she took pity on his wretchedness, and promised all he asked.

Indescribable was his anxiety of mind, until Josephine had seen her father, and the old gentleman came walking into the room where the young man was alone. Mr. Marvin's countenance wore the same good-natured smile, which even the insolent treatment he had received could not banish; and, frankly extending his hand, he advanced towards his prospective son-in-law.

"Well, well," he exclaimed, before Albert could speak, "the past cannot be recalled; and I suppose the less said about it the better. For my own part, I freely forgive the rather ungentlemanly manner you used towards me. In fact, I care nothing for it now; yet, I must say that it gives me pain to think that you are in the habit of giving way to ill-natured feelings while travelling. Don't speak! I know what you would say. You are not always uncivil. I readily believe it. But, like too many young people, you think that, while travelling, you owe no man politeness, and ought neither to grant nor receive favors."

"O! but after this lesson, sir ——"

"You will act more like a sensible man. I believe it. But now I must confess that I am a little to blame in this matter. I knew you at the first, from Josephine's description. You can, perhaps, imagine my motive for persecuting you with my unwelcome society."

"O, my dear sir!" cried the tortured Albert.

"Ha! ha! It is n't a very bad joke, after all!" cried the old gentleman, his velvet waistcoat undulating with his peculiar happy laugh. "Come, come, don't look gloomy now! I tell you the past is forgiven; — but, mind, you must n't forget it. You must learn not to turn the cold shoulder to corpulent old gentlemen you meet in strange places, even

though always as disagreeable as the one you met to-day. Ha! ha! Let 's have a good, hearty laugh at the affair, and say no more about it."

In his gratitude for the kindness with which the old gentleman repaid his ill treatment, Albert kissed his hand with tears glistening in his eyes. Josephine entered presently, followed by her mother; — and, in half an hour, Mr. Marvin was showing Albert about his farm, and all were as happy as if no unpleasant occurrence had ever troubled their minds.

In a week Albert returned to town, a happier, wiser, better man. He had gained the consent of Josephine's parents to his marriage with the girl of his choice, and the wedding-day was appointed. For this and other good reasons, his heart was overflowing with joy.

In conclusion we may remark that, on his journey home, Albert attracted general attention, and won the good will and esteem of everybody, by the respect and civility of his deportment towards his fellow-travellers.

EDGAR EDSON.

In a beautiful rural district, in one of the New England States, Edgar Edson lived alone with his mother. His father died when he was sixteen; an only sister had married, and followed the fortunes of her husband in some wilderness of the west, and Edgar and his surviving parent were left sole possessors of the old homestead.

Mrs. Edson and her son lived very happily together; motherly love on the one side, and filial affection on the other, uniting them more effectually than often happens under similar circumstances. Without doubt, this happy condition of things would have continued until Mrs. Edson followed the generations which have passed from the earth, had it not been for the marriage of Edgar.

Living comfortably with his mother, who still enjoyed excellent health and strength, the young man had not thought of taking unto himself a wife

as long as she was spared to him, — until, in the course of human events, it happened that his affections became fixed upon an orphan who resided with a relative in the neighborhood.

Edgar desired to make Althea Baldwin his wife, without undergoing the delay and dangers of years; but it was the most difficult thing in the world for him to break the subject to his mother. He knew too well that, much as she valued his happiness, it would be a great sacrifice for her to give up her place as mistress of the old homestead to another.

However, he opened his heart to her, and asked her consent to his marriage. It was a great trial for Mrs. Edson. She shed abundance of tears, and prayed nightly for strength and wisdom to do her duty. At length, she said one day to her son,

"I had hoped that as long as I was living you would never think of bringing a young girl into the house to take my place. Here your poor father and I labored for years, — coming into a wilderness, as it were, and making a home for ourselves and children; and I am so much attached to this house, which my own hands have assisted in building up, that I would not exchange it for a palace. And I know how it will be, if you marry, Edgar! Your wife will claim all the privileges of a wife; I shall be mistress here no longer; but she will take the ordering of things upon herself, and I must sit by

and look on, as if I had no right to meddle or make with your household affairs. Yet I am willing to make the sacrifice, if it will add to your happiness. I know it is not right for old people to let selfishness and prejudice stand in the way of the happiness of the young. And as for Althea, though I think you might have chosen some one who would have brought you a little addition to our property, I have not a word to say against her. When my Matilda was married, I gave her a good setting out, as you know; but it cannot be expected that every man will find a wife with such good qualities, and so comfortable a dower, as my Matilda. As I said, I have nothing against Althea, who appears to be a pretty good sort of girl; so, consider all things, and then, if you think you had better marry her, do so as soon as you please."

Edgar Edson made some allowance for his mother's prudence and simplicity; and it was without the least inclination to smile that he heard her repeat, twenty times a day, what she said about that paragon of daughters — Matilda. He was sorry, however, to know that she was by no means favorably impressed with the idea of his marrying Althea; and, looking into the future, he trembled to think of the eternal comparison she would be sure to draw between her daughter-in-law and her own own daughter.

But, having considered everything which could be advanced as an objection to his marriage, and having prepared Althea for the life she must necessarily lead as his wife, he resolved to achieve the object of his wishes.

Althea was a girl of considerable spirit; she possessed an ardent temperament, quick perceptions, and not a very extensive store of patience. Naturally kind and affectionate, however, she would undoubtedly have made Edgar abundantly happy, had it been her fortune to live with him alone. As it was, the honeymoon was scarcely over when the smooth waters of happiness began to whirl in troubled eddies.

I believe Mrs. Edson ardently desired to fulfil the entire bond of duty towards her son's young wife. She endeavored conscientiously to grant Althea all her rights. But when the latter, with the native energy of her character, assumed the direction of her husband's household, and did so many things in a manner new and strange to her mother-in-law, — carelessly suffering those matters to lie neglected with which Mrs. Edson had always been most particular, and bestowing time and care on affairs of little moment in the old lady's estimation, — the parent of the unparalleled Matilda could not hold her peace.

Strong in her prejudices, quick in words, and

lacking moral fortitude, she lost all her patience with "the girl;" and often assumed the right to reprove her severely.

Althea could have borne gentle teaching and kind explanation with Christian charity. She was ever anxious to please Mrs. Edson, and would willingly, in many instances, have submitted, without a word, to her own more experienced judgment; but, when it came to reproofs and reproaches, the poor girl manifested herself one of that numerous class of women who possess a darling "will of their own."

She loved her husband, however, and, in order to spare his feelings, forebore to exercise that will as she would otherwise have been sorely tempted to do. Only at intervals it flashed out, like lightning from a dark cloud. However, Edgar was not altogether spared the pain of knowing how ill-adapted were the dispositions of Althea and his mother to move together through life. The latter, in the bitterness of her heart, complained to him continually, exaggerating his wife's faults, and strongly condemning the assumption of the girl, who, she declared, thought to set herself above *her*, in her own house.

"This, too," Mrs. Edson would say, "after I have spent a lifetime in making this place what it is! Only to think that she, coming here without so much as a set of spoons, should presume to take

away my authority and rights! O, if she had one fiftieth part as good a disposition as Matilda, — but it is no use to talk! You think she is perfection!"

These complaints made Edgar very unhappy, without alienating his affections from either Althea or his mother. It was now his great study to make peace between them; and so judiciously did he manage, that he effectually prevented any open outbreak, as long as he had daily intercourse with them.

But a time came when Edgar was obliged to leave home on business, and be absent several weeks. Bidding an affectionate adieu to his wife and mother, and exhorting each to exercise charity, patience and love, he took his departure.

Now, no sooner was he gone, than, in consequence of a slight misunderstanding, they had a violent dispute, in which the mother-in-law made use of such terms of reproach as fired all Althea's resentment. The latter, with flashing eyes, and lips compressed, suddenly left the room where the dispute occurred, and, reäppearing soon after in her bonnet and shawl, started to leave the house, without a word.

A little frightened by Althea's desperate air, Mrs. Edson asked where she was going.

"I am going back to my old home," replied the indignant woman. "I have endured enough of this slavery! I would rather be a domestic, and work

for my daily bread in peace, than live this horrid life. I leave you to the free enjoyment of the '*house your hands have made*,' and which you are not willing I should enter, except as an humble drudge, a mean and uncomplaining slave. If this is to be the wife of your son, I will go back to my old home, and spend my days there, peaceful, if not happy."

"Althea!" exclaimed Mrs. Edson, amazed and confounded, "come back! Althea——"

But the injured wife was gone.

Mrs. Edson followed her to the outer door, and called again in a loud voice; but she did not so much as turn her head. Following at a quick and nervous pace the hill-side road, she hurried away, and soon disappeared from Mrs. Edson's sight in the valley beyond.

The widow returned to the room, and, with a troubled brow, sat down, endeavoring to ply her knitting-needles with her accustomed swiftness. But her fingers trembled, her hands fell upon her lap, and she sat gazing thoughtfully at the floor.

She thought Althea would certainly come back that morning. Towards evening she began to grow anxious, and she spent the time in sighing, complaining to herself, and shedding tears. Conscious of having done wrong, and feeling that she had vexed Althea beyond endurance, she could not com-

pose her mind, nor silence the self-reproaches which distressed her breast.

How would her son greet her on his return, knowing that her uncharitable and impatient reproofs had driven his wife from his home?

Mrs. Edson passed a troubled, sleepless night. The house never appeared so hollow and lonely before. Fears and forebodings haunted her; and she thought of her own Matilda, and remembered how she had once dreaded to think that *she* might enter the home of a mother-in-law, — as Althea had entered hers. Had she done unto Althea as she would have had others do unto her own child?

Meanwhile the young wife, too highly incensed to give a thought to the scandal the step would inevitably excite, had returned to her old home, resolved to remain there until her husband should provide her another, in which she could live peaceably and happily with him, without danger of reproofs and insults from his mother.

Althea, when roused, was firm. The following day found her cheerful, and strong in her determination. Nothing could move her; and when, towards noon, she saw Mrs. Edson approach the house on foot, with a slow and faltering step along the path, her lip only curled with scorn.

The widow stood a moment on the step, hesitating; then with her thin fingers knocked feebly on the

door. Althea, with head proudly erect, and countenance serene, stood before her mother-in-law.

"Althea," said Mrs. Edson, with tears in her eyes, "will you go home with me?"

"I am at home," replied the young wife, coldly. "I shall not disturb you in *your* home again!"

"My child," rejoined the mother-in-law, in a trembling voice, "I am sorry I have offended you, and I ask your forgiveness! You must go back; for, consider the scandal which will gather, to burst like a storm on Edgar, when he returns. If not for my sake or your own, for his sake, come back!"

"Mrs. Edson," answered Althea, with cruel coldness, "I love my husband, and for his sake I have borne such injuries as humanity never suffered with patience. It took me long to form the resolution I did; but, now that it is formed, it is unchangeable, — I shall not go back!"

Mrs. Edson had prayed for humility, charity, patience. Patient, charitable, humble, she had gone to beg her own daughter-in-law to forgive her. But could she — should she suffer such pride to triumph over her, — such presumption to trample her in the dust? Ought the mother-in-law of fifty to cringe and shrink at the feet of the giddy girl of twenty?

She threw off her mantle of humility, charity and patience, and, with the sharp, wordy sword of

indignation, attacked Althea's pride. The latter laughed, and, reëntering the house, left the widow standing alone on the threshold.

Mrs. Edson stood a moment, speechless with anger and amazement, following Althea with her burning eye; then, gathering her shawl closely about her, as if it had been some strength-giving resolution, she turned away, and, at a different pace from the slow and feeble step with which she had approached the house, returned to her own desolate home.

With the exception of Samuel Masters, a youth in Edgar's employ, she was now quite alone; and it was only in the evening and at his meals that she had his society. Young and ignorant as he was, however, the widow made him her companion, and endeavored to beguile her loneliness and wretchedness by drawing him into conversation. But Samuel would drop asleep in his chair, and Mrs. Edson would be left alone with her own thoughts, which were like haunting spirits of evil.

Two weeks passed. Althea was still firm in her resolution, and her mother-in-law was very anxiously awaiting her son's return. Edgar had been heard from but once; he wrote the morning he embarked on board the sloop Dolphin, at Charleston, on his way home; and he was now daily expected.

Such was the condition of affairs when, one beau-

tiful afternoon, as the widow was plucking some weeds from the borders of the door-yard path, she heard the gate open, and, looking up, saw, with a strange mingling of joyful surprise and foreboding of ill, Althea approach the house.

She had despaired of seeing her daughter-in-law again until Edgar's return; and, so great was her confusion at the sudden apparition, that she scarcely knew whether to turn her back upon her, or welcome her with open arms. Althea left her no time for reflection. With a frantic gesture, she thrust a newspaper into the widow's hand, exclaiming, hoarsely,

"Read that, — and tell me if I am in my right senses!"

Mrs. Edson started with alarm. She gazed earnestly at Althea, who was deadly pale; then eagerly read the paragraph at which the young wife's trembling finger pointed.

The widow swooned, and fell upon the path.

"It is too true! — too true!" shrieked Althea, clasping her hands upon her brow. "O, Edgar! my Edgar! dead! dead!"

The paragraph was a brief notice of the loss of the sloop Dolphin, and the lives of three passengers. The names of the unfortunates were given. The first was that of EDGAR EDSON!

Althea lifted her mother-in-law in her arms, and,

as the latter began to recover from her swoon, wept upon her bosom. It was no time then for resentment or pride; but the tears that welled up from their crushed and broken hearts were mingled in sympathy.

It is meet that we should draw a veil over the scene of grief and lamentation which ensued. In all the years through which that house had stood, it had not been visited by such wild and uncontrollable despair. The sounds of woe brought neighbors to the cottage, who vainly endeavored to administer consolation and hope to the afflicted women. It was impossible to say which of the two suffered the keenest anguish.

The whole neighborhood was thrown into consternation by the intelligence of Edgar's death. The cottage was thronged by the old and young of both sexes, — the friends of the widow, the mates of her son, the companions of Althea, — all who sympathized with their distress. Everybody seemed anxious to comfort and assist; but what comfort, what assistance, could be given? Only one person conceived of the true method of soothing the wounded hearts of Althea and her mother. This was the thoughtful and benevolent Deacon Sumpter. Volunteering to set out at once for the scene of the disaster, to bring, if possible, the body of Edgar to his

native village, he took leave of the mourners, and departed on his mission the same night.

Three days have passed. It is evening, and Mrs. Edson and Althea are alone in the lonely cottage. Friends, who have been with them all the long, long day, have just gone to their homes, under the escort of the faithful and simple Samuel.

It is a chilly night, and the sorrowing women have built a fire of fagots on the hearth. The candle, burning low, has fallen in its socket, and expired. Only the flames of the blazing twigs and sticks light up the room, as they dance in the wide chimney, and throw spectral shadows all along the walls.

The cricket comes forth from his hermit-cell, and startles silence with his shrill, sharp chirp. There is something ineffably dreary and desolate to the sorrow-stricken heart in that mournful insect's song. It makes the two widows shudder, — the elder and the younger, — and clasp tighter the hand each holds in hers.

The first paroxysm of grief had passed. Sad resignation and deep-settled sorrow had taken the place of the agony which seeks relief in lamentations.

Althea and her mother-in-law had conversed calmly about their sorrow. The past, too, had been reviewed; and, when their hearts were softened by the sympathy of sadness, they tasted the heavenly

sweets of mutual forgiveness and perfect reconciliation.

"Henceforth," said the elder of the two mourners, as she pressed her companion's hand, "henceforth, my child, my home is your home, — what I have is yours. I only ask you to love me, and overlook my faults. Live with me, and I will endeavor to atone for the past by perfect submission to your wishes."

"Mother, do not talk so!" murmured Althea. "It is for *me* to atone for my faults by humility. Shall I — so much younger than you — shall I, with my immature judgment and ungoverned caprices, attempt to set up my wishes before yours? O, mother! let us live without selfishness, without strife and discord, — let us live in peace, and may the memory of *him* bind our hearts together!"

"Amen!" breathed the widow, raising her eyes, dim with unshed tears, towards heaven. "Amen!"

At that moment the door was burst open, and the lad Samuel rushed to the hearth. The mourners, alarmed by his abrupt and excited manner, started from their seats, and gazed upon his face. The blaze of the fagots revealed it pale as ashes. He trembled from head to foot.

"What is the matter, Samuel?" asked the old lady.

With a countenance full of horror, the lad pointed towards the door, which he had left open.

Althea closed it.

"Speak!" said her mother, clasping Samuel's arm. "What is the matter?"

"His ghost!" gasped Samuel, shuddering.

Althea smiled sadly. Since the news of Edgar's death had arrived, Samuel, who possessed an excitable imagination, had been haunted by vague terrors, insomuch that he had been confessedly afraid to be alone in the dark. On this occasion, Althea charged his fears upon his excited fancy, and would not have questioned him; but Mrs. Edson pursued her inquisition.

"What do you mean by *his ghost*, — whose ghost?"

"His — Mr. Edgar's, — I saw it — by the graveyard!"

At that moment the gate was heard to open and close, and the superstitious lad moved into a corner, pale, and trembling with fear.

"There it comes!" he muttered. "It followed me, — I knew it would come here!"

"Hush, simpleton!" exclaimed Mrs. Edson. "Ghosts go through gates without noise, — if ghosts there be. Go and open the door."

"I — I would n't for a kingdom!" said the lad.

"I know it 's him. I saw him with the moonlight in his face, — there! there!"

The door opened. A pale figure glided into the room. The flame of the candle, which Althea had just lighted from a blazing fagot, fell upon the face of the visitor. Those white features were not to be mistaken. Althea let fall the candle, and sprang forward. She was clasped in her husband's arms; she fainted on her husband's breast!

"My son! Edgar! my living son!" the widow cried aloud, clasping his neck in the frenzy of sudden joy.

Half in fear, half in wonder, Samuel started from his corner, and stared at the marvellous scene, until, his weak comprehension receiving the vivid truth, he shook off his terror, and shouted, at the top of his voice,

"He 's come home alive! Mr. Edgar Edson, that was drowned-ed, has come home alive!"

Almost as much I shrink from attempting to delineate vast joy as from the description of overwhelming grief. But what need is there of portraying the all-powerful and pervading happiness, the bursting flood of sunshine, which filled the souls of Althea and her mother?

As soon as they were calm enough to hear him, Edgar told his story, of which we only require to know that, being picked up from a spar, to which

he had lashed himself, after the wreck of the Dolphin, he had been taken care of by a kind captain and crew of a merchant ship, and carried to New York. Thence, although enfeebled by the sufferings he had undergone, he had proceeded at once to greet his wife and mother, whom he hoped to see before they heard of his disaster.

It was months before Edgar Edson learned the particulars of the misunderstanding which had divided Althea and her mother-in-law during his absence; and when he heard the truth, it afforded him little uneasiness, in presence of the peace and love and harmony which now prevailed, unsullied and undisturbed, under the sheltering wings of the guardian angels of his home.

MRS. JASLITT'S SPANIEL.

MRS. JASLITT'S spaniel was sick. The darling dog was stricken with some frightful malady. Mrs. Jaslitt thought the lovely creature was going to die.

"What is the matter with it?" she cried, in a tone of anguish, to Mr. Jaslitt. "It won't eat anything. I offer it the nicest cream toast, and it will not taste it. It refuses pound-cake. I bought a bit of venison yesterday expressly for it, and had it carefully broiled. Yes, Mr. Jaslitt, I broiled it with my own hands. But the poor thing only smelt of it, and turned away his head."

Mrs. Jaslitt used her perfumed handkerchief. After wiping her eyes with it, she wiped the dog's, as he lay upon the sofa by her side.

"He will grow lean if he cannot eat," she murmured, smoothing the animal's plump, shaggy skin. "He will starve, Mr. Jaslitt. What a horrid thought!"

"Have the doctor to him," cried Jaslitt, gruffly, over his newspaper.

"Have the doctor?" repeated his lady, in a mournful tone, and with tears in her large blue eyes. "O, Mr. Jaslitt! do you think I would neglect to do so, when my pet"—dropping a tear on the tip of Angelo's nose—"was dying? I called Dr. Slique three days ago. But he could n't do anything. To be sure, he was for giving a dose of calomel; but I could n't bear the thought of that. O dear! if the poor thing should be salivated!"

"Dreadful!" growled Jaslitt, rustling the newspaper. "Did the doctor give no sort of advice?"

"Yes. He charged me, as I value Angelo's life, to keep him in doors, and take care that he does not get cold. An influenza would prove fatal. I don't know but he has it now,—ah, poor thing!"

Mrs. Jaslitt saw the glistening tear she had let fall on Angelo's nose. She did not know it was a tear. It might be a symptom of the influenza. She wiped it away very tenderly with her dainty handkerchief, and went on:

"Last night I soaked his feet. The doctor said it would do no harm, at any rate. The water was blood warm; and I applied hot flannels afterwards. But I believe he is worse than ever this morning.

All he has eaten since yesterday was a fresh egg, beat up in milk, with sugar and butter."

"I 'll tell ye what!" suddenly exclaimed Jaslitt, "I 've an idea."

"O!" articulated his lady, clasping her hands, "if you love me, Jaslitt, save, O, save my dog!"

"I will. I know a man that can cure him. Wonder I did n't think of the colonel before. He is worth fifty Dr. Sliques, when we come to diseases of animals."

The colonel was a famous veterinarian. At the mention of his name, Mrs. Jaslitt's bosom thrilled with hope. She gave her husband no peace until he had sent for him to come and look at Angelo.

The colonel arrived, — a shrewd, dashing, jolly fellow, with a sense of the ludicrous. He enjoyed the lady's distress exccedingly; but promised to cure her darling. She thanked him with an excess of gratitude.

"Send him out to my place to-morrow, and come for him in a week," said he to Jaslitt.

"Money is no object," replied Jaslitt. "Cure him, if he can be cured, whatever the expense may be."

"Leave him to me," said the colonel.

The next day Mrs. Jaslitt took affectionate leave of her darling, and abandoned him with many tears, and some forebodings, to the hands of the coachman.

On the arrival of Angelo, the colonel attached a strong cord to his collar, and, shouldering a crowbar, led him to a bleak and unsheltered spot in the fields.

There he drove the iron bar into the ground, fastened the dog to it, pulled his ears, gave him a kick, and left him.

Five days later, Jaslitt himself came for the dog.

"I could n't wait a full week," said he; "Mrs. Jaslitt gave me no peace."

"Well," replied the colonel, "I think Angelo is about well. Let 's go look at him. I have tied him in the field where he can get a little fresh air this morning."

They found Angelo fastened to the crowbar, exactly as the colonel had left him, five days before, except that he had wound himself up, by walking innumerable times around the bar.

"Confound him! he looks a hundred per cent. better," cried Jaslitt. "His eye is bright again. He is lively, too. He looks as though he would eat."

"Eat? Try him!" laughed the colonel. "But be careful and not give him rich food. Tempt him with a cold potato, or a crust of bread."

Jaslitt took Angelo home, having paid the colonel twenty dollars for keeping him tied five days to a crowbar, without eating.

Mrs. Jaslitt danced, laughed and wept, for joy.

The lovely creature — although looking very lank — was so much better! It seemed as though they could not give him beef-steak enough to gratify his enormous appetite. In short, Angelo was himself again, and Mrs. Jaslitt's agony was over.

The colonel's fame went abroad, and, to this day, he has plenty of sick dogs to cure of dyspepsy, at twenty dollars a head. His manner of treatment remains a mystery.

In conclusion, we would suggest that, as so many of our friends, puppies and others, are troubled with a similar complaint to poor Angelo's, they should apply to the colonel for his remedy, instead of patronizing Dr. Sliques, and forcing their cloyed appetites with dainties.