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THE

HOUSEHOLD ANGEL IN DISGUISE

BY

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This Volume
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
REV. LEONARD WOODS, D. D.
OF ANDOVER, MASS.,
MY LAMENTED FATHER, IN TESTIMONY
OF MY GRATITUDE FOR HIS INVALUABLE INSTRUCTION AND EXAMPLE,
WHICH DEEPLY IMPRESSED MY YOUTHFUL MIND WITH THE
MANNER IN WHICH PIETY MULTIPLIES AND SWEETENS
THE JOYS OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

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THE HOUSEHOLD ANGEL IN DISGUISE.

CHAPTER I.

“Let me live amongst high thoughts and smiles,
As beautiful as love ; with grasping hands,
And a heart that flutters with diviner life
When e'er my step is heard.”—*Proctor.*

ON a slight eminence, in front of which lay a smooth lawn, uninterrupted except by rows of aged elms that met over the avenue in a loving embrace, stood a large stone mansion. Directly opposite the front entrance, and about three rods distant, was a spacious gateway with immense stone posts, and an arch over it from which hung a ponderous lamp. Advancing up the avenue, before named, about two thirds of the distance to the house, were carriage drives turning to the right and left, and winding around to the rear of the building. The house itself was an irregular structure, with here a wing, and there a luthern, or a bow window ; but altogether it formed a pleasing scene, and was not without some claims even to artistic beauty.

The owner of this mansion was Mr. Hugh Stanley, who had accompanied his father from the North of England to the United States when a lad of ten years of age. Mr. Stanley the elder, purchased a large tract

of land in Queenstown on the banks of the Hudson, where he erected this noble dwelling, which at his death fell into the possession of his son and only heir. From a large and beautiful grove of Linden trees in the rear of the house, the estate had early been called Lindenwood. By its elevation, it commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country; and by its rare natural scenery and numerous embellishments, delighted the eye of the many travellers along that majestic river.

Mr. Hugh Stanley was educated for the bar, but had never practised law except as a justice of the peace, and in cases of minor importance in his own neighborhood. Being of a reserved and quiet temperament, and possessed of a handsome fortune, he had heretofore occupied himself with the care of his estate. His family consisted of three daughters, Gertrude, Emma and Edith; and one son, a feeble child nine years of age. There was also a young girl named Alice, a foster-sister of Edith, who spent most of her time at the Hall; her widowed mother living at the end of the park.

An addition had lately been made to the family in the persons of Stephen Forsyth, Esquire, and his ward, Clarence Sydney. Mrs. Stanley had been deceased about five years, during which time her husband had been unfortunate in some of his moneyed transactions, so that when Uncle Stephen returned from India with numerous bags of gold, Mr. Stanley's daughters were very earnest that he should fulfil a promise, he had made to their mother more than sixteen years before, that he would some day come home rich as a Jew, and settle with them for life.

Mr. Forsyth landed in New York. In answer to a letter informing his nephew of his return, he had received an urgent invitation to hasten at once to Lindenwood. He wrote, in reply: "I am prematurely old, and people call me odd, or *eccentric* is, I believe, their word. Unless your daughters are sweet tempered, like their sainted mother, I do n't think they would find my society agreeable, for I have lived so long among Hindoos, I scarce know how to behave among civilized people. Then I have a ward who will live with me while he finishes his studies in preparation for the bar. So weigh the subject well, and let me know whether you are willing to devote yourselves to the whims of a petulant old man.

"UNCLE STEPHEN.

"P. S. How could I forget to tell you that I am confined to the use of a speaking-trumpet, and that I keep two monkeys.

"If, after knowing the above, you should conclude to continue your invitation, I shall start at once for Lindenwood, for there are no words in the English language strong enough to express my disgust of this city, which is a perfect Babel; and the cold bends me almost double."

After many discussions in the family, Mr. Stanley commissioned his daughter Gertrude, a young lady of eighteen, to write to her uncle to "come;" and in ten days after the receipt of the letter, he arrived, bag and baggage, ward and monkeys, at Lindenwood Hall.

I do not intend any disparagement to Mr. Clarence

Sydney by placing his name in such close proximity to the animals of a lower order, for he was considered by the family a great acquisition, affording as he did a pleasing contrast with the grotesque appearance of Uncle Stephen.

The young ladies had been easily persuaded by their father that the old gentleman, in his letter, had only wished to try them by representing himself in as unfavorable a light as possible; but when they saw him descending from the carriage, assisted by his ward and the coachman, it was with difficulty that they could suppress a scream of horror, that such a man was henceforth to be an inmate of their home.

Uncle Stephen was naturally small of stature, but now he was so bent down and shrivelled with the cold, that it was difficult to tell how he would look if he stood upright. He was so bundled up that but little could be seen of his face, except a huge pair of goggles. He made no reply to the offers of assistance from Mr. Stanley or from his nieces, when he had ascended the steps, but pushed them aside, motioning to his ward to lead him to the parlor, where he saw a fire blazing on the hearth. When he was seated in the large arm-chair, he pointed to Gertrude to place a cricket under his feet; then, in a low, grum voice, asked Clarence for his trumpet, who took from one of his outer pockets a large horn, with a long coil attached to it, surmounted by an ivory mouth-piece. The leaf man immediately placed the tube against his ear passing the other end to his nephew, who stood by looking on with amazement. But he instantly put it to his mouth, and said in a loud

voice, "We are happy to see you back again in your native country."

"Glad of it," replied Uncle Stephen, gruffly, "though you appeared rather glum; and the girls there look at their old uncle as if they took me for an ogre."

Speaking through the tube, their father assured him that they had been very impatient for his arrival.

"Well, perhaps so," said he, looking from one to another as they stood near; "but they don't altogether make up to me for the loss of Emma, their mother. She'd have had her arms about my neck before I had time to step my foot upon the ground; but it's no matter," he continued, as if speaking to himself, while he removed the goggles sufficiently to wipe away a tear which had gathered at the mention of the deceased.

"This, I suppose, is Mr. Sydney," resumed the host, endeavoring to give a more lively turn to the conversation. "He is so much altered that I should not recognize him."

"'Tan't any body else."

Mr. Stanley cordially shook hands with his guest, and introduced him to the different members of the family, when the conversation became more general. In the midst of it, Alice came in from the nursery accompanied by Louis, of whom she went in search, after witnessing with much curiosity the appearance of the Uncle, of whom she had heard so much. "He loved aunty, dearly," she whispered, as they advanced through the hall, "and I want him to see that we love him for her sake." But when Louis saw the odd figure, almost buried in shawls and outer garments, he started back;

but she whispered again, and he permitted her to lead him up to his uncle's chair, where he said, timidly, as he held out his small, white hand, "I am glad you have come, because Alice says you knew my mother and loved her."

Uncle Stephen eagerly caught the little hand, and kissed it; but laying it quickly down, as if ashamed of betraying so much emotion, he passed him the tube, inquiring, as he put it to his ear, "What did you say?"

With a deep blush overspreading his pale countenance, the boy tried to speak, but was unable to articulate.

Taking the trumpet from him and giving it to Alice, he asked, "Who is he, and who are you, and what does he want?"

Though her lip quivered, the child replied, "He is Louis, and I am Alice Carey. He says he loves you, and he's glad you've come."

With a softened voice and manner, Uncle Stephen replied, "And are you glad, too?"

"Yes, sir, I am always glad when Louis is."

"Honest — well, I like that. Do you live here?"

I live here part of the time. My mother lives in the cottage at the end of the park."

"What is her name?"

"Susan Carey, sir."

"Was her name Susan Brown, and did she live at the Hall once, as nurse to Mrs. Stanley?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, you may tell her she's got the best behaved, and most civil little girl I've seen since I arrived in America."

The child blushed, courtesied, and taking Louis by the hand retired to a seat in the window. All this time, Mr. Forsyth had sat with his outer garments on, just as he entered; but now he motioned to Clarence to remove one of his coats. When he took off his hat he retained not only his wig, but velvet cap with a long tassel falling over his shoulder, which added not a little to his grotesque appearance.

Clarence Sydney deserves more than the passing notice we have given him. He was tall, of a noble figure, and uncommonly erect. His face was serious, even sad, when in repose; but there was a vein of mirth in his composition, as was seen from an arch twinkle of the eye, and a rogueish curl of the lip, on witnessing the astonishment of the family at the appearance and conduct of his guardian. His eyes were large, and of a deep blue. His hair was chestnut, and was pushed back from his forehead, disclosing a broad, noble brow. His nose was decidedly large; but his mouth was small and finely formed, giving evidence not only of great sweetness of temper, but of firmness and resolution. Of the relation in which he stood to Mr. Forsyth, we shall speak hereafter.

Mr. Stanley, after directing the servants where to place the baggage, called Mr. Sydney from the room to consult about future arrangements. "Einma," said Gertrude, when he had retired, "what an old barbarian Uncle Stephen is. If it were not for the young man, I would persuade father to ship him, and his disgusting monkeys back to India, in very short notice."

“But,” said Edith, eagerly, “if he went, he’d carry his money with him.”

“Oh,” exclaimed Alice, “how can you speak so, when he says he loved your mother so dearly? I’m sure I shall always love him.”

“I should like to know, Miss Alice,” retorted Edith angrily, who asked your opinion? I’d have you to remember that you are only a servant.”

“Hush, Edith,” whispered Emma, looking at the old gentleman, who was gazing abstractedly into the fire, “don’t speak so loud.”

“No fear of him,” said Gertrude; “he is deaf as an adder, and it is fortunate for us that he is so.”

A few weeks later, when the family had become somewhat accustomed to the whims and caprices of Uncle Stephen, Mr. Stanley started for N——, from which place he was to bring home a lady to preside over his establishment, in place of the wife he had so tenderly loved.

CHAPTER II.

“Beauty and worth in her alike contend,
To charm the fancy, and to fix the mind ;
In her, my wife, my mistress, and my friend,
I taste the joys of sense and reason joined.” — *Hammond*

MARION THURSTON was the daughter of a clergyman, by whose sudden death she had been left an orphan, and destitute of any near relatives. She was alone, and her heart yearned for the sympathy and love to which she had been accustomed in the society and affection of her beloved parent. He had filled to her the places of father, mother and friend. He had been her teacher as well as companion ; had watched with fond pride her expanding intellect ; had directed her studies and her reading ; and as she had grown older, consulted her in all his plans for the welfare of his parish, and associated her with himself in his visits to the poor and afflicted.

Marion had a face, which, though not handsome in the strictest sense of the word, yet awakened feelings of interest in the most casual observer. There was a purity in the low, broad brow, from which her soft hair was simply parted ; a clear, truthful expression in her deep blue eye ; and when animated, such a sunlight spreading over her whole countenance, that one turned instinctively to look again. Brought up in intimate association with a gentleman of truly refined tastes, and of a high order of intellect ; shielded as far as possible from all per-

nicious influences, she was now, at twenty-five, a young lady gifted with rare endowments of mind and person, and with a heart peculiarly susceptible to kindness and love. She had received offers of marriage, but had never been sufficiently interested in those who sought her hand to waver for a moment in the determination she had formed not to leave her father. Such was her character at his death, which was the occasion of her first heart-sorrow. Her mother died before her remembrance, and from that time her life had flowed on in uninterrupted peace and quietness. But the loss of her only surviving parent crushed her, and for a long time she was not able to leave her bed. After the expiration of several months, she was urged by dear friends to shut up the cottage, and spend the summer with them. This she at length consented to do, though it cost her a dreadful struggle to leave, even for so short a time, the home rendered sacred by the memory of her beloved parent. It was in the family of her dearest friends, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, that she met Mr. Stanley, who visited them on his way to the East. He was much pleased with her appearance, though her countenance was rather pensive, and her manner in the presence of a stranger very retiring. He continued his journey, but, wherever he went, a pair of deep blue eyes seemed ever appealing to him for kindness and sympathy. He cut short his stay in B—, and returned to N—, where he obtained rooms at the public house, but spent most of his time in the family of Mr. Churchill. He gradually won the confidence of Marion, encouraged her to talk of her father, and at

length offered to fill the place in her heart rendered desolate by that father's sudden death.

Miss Thurston was at first startled at his abrupt proposal, as she had never thought of him in the character of a lover, and especially as he wished to take her with him on his return to Lindenwood. But her friends were enthusiastic in his praise; and Marion at length yielded herself to the delight of being once more the dearest object of affection to a true manly heart, though she positively declined accompanying him to Lindenwood until he had made his intentions known to his family. She urged him to consent that their marriage should be postponed until the next summer; but to this he would by no means agree, and at length the twentieth of November was decided upon for the celebration of the nuptials.

When Mr. Stanley communicated to his family his intended marriage, he met with no sympathy from his daughters, who were very unwilling to give up the freedom they had so long enjoyed of acting out the impulses of their own free will. Louis, however, was charmed with the description of his new mother; and many were the conversations he held with Alice upon this interesting theme. But Edith more than either of her sisters openly expressed her displeasure, and her determination, whatever Gertrude and Emma might do, to show Miss Thurston that her inclinations and pleasures were not to be restrained.

On one occasion, when she was unusually earnest in asserting her own rights in opposition to those of a mere stranger, Alice ventured to expostulate with her, asking,

“Why should you suppose she will wish to tyrannize over you?”

Even Louis undertook her defence, and, with a flush upon his sickly countenance, said, “You ought not to talk so, Edith, when you’ve never seen her. I think she will be very kind; and I mean to love her with all my might.” Exhausted by his emotion, he put his hand feebly into that of Alice, when, looking up, he beheld his father standing behind him.

Mr. Stanley drew a chair near the group, and sat down, taking Louis upon his knee. For a moment he pressed the artless boy to his heart, when he turned to Edith, who, with a heightened color, stood before him with a seeming determination, now that he had heard her passionate words, to brave it out, and said, gravely, “I shall give you no opportunity, my daughter, to make your new mother unhappy by your undutiful conduct. You will leave for school, and continue there until you can command your temper, and can learn to treat her with the respect and courtesy which are her due.”

Edith’s only reply was an ugly pout.

“Leave the room!” commanded her father, sternly.

When she had gone, Louis whispered, “You wouldn’t send Alice away from me, father?”

“No, my dear, Alice shall not leave you. She is a good child. I wish Edith were more like her;” and Mr. Stanley sighed as he thought how much more like his departed Emma was the tearful girl who stood clasping the hand of his little son, than either of his own children. “Alice,” he resumed, after a short pause, “if I am not very much mistaken, you will have cause to

blest the day Miss Thurston comes to dwell under this roof."

"She loves her now!" exclaimed Louis, eagerly. "She told me how she looked, and how good she was; and she says she is so glad, because she knows you will be happier."

Mr. Stanley cast a look of wonder upon the child, who stood with downcast eyes, as she said, timidly, "I heard you tell mother, sir; and she said the girls ought to be very thankful to have such a lady for a parent."

In the meantime Edith joined her sisters, and gave them an exaggerated account of her grievances, sobbing out, "Father never treated me so cruelly before. I hate Miss Thurston more than ever, for she is the whole cause of it. I have a great mind to say I never will come home from school!" Gertrudé and Emma joined the passionate girl in lamenting that the artful creature had gained such an influence over their usually kind and indulgent father; and when they met him at dinner, they only answered his kind inquiries in monosyllables.

The conduct of his daughters caused Mr. Stanley no little solicitude. With the exception of Edith, they had been uniformly dutiful and respectful toward him, though he became every day more sensible that they needed a mother's watchfulness and care. He felt, now, that he had unintentionally deceived Miss Thurston in describing them as loving, affectionate girls, who would take delight in rendering her happy. He began to doubt whether it would be right to expose her to such trials as he foresaw that she, with her too sensitive nature, would be called upon to suffer. Edith's character had always

been an enigma to her parents. They could not discern a single trait like her sister's. Though the younger, yet by her proud, imperious will, she had, even before the death of her mother, exercised control over her elder sisters, especially over Gertrude, who was naturally indolent, and would yield rather than defend her rights. Perhaps there was no one in the family who could influence Edith, and calm her passionate bursts of temper, so quickly as Alice. Though very unobtrusive and unpretending, yet she was bold in her defence of right, especially when Louis was assailed. Mrs. Stanley had hoped much from the influence of this lovely child, and had obtained a promise from her husband, on her death bed, that she should remain in the family, and be educated with her own children.

In the course of the week following Mr. Stanley's conversation with Edith, he completed his arrangements for her and Emma to go to the boarding-school, in T——, from which Gertrude had graduated the previous summer. He was only persuaded to postpone it another quarter, after hearing of the arrival of Uncle Stephen, and their strong desire to see him before they left home. Impelled by this curiosity, they gave their father a pledge of good conduct, and were to leave a short time after the introduction of their new mother to Lindenwood Hall.

This was the situation of the family when Mr. Stanley started for N——. Often during his journey he asked himself, "Can I make her happy? Can I return her warm and tender affection, as breathed through every line of her letters? Is it a fair return of such love, to offer her a heart whose first, best affections, are buried

with my Emma? Am I not too mature, too reserved, to be a companion for one so artless and impulsive in her temperament?" But these momentary thoughts were entirely dissipated as he approached the place of his destination, and looked forward with delight to meeting again his dear Marion.

At the pressing invitation of her friends, Miss Thurston had consented to remain in N——, and to have the wedding take place at their house. By her desire Mr. Churchill rented the cottage, where she had lived so happily with her lamented father, to the new clergyman who had come to take his place. By the kindness of the same friend the rest of her property had been converted into money, and placed at interest. She had dwelt upon the image and character of her betrothed until he had become her ideal of all that was true, noble, and good. With eyes streaming with tears of joy and gratitude, she thanked her Father in heaven for providing her a friend and companion to take the place of the one she had lost. This was Marion's first love, and she poured out freely her best and warmest affections, the whole wealth of her generous heart.

Mr. and Mrs. Churchill witnessed her devotion to him, and, though much pleased at her prospects, yet they warned her that there might be many circumstances connected with the relation of step-mother which would be wounding to her feelings. But Marion answered, "With a husband's love I can endure anything. And I mean to show them," she added, her eye brightening, and her whole countenance glowing with the generous resolve "that I love them for his sake, and that I hope to win

their respect and affection. I feel sure that I shall succeed."

Her friends said no more, believing that the heart must be indeed cold which responds not to such a sentiment.

Now Marion Stanley was to test the character and feelings of her new friends, and certain misgivings, arising from remarks of her husband as they drew near Lindenwood, made her breast heave, and her eyes fill with tears. They had been talking of Edith, and her father had expressed his determination to keep her at school until she could overcome her passionate temper, and her unreasonable prejudices.

"How, then, can I win her confidence?" asked Mrs. Stanley, smiling through her tears. "I wish she were to be at home, certainly for a time."

But her husband shook his head, and began to talk of his gentle Louis, whose arms were open to receive her. Nor did he fail to speak of Alice, who was as dear to him as his own children. With slight embarrassment he continued: "Her mother was brought up in the family with my deceased Emma, and, from our marriage to her own, lived with her as companion and nurse. Edith is only a few days older than Alice, and my Emma's health was then so feeble, that Susan, her mother, took our little one and kept her until she was nearly two years old. I think Edith retains some of the affection she then exhibited for her foster sister, though she often makes remarks which bring a tear to the eye of the sensitive child. When first separated from her companion she screamed so violently that her mother feared she would

have convulsions. And thus it came to be the habit for Alice to live almost entirely at the Hall. I tried to prevail upon Mrs. Carey to live with us; but she prefers to be alone at the cottage, except when she is needed for Louis, who is as dear to her as her own child. Since the decease of Mrs. Stanley she has been subject to fits of despondence; and at such times, even the presence of her child adds to her melancholy; but generally she is cheerful and very efficient.

Mr. Stanley related to his wife his conversation with Alice and Louis in regard to her, and the young bride was comforted with the thought that she could influence these dear children for good; and, perhaps through them, win her way to the hearts of the others. She asked many questions concerning the uncle, of whose arrival she had been at once informed, and was quite amused at the graphic account her husband gave her of the old gentleman and his oddities.

For a number of weeks Uncle Stephen had confined himself almost entirely to his own suite of apartments, where, in the company of his ward, he passed his time; though, whether in reading, writing, amusing himself with the tricks of Sally and Pollo, or whatever way, could not be ascertained, as no one ventured, uncalled, into the presence of the deaf nabob, as he was styled by the servants. But on the day of the expected arrival of Mr. Stanley and his bride, he appeared at dinner, arrayed in a new suit, consisting of a gayly embroidered smoking cap over his wig (though smoking was the old gentleman's abhorrence), with the long gilt tassel falling as usual over his shoulders; and with slippers, embossed with gold bullion.

When he entered the dining-hall, Gertrude and her sisters were at no loss to account for the perfect roar of laughter which they had heard from his room, at several different times during the forenoon, and which, indeed, was no unusual sound from that quarter. Their illy-concealed mirth did not by any means escape his notice. Indeed, his eyes, though shaded by the huge goggles, allowed nothing to pass without attention. The young ladies often remarked, that if his hearing were as perfect as his sight, they would not be able to live in the house with him; but on this occasion the only perceptible result of their rude conduct was an incessant demand, on his part, for attention. He was continually mumbling to himself, only now and then a sentence being spoken intelligibly: "In my dotage when I left India;" "Heathen Hindoos more civilized than some Christians; but 'twa'n't always so."

After dinner, Clarence Sydney having learned that Uncle Stephen would remain in the parlor until the expected arrival of Mr. Stanley with his lady, went out for a walk to the village.

After his departure, Gertrude and her sisters, unrestrained by his presence, began to discuss various items of family matters. "I wonder," commenced Emma, "what Uncle Stephen thinks of our new relative?"

"The great Mogul has condescended to give no opinion upon the subject," replied Edith.

"I suppose," remarked Gertrude, "that he is waiting until he has seen her before he gives his opinion. She must feel flattered at her new connection. How ridiculously he looks, decked out like a peacock. I saw Clar-

ence had as much as he could do to retain his dignity. I noticed that he never once glanced at his guardian all the time we sat at the table."

An expressive cough from the subject of their remarks, startled the eager group into an awkward silence, during which Alice, who had occupied her favorite seat in the window with Louis, advanced to the old gentleman, and quietly placed a cricket under his feet. He started as if from sleep, and something like a smile flitted for a moment across his features.

"How the old fellow frightened me," said Edith, in a low voice, and drawing a long breath.

"Nonsense, child!" exclaimed Gertrude, shrugging her shoulders as she left the room. "He was snoring."

"How Clarence can be so devoted to him is a mystery to me," said Emma, as she and Edith joined their sister.

"On the verge of evening a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth, throwing out its fitful gleams of light to the farthest end of the apartment. It was truly a pleasant scene to look upon. Ally and Louis were sitting in graceful attitudes upon the rug near a large globe, which they had drawn up to the light; while Clarence, who appeared inspired with animation by the rapt attention of his hearers, was pointing out places of interest which he had visited. Uncle Stephen had so far lost his presence of mind as to push back the goggles from his eyes, and disclosed a pair of brilliant orbs, whose mild, loving glances were resting upon the group before him.

"And did you live there too?" inquired Louis of Clarence, pointing to the southern part of Hindoostan,

while the heat and reflection from the fire gave an almost unearthly beauty to his usually pale countenance.

"Yes, my little cousin, I lived there with Uncle Stephen, amidst the elephants and tigers you were reading about this morning."

"What a pity Uncle Stephen can't hear," murmured Alice, looking tenderly in his face. "I always feel as if I wanted to tell him what we're talking about."

"He wouldn't *always* be edified by the conversation," responded Clarence, with an arch smile.

"No," said Alice, blushing painfully, "but when, as now, he'd like to hear it."

"Tell him so, then."

Uncle Stephen moved uneasily in his chair, as the child put the trumpet to her mouth; but he placed the tube to his ear, and said, kindly, "I know, little girl, you've been talking about the old man. I've seen the pitying glances you cast up here."

"I told Clar — Mr. Sydney," said the child, hesitating, "that I wanted you to hear too, because we're having such a beautiful time."

"Ahem! ahem!" said the old gentleman, clearing his throat; "so you can't enjoy yourself unless I enjoy it too? Did anybody ever tell you, Alice," he said, abruptly, after she had returned to her seat on the rug, "that you were like Mrs. Stanley?"

Alice shook her head as she replied, "No, sir."

"Got no eyes then," grumbled he, in his old tone.

"My little cousin Ally," said Clarence, laying his hand on her arm, "do you wish to please me?"

"O, yes, sir!"

“ Well, then, never call me *Mr. Sydney* again, but Clarence, or Cousin Clarence, if you will.”

“ But Gertrude told me — ” she checked herself.

“ No matter what anybody told you, will you remember ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

Just as Louis had put out his hand to thank his cousin for the kindness extended to his dearest friend, the door of the parlor opened, and Mr. Stanley appeared, leading in his lady. For just one instant, all remained motionless, the quick glance of the young wife taking in the whole pleasing tableau, when Louis eagerly sprang forward into his father's arms. Alice would have followed, her glowing cheeks and beaming eyes betraying her interest ; but she hesitated, when a look from Clarence decided her, and she advanced cordially and gracefully to Mrs. Stanley, and gave her her hand. Marion quickly drew the lovely child to her heart, and whispered, “ Thank you, my dear.”

“ If you are endeavoring to gain the affection of this young man, you are taking the surest means to do so,” said Mr. Stanley, introducing Louis to his new mother.

The boy put his arms lovingly about her neck, irresistibly attracted by the tenderness which beamed from her eye ; and he kissed her tenderly. Then, taking her hand, he led her toward the fire, saying, “ Here's Uncle Stephen, mamma. Alice and I love him dearly ; but he's very deaf, and he can't hear unless you speak through the trumpet.”

Uncle Stephen took no notice of his nephew's earnest signs for attention, but appeared wholly absorbed in the

vigorous use of his bandanna, and Mr. Stanley introduced to him his wife.

Marion caught the glance of kind interest with which Uncle Stephen regarded her, entirely forgetful that his goggles were lying useless upon the top of his head, and without ceremony she took the old gentleman's hand. She was agreeably surprised at the warmth with which it was returned, and from that time knew, however Uncle Stephen might appear, there was a warm heart beating beneath all the seeming coldness of his manner.

"Where are the girls?" asked Mr. Stanley of Alice.

"I will call them, sir," she replied: "we did not hear the carriage drive up; and they do not know you have arrived." They immediately made their appearance, and greeted their father with affection, and their mother at least with politeness. Mr. Stanley spoke in a low tone to Alice, when she went toward the stranger, saying, "Will you please come with me to your room?"

The lady immediately arose, and Louis put his hand in hers, asking, "May I go too?"

The evening passed pleasantly away. Even Uncle Stephen, as he turned to watch the countenance of one and another, seemed unconscious of the lateness of the hour. But the young bride felt sad as the family separated without having first thanked God for the favors of the day; and she repressed a sigh as she asked herself, "Have I come into a prayerless family?"

CHAPTER III.

“Perfumes, the more they’re chaf’d the more they render
Their pleasant scents; and so affliction
Expresseth virtue fully, whether true
Or else adulterate.” — *J. Webster.*

Two weeks passed away, during which time Mrs. Stanley had so endeared herself to Ally and Louis, that they were never so happy as when sitting by her side, and listening to her pleasant instructions. The preparations were completed for Emma’s and Edith’s departure: and they were to leave for T—— the next morning. The kind interest her new mother had manifested for her, touched Emma’s heart, and she would have thrown away her reserve, and treated her with affection, had it not been for the influence of her younger sister, who found something to ridicule or sneer at in every action, though she took good care not to do so in the presence of her father. She ascribed her mother’s kindness to the worst motives, while Gertrude, though ceremoniously polite, took no pains to conceal the fact that she considered Mrs. Stanley as an intruder. The word *mother* had never passed her lips, and she had made a solemn promise not to call Mrs. Stanley by that sacred name.

Poor Marion! It needed all the attention of her husband, all the confiding love of the younger children, all the sympathy expressed in the countenance of Uncle Stephen, to enable her to endure this chilling indifference

on the part of those whom she longed to be able to regard as her own children. She had always been so beloved by her friends, had lived in such an atmosphere of peaceful affection, that she was often obliged to retire to her room to give vent, in tears, to her grief and disappointment.

Little did her husband imagine the constant annoyances to which she was subjected, for in his presence Gertrude, and even Edith, restrained any outward manifestation of the feeling of dislike which increased with every fresh indulgence of unkindness toward their gentle, unassuming mother. Indeed, he inwardly congratulated himself that his daughters conducted themselves toward her much better than he had dared to expect; but they had seen her quietly submit to insulting language, and they began to feel contempt for her as a tame character. They never dreamed of the severe conflict which was going on in her soul. They could not understand, or appreciate, the agony of spirit with which, night and morning, she plead with her God, and her father's God, for wisdom so to conduct herself as to win all the dear members of this beloved family to her Saviour. Sometimes, indeed, she was tried beyond endurance; and, though a sudden flashing of her eye, which was daily growing more serious in its expression, and a flush upon her cheek, might have convinced her daughters that she felt, keenly felt, their unkindness; yet she would quickly retire to her closet, and there give way to a passionate burst of grief.

"Oh! why, *why* will they be so cruel, so unjust, to me? Why will they persist in ascribing all my words of love, all my interest in them, to the worst of motives!" This question she often asked, while tears were stream-

ing down her cheeks. "How can my husband be so blind as not to see this? He has spoken of my depression of spirits, and feared I was disappointed either in him or in my home. I assured him truly this was not the case; but oh! I could not speak of the cruel, unlady like taunts I constantly received from his children, when not restrained by his presence, or that of Mr. Sydney. No, I will not make him unhappy. I will try first to conquer myself, for oh! how hard my heart must be, when I find it so difficult to love them; and then to conquer them by kindness."

During the evening previous to the departure of Emma and Edith, Mrs Stanley went to her room for the purpose of writing a note to them, begging their acceptance of some bracelets which she had ordered for them, of beautiful and chaste workmanship. A stone of rare value was set in each, and underneath it the initials of their names. To E. S., from their mother. Mr. Sydney had returned from New York that evening, and had just given them to her. On advancing toward her dressing-table, she perceived it had been removed, while all the contents of the drawers were thrown carelessly upon the bed. She stood for one moment in amazement. This was but a fresh instance of the annoyances to which she had every day been exposed, and she doubted whether she ought not to resist such treatment; but she shrank from the thought of a contest with Edith, who, she doubted not, was the principal in this offence. Already she had seen in her such a disposition to tyrannize over all around her, she was sure the proud girl would not yield to her authority without a struggle. After a few moments

she knocked at Gertrude's door, and was instantly admitted. Indeed, she seemed to be expected by the young ladies, who were making themselves very merry upon some subject of which they had been conversing. Edith was standing in front of the missing table, the top of which was strown with combs, brushes, and hair-pins, while she had unbound her hair, and was deliberately proceeding to dress it for the evening, having just heard of the arrival of Mr. Sydney.

"I think you have appropriated my dressing-table," said the young mother in a voice which slightly trembled, notwithstanding all her efforts to appear perfectly calm. "I found my laces and other articles in rather a confused state."

No one answered.

"I hardly expected young ladies would have treated one so much of a stranger with so little courtesy, she continued, brushing away a tear which filled her eye.

"You needn't look so woe-begone at Gertrude," replied Edith, with a coarse laugh. "She wanted the table, but she never would have had the spunk to take it, so I took it for her; not doubting your willingness to oblige," she added, with a low courtesy of mock respect.

Mrs. Stanley was so indignant at the tone and manner of this rude speech, that it was with difficulty she restrained herself from a sharp reply. She turned instantly to leave the room, but had not shut the door, when she heard Edith exclaim, in a triumphant tone, "There! didn't I tell you so! She's a mean, craven-spirited woman! She dared not speak a word in her own defence! I'd like to have anybody try that game on me

P'd storm and rave till I raised the roof, before P'd submit to it."

"I never was so thoroughly mortified in my life," said Emma. "If she had staid one moment more, I should have told her so."

Mrs. Stanley retired to her own room; but it was some time before she could compose herself to the task before her. Again and again did she throw herself upon her knees, in prayer for strength to endure all the trials which her heavenly Father thought needful for her. When she arose, the memory of the past—the quiet—and happy life she had led with her sainted father stood out in such bold contrast with the insulting abuse—the petty annoyances which, by their constant recurrence so embittered her present life, that she could only weep afresh. She felt herself alone, and unprotected; and for the first time hard thoughts of her husband began to arise in her heart. She felt that she had been deceived. Not for worlds would she have left her pleasant home, to live a life of such wretchedness as she now saw before her. Then the questions again arose, whether she ought to submit to it; whether it were not a sin toward those, who, however they might regard her, stood in the tender relation of children. She wrung her hands in agony. "Oh! what can I do? I am altogether unfit for such a responsibility. Naturally timid and wanting in decision, with my whole heart, I shrink from these trials."

But Marion Stanley was not alone. The good Spirit whispered, "I am with thee. As thy day is, so shall thy strength be." She again bowed her head, not in prayer, but in praise. Yes, Marion was comforted. An Al-

mighty arm was underneath her, and though clouds overcast her sky, yet she was enabled by faith to look forward to the time when these precursors of storm should pass away, and the sun shine forth unclouded in his brightness. A glorious future rose to her vision, in which she saw husband and children bowed with her around the family altar, blessing God for her presence, who had led them to happiness and peace. The thought of Ally and Louis, also, came to cheer her, and she realized that she had still many mercies. Her husband no longer appeared unsympathizing, and she rejoiced that his heart was spared the pang he would feel if acquainted with the conduct of his daughters. She remembered, too, the respectful manner of Mr. Sydney, who had from the first treated her with the affection of a brother; and also the appreciating glances of kindness and sympathy from Uncle Stephen. She laid these things up in her heart, as preventives to the recurrence of the overwhelming despondence she had heretofore experienced; and seated herself at her desk to write to her daughters. The two small cases, containing the valuable gifts, lay before her. She opened one, and taking out the bracelet, touched a spring and disclosed to view a miniature of herself, exquisitely painted on ivory. Though very minute, yet the features were perfect, and the expression, which met her own, was full of earnest affection.

Mrs. Stanley was an artist, though the knowledge of her skill was as yet a profound secret in her family. She had copied these from her miniature executed by a skilful artist. She again compared them, and was more

than ever satisfied of her success. She replaced the toy, and with a heart full of the best wishes for her daughters, from which every hard thought had flown, she commenced the following epistle:—

“ My dearly beloved daughters,—

“ When you unpack your trunks, you will each find a small casket, of the contents of which I beg your acceptance. From a casual remark I heard from you, Emma, about your choice of trinkets, I hope these will not be unacceptable. The thought that you will sometimes, when wearing them, think of me as one who would gladly sacrifice her own comfort for your good; who entered your pleasant home with a heart fully resolved to do you good, and to love you as my own daughters, will fully and richly repay me for procuring them.

“ By touching a small spring under the first letter of your name, you will see that I have taken the liberty to give you a miniature of myself. When you look at it, remember that your mother will never forget you; but that morning and evening her prayers will ascend to Heaven in your behalf.

“ MARION T. STANLEY.”

Having sealed the letter, she gave it with the caskets to Mrs. Carey, requesting her to pack them into the trunks unknown to the young ladies. The good woman promised compliance, though she said gravely, with a shake of the head, “ I’m afraid they don’t deserve such kindness at your hands.”

Mrs. Stanley then joined her husband and the family

in the parlor, with a countenance so full of peace and tranquillity that some of them at least looked upon her with amazement; and, when she replied to a casual remark of Emma's, her tone was so full of motherly tenderness that the eyes of the young lady were suffused with tears. At the close of the evening, when her sisters left the room, she remained behind, and, putting her arms for one moment about her mother, kissed her good night.

O, what a thrill of joy and gratitude that affectionate embrace sent through the loving heart of the young parent! What an earnest did she consider it of her success in the great work she had undertaken!

There was one present who rejoiced with her in this token of childlike affection. Quick as thought, Uncle Stephen pushed his goggles to the top of his head, that he might see more distinctly; and when she turned to leave the room, with his usual expressive cough he called "Emma!" in a tone so different from any she had ever heard from him, that she could scarce believe the sound came from his lips; but, on her approaching, he said, with emotion, "God bless you, child! you may yet be worthy of the name of your sainted mother. There, go!" he added, impatiently, seeing her stand gazing at him in wonder; "what are you stopping for?"

With an impulsive motion, the young girl caught Uncle Stephen's hand, pressed it to her lips, and darted from the room. She did not wait to see the effect of her action.

"What an old fool I am," grumbled Uncle Stephen, fumbling impatiently for his handkerchief. "One would

think I had never been kissed before. But I should like to know who there is to feel for her, if I don't;" and, with this apology, he allowed his tears to flow unrestrained until he had overcome his sudden emotion.

When Mrs. Stanley at length advanced to bid him good night, having taken care to keep out of his sight, he muttered, "Bad girls, very; what's to become of them?"

"O, no!" she exclaimed, eagerly putting the trumpet to her mouth. "Emma has a warm heart. She will make a fine character yet."

"Humph! Edith, too, perhaps?"

A shade passed over the animated countenance of the lady as she answered, slowly, "Edith is high-tempered; but she is still young, and, with proper training, may yet do well. She has a great deal of energy."

"Charity covers a multitude of sins," muttered the old gentleman in a low tone. Then, speaking aloud, "Alice is worth the whole troop. She's honest — well, good night, ma'am."

She held out her hand, which he at first appeared not to notice, when he suddenly turned again, saying, "Do you know how to pray?"

Marion's cheek flushed as she bowed assent.

"Pray, then; pray for them all. They need it."

CHAPTER IV.

“Tho’ losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There’s wit there, ye’ll get there
Ye’ll find nae other where.” — *Burns.*

UNCLE STEPHEN and Maria Forsyth were the only children of their parents. Their father died before Stephen’s remembrance, leaving them to be the comfort and support of their widowed mother. Maria was five years older than her brother, and dearly did he love his sister, whose whole affections were lavished upon her afflicted parent and the little pet of the household. Eight years after the death of their father, these orphan children were called to follow the remains of their mother to the house appointed for all living. And now Stephen would have been disconsolate indeed, had it not been for his beloved sister, who watched over him with almost a mother’s solicitude and tenderness. To her teachings, warning and entreaty, he was indebted, under the care of his heavenly Father, for preservation from many of the follies and vices of youth. Her finger pointed to the paths of virtue and holiness as the only paths of peace. Her prayers ever ascended to God that the good Spirit might incline him to walk in them.

At the age of twenty, he left the shores of his native land for a lucrative situation in India. His sister had been married for several years, and had two children —

Einma, who afterwards became Mrs. Stanley, and Stephen, named for himself. It was a dreadful affliction for her to part with her brother, for he had no expectation of returning for many years, until he had made a fortune sufficiently large to secure his independence. The strongest hope of his sister for his speedy return centred upon the tearful girl who clung so convulsively to him at parting, begging him in heart-rending terms not to leave her.

“Keep up good courage, Isabel,” said the young man, as he tried to force back the tears he considered it unmanly to shed. “I shall soon make a fortune, and then we will have a beautiful home, and I will never leave you.”

Alas, alas, for human calculations! Before six years, he had heard first of the death of his sister and of her only son, and then of the marriage of his Isabel. The latter event threw him into a state of such gloom and despondence that he lost more than half of the fortune he had accumulated; and, after living on a year or two in melancholy amounting almost to insanity, he returned to his native country, hardly thirty years old, but bent and wrinkled like an old man. His whole character had undergone a change. From being light of heart, trusting and hopeful, he was morose, distrustful, and despairing. About six months after his return, he was called to the bedside of the one whom he believed had violated her solemn vows to him, but who was now a widow and dying. She revealed to him a plot of villany by which she had been led to believe him married in India, and that, shocked by his want of fidelity, and hopeless of the future, she had given her hand to Mr. Sydney, a man

whom she soon found had deceived her, not only with regard to her beloved friend, but as to his own character. He had taken delight in her distress, when he boasted to her of the forged account of Mr. Forsyth's marriage, which he had caused to be inserted in the papers. She confessed her sin in having married a man whom she did not love, and, with panting breath, begged his forgiveness for the injury she had done him.

It would be impossible to describe the nature of Mr. Forsyth's feelings as he sat by the couch of the dying woman, and heard her confession, interrupted as it was by groans and tears as she witnessed the agitation of the bowed man sitting before her, and learned from it that his grief had even surpassed her own.

"Isabel, my own Isabel!" he exclaimed, his voice choking with emotion, "you must not die. We may yet be happy. God forgive me for having doubted you; nay, for having distrusted his goodness. O, my Isabel, live for me," he continued, grasping her pale, emaciated hand tightly in his own. "I cannot give you up."

The dying woman lay gasping for breath, almost terrified at the wildness of his manner. At length she spoke feebly. "It is too late; I am even now dying. But you can grant me one favor; then I can lay my body in the grave in peace."

Overpowered with grief, Mr. Forsyth could only bow his assent.

"Take, then, my boy, my only child. I give him to you. He will be the heir to considerable property. I wish you to be his guardian, his father. Clarence, my child, come here!"

The boy advanced from the farther end of the apartment, where, unobserved, he had witnessed all that had passed. His countenance bore the marks of violent agitation, but with a maturity beyond his years he restrained his feelings, and put his hand into his mother's. "This, Stephen," she faltered, "has been my daily prayer, that God would spare my life until I could tell you how truly, faithfully I have loved you, and give into your care my best earthly treasure. Will you take him?"

Mr. Forsyth opened his arms, and, at a motion from his mother, Clarence advanced, and was clasped tightly to the heart of her early friend. "Isabel," said he, after a pause of intense emotion to both of them; "Clarence is henceforth my own son. Why will you not give me a legal right to the name?"

Isabel started.

"Why not give me the bliss of calling you mine, for the brief remainder of your life. Even now God has power to send health through your enfeebled frame. Oh, God!" he added, throwing himself upon his knees, "I will bless thee all my days!"

A beautiful smile of affection played about the mouth of Mrs. Sydney, as she put her hand in his.

"You will! you do consent!" he exclaimed, joyfully, "you will yet be my own bride, my wife!" and he warmly pressed the cold hand to his lips, while his frame shook with struggling emotion.

"Yes, Stephen, if my life is spared until morning, I will be your wife. I will not try to conceal from you that it will give me a pleasure I never looked for in this world

Ther. Clarence will be your own — your — own." She repeated the words faintly, as if falling asleep.

"Isabel! Isabel!" he almost shouted, as she sank back fainting; "You will not leave me thus." He pulled the bell violently, when the nurse entered from an adjoining chamber. Mrs. Sydney's countenance so nearly resembled death, that Mr. Forsyth rushed wildly from the room, utterly unable to restrain his grief.

By the application, however, of powerful stimulants, she soon revived, and looked anxiously around. A shiver seized her, and she put her hand to her head as if fearful she had been dreaming.

"He has gone below," said the kind nurse, observing her look of distress. "I will call him."

Clarence, who had been weeping bitterly, advanced to the bed-side, while she hastened to the parlor, where she found the afflicted man leaning on the table, with his face buried in his hands. He started up as she entered, and gazed at her with horror, as if he shrank from the tidings he feared she had come to impart. "Mrs. Sydney has revived," she said, "and seems anxious to see you."

He started forward, when she detained him. "It is necessary to be more calm. It would not do for you to see her thus. Can you command your feelings?"

"I can, I will, I must be calm;" he answered, impatient at the momentary delay.

During the night the pulse became more feeble. The last sands of life were ebbing fast away; but her mind remained clear, and the dying woman besought her friend to look to the Saviour, in whom she trusted for support under this trial. Again and again she thanked her heav-

only Father for his gracious answer to her prayer, and for providing a protector for her orphan child.

She repeatedly assured him that he had ever occupied the first place in her earthly affections, and expressed her gratitude for his forgiveness and renewed affection. Toward morning in feeble accents she once more committed Clarence to his care, exhorting him to bring up her child "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She then told her son to remember his mother's dying words, "Fear God and keep his commandments, obey and love Mr. Forsyth as your father," and, pointing upward, she whispered, "meet — me — there." Her eyelids closed, while a heavenly smile of hope and trust rested upon her features. When the morning sun arose, his earliest rays fell upon the lovely countenance of Mrs. Sydney, pale and motionless in death.

I will not attempt to describe the almost frantic grief of the afflicted lover, who felt as if bereaved of all that rendered life desirable; but will pass over a period of five years. During this time Mr. Forsyth remained in his native country, settling the affairs of Mrs. Sydney, and occupying himself in the care and education of her son. At the time of his mother's decease, Clarence was nearly three years old. Though at that period far from prepossessing in his personal appearance, his guardian found him possessed of an extremely affectionate heart, and of a warm and impulsive nature. When he came under the care of Mr. Forsyth, (or Uncle Stephen, as he had been taught to call him), he had evidently known but little restraint, and was self-willed and violent in his temper, when excited. But his passion soon passed away, and

was succeeded by a perfect torrent of self-reproach, in which he humbly begged forgiveness. Under the judicious management of Uncle Stephen, who never for a moment forgot, in his care of the boy, his mother's dying words, "bring him up in the fear of the Lord," Clarence became all that the fondest parent could wish.

At the expiration of that time, having become restless at so long a period of inactivity, Uncle Stephen concluded once more to go to India, and did so, taking Clarence with him, having remained in the family of his niece, Mrs. Stanley, for the last six months of his stay in the country. In that period he transferred all the devoted affection he had felt for his sister, to her child; and when he left her, his grief nearly equalled that he had experienced in leaving his dear Maria. She exhibited a tender affection for Clarence, and begged her uncle to leave the boy under her care; while she listened with pleased interest to her uncle, when he prophesied that his ward would some day become a distinguished man, and claim a relation with the little miss who was now elapping her hands in ecstasy at the sight of the high house he had made with her blocks.

At that time Gertrude was only two years old, so that she remembered nothing of the brilliant future prophesied for her. But Clarence was a tall, mature boy of eight, and while he seemed only intent upon amusing his little companion, he heard and remembered all that was said. In the years which had intervened, he had often called to mind the little, fairy-like figure enticing him to play, and rewarding him with a sweet kiss from her coral lips, until she was associated in his mind with all that

was lovable and lovely. After his return to America, six years before Uncle Stephen, he often longed to visit Lindenwood Hall, and renew his acquaintance with his young companion, of whom he could never think, except as a bright, laughing child. But his time had passed so rapidly in college, and at the law school, that he had never done so. When Uncle Stephen announced his intention to return, and spend the remainder of his days in his native land, and added, that if it was agreeable to the family of his nephew, it was his wish to live with them; it is not strange that the opportunity thus afforded of seeing once more one who had been a part of his daily as well as nightly dreams, should quicken the blood in his veins.

After the letter of his guardian to Mr. Stanley, he waited impatiently for the answer; and when it came, written by Gertrude, he evinced so much pleasure that Uncle Stephen looked upon him with astonishment.

“Don’t you remember, sir,” said the young man, archly, “you assigned this young lady to me?”

“Humph!” exclaimed Uncle Stephen, at the same time chuckling to himself; “so, young man, that’s the way the land lies. Well, we shall see; *we shall see.*” Though he would by no means have acknowledged it, yet the interest displayed by Clarence was very pleasing to his guardian. But he determined to test well her character before he trusted her with the happiness of one so dear to him as his adopted son. Of some of the measures he adopted to attain that end we will speak more hereafter. To tell the truth, the thought that his residence with his ward in the family of his nephew, might result

in the fulfilment of the old prophecy, had been no slight inducement to him to make such an arrangement. So far it had proved satisfactory.

From their first introduction Gertrude had been much pleased with Mr. Sydney, and in his presence appeared all that was amiable. We have seen he was much prepossessed in her favor, so that there appeared every probability that he would soon be deeply in love. Whatever Uncle Stephen thought of her, he kept his opinion, as yet, strictly to himself.

CHAPTER V.

^ The seeds of first instructions are dropped into the deepest furrows.

Tupper.

It was now mid winter. After the departure of Emma and Edith, the family spent more of their time in the large sunny parlor. The Hall was warmed throughout by a furnace; but in this apartment there was always a cheerful fire blazing on the marble hearth. On one side, close in the corner, stood the easy-chair which had been assigned to Uncle Stephen. Here he read, wrote or slept, just as he felt inclined. Here, too, after dinner, he submitted to the tricks of his favorite animals, allowing them to take liberties which he would have highly resented from any human being.

In the recess, formed by the bow-window, could be seen at almost any hour of the day, Louis with his young companion. The window was large, and afforded ample room for the small table which stood partially in front of the low divan occupying the space. Heavy curtains fell in rich folds from the arch above, which were usually looped aside to admit the cheerful rays of the sun; but by allowing them to fall to the floor, the young people could be entirely secluded from observation. A table stood in the middle of the room near which Mr. Stanley usually sat, when not in his study. Here also his wife occupied herself with her reading or sewing.

The greater part of every day Clarence remained in his own apartment, busy in his studies; but whenever he appeared below, his presence was hailed with joy not only by the children, but by the older members of the family. During his leisure hours Gertrude was as usual in the parlor, engaged with her drawing or embroidery.

Though Alice was within a few days of the age of Edith, yet both in person and manner she appeared several years younger, and could hardly have been supposed to be much older than Louis. Her form was slight, and her motions as graceful as those of a young fawn. Her hair was dark auburn, and being parted smoothly on her brow, hung in rich curls upon her neck and shoulders. Her complexion was of transparent whiteness, the blue veins being distinctly visible, while the changing color was ever mantling her cheek. Her eyes, when she was quiet, were hazel, and had a soft, dreamy expression, though when she was animated, they kindled and dazzled by their dark brilliancy. But the greatest charm in the face of Alice was her earnest truthfulness, the calm purity of expression. And her countenance was a true index of her character; for though a simple, artless child of thirteen years, she was striving after holiness. Every morning, in her room, which opened out of the nursery occupied by Louis, she asked her Father in Heaven to guide all her thoughts, words and actions through the day, and to keep her from all evil. When tempted to indulge in unkind feelings, she remembered that an omniscient Eye was watching over her, and she looked up for strength to overcome. She was naturally quick to feel when wronged, and sometimes

her eye flashed, and bitter words of retaliation rose to her lips, but she suppressed them, and in one moment her passion subsided, and she was able to speak calmly and peaceably. Her companions often wondered at her self-control, not realizing the source to which she looked for strength. Louis considered her the impersonation of all goodness, and her word as sacred. Nor was he alone in this. If, as was often the case, any difficulty arose between the sisters, she was often referred to by one or another, and her statement was received with perfect confidence.

Mr. Stanley had kept his promise to his first wife, and so far Alice had received equal advantages with his own children. She had regularly attended the Academy in the village with Emma and Edith. In their absence Louis was so dependent upon his little friend for company, that his father was puzzled to know what to do with her. Mrs. Stanley proposed laying out a simple course of study for them through the winter, to be pursued under her instruction; but her husband objected entirely to the confinement this would cause her, and she yielded to his argument that lessons in order to be of use, ought to be regular. As her time was not at her own command, this regularity could not be obtained. She then proposed that Gertrude should attend to them, but when asked by her father to undertake the task, she at once declined, saying she had neither talent nor inclination for school-keeping. But at length arrangements were made which proved in the highest degree satisfactory to both parents and scholars.

Happening to be sitting in the parlor one day with

Uncle Stephen and Mrs. Stanley, Clarence, who sat reading the daily paper, while the old gentleman was taking his siesta in his chair, had his attention arrested by a monotonous sound from behind the curtain. His earnest look of inquiry as he started from his paper, and leaned forward to listen, brought a smile to the mouth of Marion, who said in a low voice, "It is Ally reciting her history lesson to Louis. The child is very fond of study." She advanced to the window, and putting aside the heavy folds, peeped cautiously into the recess, then motioned Clarence to her side.

Sitting near each other on the divan, the children were so intently occupied they did not perceive the observers. Alice was repeating a page of history, which she did with such purity of language, and such an entire appreciation of the subject, that Clarence was delighted. Her companion sat with his eyes intent on the page, his thin fingers following line after line, as she went on with the recitation. But his face was flushed with excitement, and his brow was knit as if weary with the close attention.

Mr. Sydney returned to his seat, and continued for a long time to gaze abstractedly into the fire. At length he asked, "Has she no other teacher?"

Mrs. Stanley shook her head, and then related to him her own wish with regard to them, to which her husband objected.

"Would not Gertrude?" he asked.

"She did not feel inclined," was the serious reply.

"Well, then, for want of a better, I will offer my services."

‘Are you in earnest?’ inquired Mrs. Stanley, with a bright smile.

‘Entirely so, and am eager to enter upon my task.’

‘You are very kind,’ she replied, earnestly. ‘My husband, as well as myself, will be under great obligations to you.’

‘I fancy,’ he responded, laughing, ‘that the obligation will be on my side. It will be a pleasant recreation for me. Suppose I commence at once, as the history lesson appears to be finished. I should like to be installed into office before Mr. Stanley returns from the village.’

‘Alice,’ called Marion, ‘*Alice!*’

The curtain was put aside, and the child approached. ‘How should you like a tutor, Ally?’ asked the lady, taking her hand.

‘I don’t know, ma’am,’ she replied, returning the smile.

‘Mr. Sydney has kindly proposed to be your tutor; so, if you like the plan, he will commence at once.’

Ally clapped her hands. ‘Mine — me — did you say *me*, Mrs. Stanley?’

‘Yes, I said *you*, my own little friend, Alice Carey,’ answered Mrs. Stanley, kissing tenderly the animated face, as she gazed so earnestly into her own.

Alice turned around to Clarence, as if to thank him, but her joy was too great, and merely saying, ‘O, I must tell Louis,’ she bounded to his side.

But the young man needed no words. The look of delight which sparkled in every feature told plainly enough how she regarded the proposition. In one moment she

returned, and, advancing to the side of her new teacher said, "Will you please to let Louis recite too?"

"Yes, Louis too," he answered, for one instant detaining her to gaze into her bright face. He had never before thought her so beautiful, and it was a pleasant sight to look upon.

Louis was exceedingly pleased with the idea of going to school to Clarence, and sat quietly by while Ally ran for her books to show him how far she had advanced. He proposed to her to take a rapid review of her studies, that he might better judge what course she ought to pursue. He then took Louis on his knee, and asked what he wished to study.

"I suppose I must go on with geography and arithmetic," the child answered, with a sigh; "but it makes my head ache to study much, and I don't think anybody but Ally could make me understand the sums."

"What study do you like best?"

"O, I like to hear Ally read the Bible stories, and then she asks me questions, just as if it was geography or spelling. I can answer all those questions."

Clarence glanced quickly at the young mother, as the boy, having answered the inquiry, lay back against his breast. "Well, Louis," he resumed, trying not to betray his emotion, "if Ally will let me join her class, you and I will study the stories in the Bible."

Louis started from the kind arm thrown around him, and looked eagerly in Clarence's face; but, finding that he was serious, lay back again with a calm expression of happiness upon every feature.

While this conversation was going on, Uncle Stephen

awoke, and was gazing from one to another to ascertain, if possible, the subject which so much interested them. As soon as Alice perceived it, she sprang to his side. "O, Uncle Stephen!" she exclaimed through the tube, "Clarence is going to be my teacher. I'm so happy!"

"Ahem! happy, are you? Well, were you ever otherwise? tell me that," he added, catching her hand as she was dancing away.

"What, sir?"

"Are you ever unhappy?"

Alice cast down her eyes, while a rosy blush spread over her cheek; but as Uncle Stephen was intent upon hearing her reply, she reluctantly placed the ivory to her mouth, and, in a low voice, answered, "Yes, sir."

"'Yes, sir,'" he repeated; "and I should like to know what cause you have to be unhappy."

The child cast a hurried glance of embarrassment around the room, and then added, "Please, Uncle Stephen, I had rather not tell now."

"But I wish to know *now*. You needn't fear to speak before your friends."

She looked beseechingly at Clarence, who arose and went to the farther end of the apartment, but not beyond the sound of her voice. He was evidently anxious to hear what she would say.

"Well, Ally," urged the old gentleman, impatiently.

Though the tears trembled in her eyes, she answered, "I can't help being sorry when I have done wrong."

This reply, so different from what had been expected, caused a momentary silence in the room.

"And pray, then," continued the interrogator, "why

don't you leave off? Precious little need you have of grief," he murmured.

"I do try to," was the almost inarticulate response, while a tear trickled down her cheek; "but I often get angry, or feel wrong in here," and she laid her hand upon her heart.

"And what do you do then?"

"I ask God to take away my naughty feelings, and to forgive me for the sake of Jesus Christ."

"What then?"

"Then I feel happier."

"How often do you feel angry? every day?"

"O, no! not every day, not as often as I used to."

"Why is that?"

"I think God helps me to keep my resolutions."

"Alice," inquired Uncle Stephen, wiping his eyes, "who taught you to pray?"

"My mother, sir, and my father, before he died."

"When you pray again, ask God to bless Uncle Stephen," and the old gentleman, whose fountain of tears seemed ever full, no longer able to repress his emotion, wept without restraint.

Mrs. Stanley was much affected at the child, who had unconsciously let her friends into the secret of her hope and trust in her Maker, and revealed the struggles she had with her own sinful nature, and her entire confidence in her Saviour to wash away her guilt. She had no opportunity of ascertaining the effect this had upon Clarence, for he had walked into the recess, and was completely hidden from her view. Alice immediately left the room, and was joined by Louis, who returned,

however, in a few moments, and whispered to Clarence, asking him if he would please tell Uncle Stephen it made Ally cry to ask her so many questions.

“Is she crying now?”

“Yes, and I can't get her to speak, she sobs so much.”

“Tell your mother, and ask her to go to Alice.”

It had, indeed, been painfully embarrassing to the child to be obliged, as it were, to proclaim the inward conflicts which had only before been known to her God. But from this time the dear child found great comfort and support in the sympathy of Mrs. Stanley. A holy tie bound their hearts together.

The next day lessons were commenced in earnest, and Alice applied herself diligently, determined to show her teacher how much she prized his kindness.

Mr. Stanley was delighted with any plan whereby the child could be kept with Louis without injury to herself.

After dinner, Clarence asked Alice to come to his study with her books, and Louis to accompany her, and bring his marbles.

The boy looked in amazement. “Shall I need them in the school?”

“I'll have a game with you at recess,” replied Clarence, laughing. “Will you be my scholar too?” he whispered to Gertrude.

The young lady smiled, and her father looked much pleased, as he always did at any attention to his daughter from Clarence. “In what branch?” she asked.

“In anything you please.”

“In drawing?”

"I fear I should make but a poor teacher of drawing I am but a fourth-rate artist."

"And I am but a beginner."

"I shall be but too happy to be of use;" and so saying he followed the children, where he was equally astonished and delighted at the progress Alice had made, and her great thirst for knowledge. He questioned her closely to be sure that she fully understood the subjects of her studies, and came to the conclusion that his first pupil was possessed of a mind of uncommon force and clearness. "Now, Louis," he said gayly, after he had given Ally her lesson for the next day, let us have a game. How many marbles have you?"

"A whole bag full."

"Well, don't be partial; divide them into three parts."

Alice put out her hand to assist him, but was restrained by a glance from her teacher, who said, pleasantly, "Be fair now, Louis, and give me as many as you do Alice."

"I'll divide them equally."

These three parts proving too many for the game Clarence wished to play, Louis divided them into four, six, eight, twenty, multiplying and dividing until he began to think his teacher was very difficult to please. At length Clarence appeared satisfied, and the game commenced, when the teacher became the pupil, and begged Louis to impart some of his skill. The three were laughing very heartily, when Uncle Stephen appeared at the door.

"Hoity, toity! fine school this," he muttered, as he stepped cautiously over the ring into the room.

“ Pretty work for a young lawyer. Who’s scholar now, pray ? ”

“ We have had a good game,” said Clarence, rising from his humble position on the floor. “ Come, Alice, now it’s your turn to be teacher.”

“ She don’t know anything about it,” exclaimed Louis, eagerly ; “ but if you want her to hear you just as she does me, I know she will, because she says she likes you the best of any——.”

Alice put her hand across his mouth, so that he could say no more. Clarence gently took her hand, saying, “ Will you take me into your Bible-class, Ally ? ”

“ I don’t know what you mean, sir.”

“ Louis says you hear him recite, after telling the stories, and I think you could also instruct me.”

His manner was very serious, and the poor child did not know what to say. She looked so much embarrassed that he continued : “ Perhaps we will postpone our Bible lesson until Sabbath afternoon,” and she left the room.

“ Rather think,” said Uncle Stephen, when they were alone, “ you’ll get as much as you’ll give.”

“ I feel that I shall be well repaid,” replied Clarence ; “ she has a very bright mind.”

“ And a very pure heart,” added his companion. “ Strange, how often she reminds me of my sister.”

“ What kind of a woman is her mother ? I can’t make much of her. She came to thank me for the interest I took in her child ; but she did it in such a strange way, that I could hardly understand her.”

“She was formerly a very good woman. I have hardly seen her since we have been here.”

“Mrs. Stanley told me she thought her partially insane. She was very anxious for Edith to go away, saying she ought to be under restraint, as she never was at home; and now she is constantly fretting that Alice didn't go too. She told Mrs. Stanley yesterday, that the first wife promised that Alice should have as good an education as her own daughters. However, she seemed grateful that I would teach her. Poor Alice! Her fate will be a hard one if she should be deprived of her friends. She has been educated like a lady, is refined and cultivated in her tastes, and therefore but ill-prepared to struggle with the world.

“Ahem! we'll see to that,” said Uncle Stephen, emphatically.

Weeks flew rapidly by. Alice pursued her studies with great ardor, while Louis took lessons in arithmetic, geography, and grammar, never complaining of weariness, but thinking all the time that he was only enjoying some new game. Gertrude had commenced her lessons in drawing, but found no interest in them unless Mr. Clarence Sydney were sitting by her side; and, in truth, he appeared nothing loth to do so. He patiently taught her the same lessons day after day, instructing her to shade a little heavier here, and a little lighter there. He praised her success, and where he pointed out a fault, he did it so tenderly, that she was almost inclined to commit the error again. On the whole, Clarence had never passed so happy a winter, and he loved to bring the blushes to the cheeks of Gertrude by telling her so.

Mrs. Stanley alone looked pale and weary. Her countenance had gradually assumed a seriousness of expression, very foreign to the cheerfulness she exhibited when she first came to Lindenwood. Mr. Stanley noticed it, and it annoyed him. He supposed it to result from disappointment in her connection with himself. This rendered him somewhat reserved in his manner toward her, and caused her to retire more within herself. She usually now passed the morning in her own room, and only joined the family when they were all together.

Uncle Stephen, more than any other person, appeared to notice the change in Mrs. Stanley, and conversed with her more than with the rest of the family.

One day when Clarence had been seated near Gertrude, talking with her in a low voice for some time, she looked up and perceived the eye of her mother fixed upon them with a sad, grave expression. Soon after, the young man arose and left the room. Gertrude was very angry, and began to talk to her mother in a reproachful manner, saying, "I have seen you try to influence Mr. Sydney against me, and take every means to prevent our being together. When we are, you watch us with Argus eyes, as if you begrudged us the pleasure."

"You are angry, Gertrude," responded Mrs. Stanley, "or you would not talk so. I have never indulged such feeling for a moment. On the contrary, I have been pleased with his attention to you. But what would he, what would your father say, to hear you address me in such a manner?"

"Father, indeed!" exclaimed Gertrude, scornfully. "I fancy father has enough to do to bear his own trials!"

“To what trials do you refer?” asked her mother, her face growing very pale.

“The trial of finding out that he has married a mere nobody!” retorted she, angrily. The moment she had spoken, the young girl keenly regretted her hasty words, and would gladly have recalled them; for she was really frightened at the result.

Mrs. Stanley tried to speak, but was unable, and fell back faint and trembling in her chair.

Uncle Stephen started from his seat, exclaiming angrily, “Begone, girl! What have you been doing to your mother? *Begone*, I say!” He rang the bell furiously. Mrs. Carey happened to be in the house, and when she heard what had occurred, came directly with sal-volatile and stimulants, by means of which the unhappy lady soon recovered her consciousness, and was assisted to her chamber; and the old gentleman retired to his room in great excitement, muttering as he went, “What fools we make of ourselves. I’ll have my eyes open, if I can’t hear. Yes, and I’ll make good use of them after this. *Begone*, sir!” he said, to one of the monkeys that had escaped from his confinement, “I’ve no time for fooling.”

Clarence thought his guardian must be more than commonly absorbed in business, when he stopped from his walk across the room, and encountered the expression of the angry man. “I wanted to talk with you,” he began, “upon a subject intimately connected —”

“Can’t attend to it, sir,” interrupted Uncle Stephen. “Other business on hand.” He jerked a chair from the wall, and threw himself into it, where he sat muttering

unintelligibly for ten minutes. Though his companion listened eagerly, he could get no clue to the cause of this sudden anger. He left him reading quietly in the parlor, and now he was more excited than he ever remembered to have seen him. At length Uncle Stephen said, in a subdued voice, "Call Alice; I want Alice."

"Cannot I do what you wish?" asked Clarence, respectfully.

"I feel angry, and I want her to come and pray for me."

"Dear Uncle Stephen," replied the young man, bowing reverently before him; "you taught me to pray. Can't *you* pray now?"

Uncle Stephen made an effort to control himself, and, covering his face with his hands, sat thus for a time in silence. At length he motioned his ward to sit by him, and asked, "Did you want my advice on any important subject?"

"Yes, sir," replied Clarence, though somewhat embarrassed.

"Well, wait until to-morrow. I'll talk with you then. One piece of advice you need, and I'll give it now: "*Keep your eyes open!*"

The following day the young man again introduced the subject, and wished Uncle Stephen's approbation of his choice of a companion, telling him he loved Gertrude, and believed her possessed of all the qualifications he could ask to make him happy.

"What qualities do you consider necessary, young man?" asked Uncle Stephen, rather gruffly.

"Why, she is well educated, of a good mind, has an

amiable disposition, and — well, she is very handsome and very lovely.”

“ Handsome is that handsome does,” muttered Uncle Stephen, in an under tone ; then, speaking aloud, he continued, “ Well, if she *is* all that, I’ll settle a cool hundred thousand upon her the day you’re married !” and, the goggles being off, disclosed his eyes twinkling with suppressed mirth.

Clarence arose, stood before his guardian, and began warmly to express his gratitude ; but Uncle Stephen cut him short. “ You’ve got first to *prove* to me that she has these qualifications.”

“ That will not be difficult, I think. You are an excellent judge of character. How long will it take to prove this to you ? ”

“ Three years,” replied the old gentleman, decidedly.

“ *Three years !* ” repeated Clarence, with dismay depicted on every feature.

“ Not a day less. You know nothing at all of her character. Try her, prove her well. If she comes out scathless from the trial, I’ll give her to you, with my blessing.”

It required many arguments, however, to persuade Clarence that he was not perfectly acquainted with the character of the one he loved. But at length he consented to say nothing of his affection to the object of it, but to do as his uncle wished, and watch her closely, fully assured that he should find her in reality all that she was in appearance, and believing, when he did so, that he should be spared so long a term of probation.

Uncle Stephen was perfectly satisfied, and gave Clar-

ence his hand, saying, "That is enough. I can depend upon your honor. It has been the favorite wish of my life, since I adopted you, to unite you with one of my nieces."

"Surely," interrupted his ward, "there can be no comparison between Gertrude and her sisters."

"I acknowledge Emma is not so prepossessing in her appearance; but she may have a good heart, and Edith is —"

"A very shrew. Deliver me from the taming of her."

CHAPTER VI.

“None but an author knows an author’s cares,
Or fancy’s fondness for the child she bears.”

Cowper.

MRS. STANLEY did not leave her room for several days, but Alice and her mother were unwearied in their attentions. Mr. Stanley really loved his wife, and he went often to her room to sit by her, as she lay weary and faint upon her couch; but every time he did so, his presence seemed to add greatly to her distress, and caused her tears to flow more freely. He knew not what to think. If Edith had been at home, he would have supposed she had wounded her mother’s feelings. It could be nothing connected with his children, for only the day before she was taken sick, she had shown him, with apparent pleasure, a letter from Emma, with whom she kept up a regular correspondence; and in it the young girl expressed much affection for her mother. Alice and Louis were, as she had often told him, a real comfort to her. He would as soon suspect himself of intentionally wounding the feelings of his wife, as of believing Gertrude capable of it; for, in her father’s presence, she was invariably polite to her mother. As day after day passed without abating the distress of his wife, he at length became seriously alarmed, and retired to his study to consider what he had better do. He walked back and forth, reviewing his married life. First he called to mind

the years he had lived with his Emma — his first love ; then his meeting with Marion. How lovely she had appeared to him. He could distinctly see her as she looked when he went to bring her to Lindenwood. How bright and happy her face ; how warm and impulsive her manner ! But all was now changed. Some great sorrow appeared to have fallen upon her, and he became convinced it was connected with himself. Could he have misunderstood her character ? Had he not been too much absorbed in his cares, and too little attentive to her, who had left beloved friends and delightful society ! Ah ! he little realized how cold and reserved he appeared to Marion, who had lived in the closest companionship and confidence of her father, had been accustomed to receive his morning and evening caresses, to share with him every joy and sorrow which filled her heart, or that this coldness, for which Gertrude had so unfeelingly accounted, was breaking her heart.

Having in vain sought, by himself, a sufficient cause for the sadness and depression of his wife, he determined to seek her once more, and endeavor to regain her confidence. He wondered he had not before done this, and immediately ascended to her chamber. As he silently entered, he saw her sitting in an easy-chair, the back of which was toward the door. He had taken but one step into the room, when his attention was arrested by her violent sobs. He advanced toward her ; but her words left him powerless. She was holding a miniature, which he could see was richly set, to her lips ; then her tears rained upon it as she exclaimed, in heart-broken accents, “ Oh ! what shall I what can I, do ? Oh ! that my dear

father were alive to advise me!" Then, again and again kissing the miniature, she sobbed out, "And I loved him so dearly" when, starting as if she heard a sound, she thrust the precious treasure into her bosom.

He had heard enough. The mystery was revealed. Marion loved another. He returned silently to his study where he sat for a time with his face buried in his hands. He, too, asked himself again and again, "What can I do?" There was but one person in the family who could answer, and that one was Alice. Young as she was, she had watched, with sympathizing tears, the sorrow of the gentle wife, who had been so true a friend to her. She had heard the cruel taunts of Gertrude, and seen their withering effect. She had observed the slight misunderstandings between the husband and wife, through the influence of the same person. She knew, too, how tenderly, how truly Marion loved him, and how wounding to her feelings had been many occurrences unnoticed by others. But Alice could say nothing; she could only, by her winning gentleness, her ardent affection, soothe the grief which she could not remove.

When Mr. Stanley was called to tea, his anger had entirely subsided. His love and pity for his wife determined him to try, at least, to make her happy, even though she loved another.

Two days later, Marion appeared below. Though extremely pale, yet there was a light in her eye, and a look of firm resolve, which had not shone there for many weeks. The family gazed upon her with wonder. From this time she gradually gained her strength; and, though never gay, she went resolutely on in the performance of

her duties. With the exception of Gertrude, none of them knew the cause of her illness; nor did *she* understand the secret motive which now enabled her, though born down with sorrow, to go boldly on.

But they were not all destined to remain in ignorance. Marion needed a confidant, and she chose Uncle Stephen. She chose wisely.

One day after dinner, when the old gentleman had enjoyed a lively game with Pollo and Sally, the monkeys, and had ordered them back to their confinement, no one else being present, Mrs. Stanley begged him to allow her to go to his room, as she had something she wished to ask him. He arose at once, and accompanied her to his parlor above stairs, when he unceremoniously dismissed Clarence and his pupils to the room below.

Taking a low seat, Mrs. Stanley drew it near him, where she could conveniently converse through the tube, and unfolded her plan for the future. She confessed that she had felt a weight upon her spirits; "but," she added, "I am resolved to show my husband I am not the senseless creature I am told he deems me. God has given me powers, and I will use them. I have already laid out a plan of a work which I intend to write; but, constituted as I am, it is necessary for me to have a friend to whom I can confide my plan, talk about it, read my manuscript as I write, and ask for revision. Will you be that friend? Will you, for the time, take the place of the father I have lost?"

Uncle Stephen wiped his eyes, used his handkerchief with great energy, and then said, "I will, and may God bless you in your noble resolve." From this hour the

young wife found a true friend in Uncle Stephen. Many a time, when weary and faint in well-doing, did she seek his room, and never failed to receive the encouragement and sympathy which she needed. Her literary labors were of benefit to her, by allowing her no time to brood over her own trials, for Gertrude, though more cautious than before, yet often, by her unkindness, brought tears to her mother's eyes.

Mrs. Stanley was often at a loss to understand her husband. She frequently looked up to meet his eye fixed upon her with sadness, and sometimes as if he read her very soul; and at such times she was conscious of appearing much embarrassed.

She had an object, and was determined to win back the love she supposed she had lost.

Early in the spring, the whole family were startled by Uncle Stephen, who, after receiving his daily packet of letters, opened one containing intelligence which greatly excited him. He sprang from his chair, threw down his speaking trumpet, upset everything which stood in his way to the door, then ran up stairs, calling, "*Clarence! Clarence!*"

It was not more than fifteen minutes before Clarence came down, equipped for a trip to New York, saying, "Uncle Stephen intended to go; but he has at length allowed me to take his place." He merely stopped to say good bye, and a few whispered words to Gertrude, before he hastened away in order to reach the boat.

Nothing could be ascertained from Uncle Stephen as to the cause of Clarence's sudden departure, or the time when he might be expected to return. Gertrude, in her

anxiety, even condescended to employ her mother to obtain for her the desired information, but in vain. The old gentleman was restless and excitable until the third day after his ward's departure, when a letter was received from him which appeared greatly to relieve his anxiety, though he said not a word of its contents. After this, a letter came from Clarence every day for more than two weeks, until one morning Uncle Stephen announced to Mrs. Stanley that Clarence would soon return, if it would be convenient for them to receive a young man with him. Assured that it would, he then told her that the first letter he received was from a physician in New York, containing intelligence of the dangerous illness of a young man whom he had known in India. He had now recovered sufficiently to be removed, and Clarence, impatient to return, had asked permission to bring him to Lindenwood.

Mr. Stanley answered the letter, urging them to come at once. He also asked Clarence to take the care of his daughters, who were to return from school, directing him where they would meet him. In three days after this, the party arrived, consisting of Emma, Edith, Mr. Sydney, and Mr. Huntington, who was still an invalid. Uncle Stephen received the latter with the affection of a parent.

The young girls could hardly express their pleasure at being once more at home. Emma was really warm in her embrace of her mother; and Edith, who had grown to be taller than her sister, appeared much improved. Her father and mother gazed at her in surprise. She no longer seemed a child. Her hair, which she had formerly

worn braided in her neck, was now twisted into a knot, and fastened with a comb, making her appear like a young lady of seventeen. While at school, she had been much praised for her beauty; and, indeed, her luxuriant hair and brilliant color gave her some claims to be considered handsome. She kissed Alice as she would have petted a child, saying, "I do believe you will never outgrow that baby look."

Marion smiled, and hoped not. Louis was delighted to see his sisters, and, while Alfred Huntington remained, the time passed pleasantly.

Alice went on with her lessons; and her teacher, willing to ascertain whether she had advanced as far as Edith, playfully proposed to examine the latter in the branches she had pursued at school. There was no shade of diffidence in the character of Edith, and she willingly consented that either he or his friend should do so. Young Huntington had from the first looked with an admiring eye upon Edith, so free, open and frank she appeared. He compared her with others whom he had met, and thought her very superior to them. Clarence found she had pursued a great variety of studies, and that she had a skilful way of covering her deficiencies by asking questions connected with the subject. To an interested observer like Mr. Huntington, this appeared to show a great desire for knowledge; and he did not hesitate to express his admiration in looks, if not in words. But upon Mr. Sydney the impression was different. He perceived at once that some faculties of her mind were very mature, that she had a smattering of many subjects, but in force and thoroughness could not

be compared with Alice. Edith was far in advance of his pupil in her knowledge of the world, and in the variety of her accomplishments; yet Alice had incomparably the advantage in the ease of her manners, and in the winning grace and modesty of her expression. Mr. Huntington regarded her as a lovely child, but as yet he had found no opportunity of comparing their dispositions.

In the meantime, Mrs. Stanley progressed rapidly with her tale. She lived in it, and wove into it many scenes in her own life; and so full was it of thrilling pathos, so entirely did she identify herself with the characters of her story, that many pages were blotted with her sympathizing tears, while, as she read, Uncle Stephen laughed and wept. So interested did he become in this tale that he could allow her to write but a few pages before she read to him. His approbation stimulated her efforts, and rendered her more hopeful of success.

After remaining at home a month, Emma and her sister returned to school. During this visit, Mrs. Stanley took great delight in the society of Emma, and parted from her with regret. This dear child confessed that upon her first receiving the affectionate note of her mother, which accompanied the valuable bracelet, she was overcome with shame and mortification at her unkindness, and that she then determined to become an affectionate and dutiful daughter. While at home, she listened with unaffected delight to nurse Carey's account of the goodness of her mother. "I am sure," said the nurse, as she was in Emma's room preparing her dresses for her return, "I never can be grateful enough for the

kindness she has shown Alice, who loves her more than any other person living, unless it be Louis."

"Not more than she does her own mother," urged Emma, laughing.

Putting her apron to her eyes, Mrs. Carey answered, "You know she would have felt differently if I'd brought her up. She takes naturally to the family where she's always been treated like a child. If your own mother, who was so fond of her, had lived, she couldn't have been more kindly cared for."

Emma asked her mother if there was an engagement between Clarence and Gertrude, adding, "She will tell me nothing, but it's easy to see that she loves him."

"I think," replied Marion, "there is an understanding between them, though there may not be any positive engagement."

CHAPTER VII

“This is some token from a newer friend”—*Shakspeare.*

As the warm weather came on, Louis failed in strength. His lessons were discontinued, and he was encouraged to be out in the open air. His father purchased a small pony for his exclusive use; but the boy could hardly be persuaded to ride, because Alice could not accompany him.

It was a mild, pleasant morning in the latter part of May. The physician on the previous day had expressed his wish for Louis to be on horseback as much as possible; and Mrs. Stanley was trying to persuade him to overcome his languor, rise from the sofa, and go out into the clear air.

“If Alice could go too,” he began as usual, when with a perfect shout of delight, the person named came bounding into the room. She was breathless with her haste and joy, and catching the hand of the sick boy, pulled him quickly to the window. There stood the Shetland pony, and by its side a beautiful white horse, saddled and bridled, pawing and stamping with impatience at the delay.

Louis gazed at the horse, and Alice gazed at Louis, when, with a spring from the floor, she exclaimed, “that’s mine, dear, *dear* Louis! Now, won’t we have a fine time? Oh! how very glad I am!”

"But where did it come from?" asked Mrs. Stanley, who, with the whole group, had approached the front window.

"A likely story!" exclaimed Gertrude, scornfully. "What makes you think it is yours?" she added, quickly changing her tone, as she saw the eyes of Clarence fixed upon her in astonishment.

"Because a man brought it, and the letter said so," replied Alice, her whole countenance beaming with animation.

"What's all this about?" inquired Uncle Stephen, looking at Clarence for an explanation.

The young man smiled as he pointed to Alice, who eagerly took the trumpet and said, joyfully, "Oh, Uncle Stephen! somebody has given me a beautiful white horse! and we can't find out who it is."

"Humph! what can *you* do with a horse, I should like to know? You never were on a horse in your life."

"Oh yes, sir!" replied Alice, in her enthusiasm speaking very loud, "I have rode on Louis's pony."

"But Clarence led you," suggested the boy.

"Well, now I can learn to ride myself, and you'll like to ride a great deal, now you'll have me for company;" and she joyfully kissed his pale brow again and again.

When they turned from the window, they saw Mr. Stanley behind them with an open letter in his hand, from which he had taken a bank-bill. He had a most mysterious air, and waited, without speaking, until Gertrude said, "Is it so, papa? is the horse sent to Alice?"

"Yes; Alice has strong friends somewhere, certainly wealthy ones. A man came this morning, leading this

beautiful animal, and having asked for me, gave me a sealed envelope, directed to my care; I opened it, and found another addressed to Miss Alice Carey, Lindenwood Hall. This I called her to open, when, just glancing at its contents, she thrust it into my hand and sprang away, saying, "Oh, I must tell Louis!"

"Shall I read your letter for you?" he asked, turning to the child.

"Yes, sir, please do."

"Here it is: 'A token of respect and affection to Alice Carey, from an obliged friend. Ask Mrs. Stanley to purchase a suitable riding-dress with the enclosed.'" Here Mr. Stanley gave his wife the bill, which was upon a New York bank for fifty dollars.

Uncle Stephen had returned to his chair, and was very deliberately opening the last evening paper. Alice took her letter, and advanced to show it to him. "Look here, Uncle Stephen!" she began, holding out the letter.

"I'm too busy, now, child," he answered, shaking his head; and though very much disappointed that he did not appear to share her joy, she turned away from him. Her clear, dark eyes shone brightly, the rosy tint had deepened on her cheeks, while her small mouth was wreathed in smiles. Mrs. Stanley glanced at Clarence, who stood gazing at the little figure, and saw that he, too, appreciated her loveliness. Gertrude saw the glance, and, for the first time, a feeling of dislike toward Alice sprang up in her heart. Knowing she could take no surer way of annoying the donor, whom she was sure was Uncle Stephen, she advanced toward him, and taking the trumpet said, in a voice loud enough to call

the attention of all present: "Alice ought to be very thankful for your valuable gift. Perhaps, as she grows older she may appreciate the kindness which has singled her out as the receiver of your bounty."

Uncle Stephen was very angry; at least his heightened color, and the impatient stamp of his foot made him appear so. He started to his feet, and giving the cricket before him a violent push, exclaimed, "Who said I had bestowed any bounty upon her, or any one else?"

Gertrude was about to make an angry reply; but she saw Clarence, whom she thought had left the room, standing by Alice in the door-way, and she turned haughtily to the window.

"Could it be Uncle Stephen," thought Alice, "who gave it to me?" She started forward, then checked herself, and finally followed her teacher to the door, where Louis was impatiently calling her to come and try her new pony.

Gertrude retired to her own room; but the sight from her windows did not by any means diminish the anger she felt toward Alice.

Clarence mounted the horse, rode him gently around the yard, trotted and cantered him, and finding him to be perfectly gentle, placed Alice upon his back. Louis followed, laughing gayly at her fear, for the horse, though not a large one, was so much higher than the Shetland pony, that she trembled excessively. Clarence, however, encouraged her, walked by her side back and forth, until she became used to the height. He then asked if she would venture to have the animal trot, saying he would still hold the rein.

Though very pale, Alice said, "Yes;" and after a few moments, thought she could go alone. He showed her how to hold the rein, made her sit erect, bearing upon the stirrup, and then let her go, following closely behind her. She rode down to the gate and then stopped, but her kind teacher soon came up and taught her to turn about, when she trotted briskly up to the door. She then begged Clarence to sit upon the step while she rode alone, and this time she and Louis trotted side by side down the gravelled road, turned, and trotted up to the door, when the young gentleman told her she had done bravely, and Mrs. Stanley from the window nodded her approval.

"I wish Uncle Stephen could see me," said the happy girl, and looking up to his window she saw him, laughing heartily at her success.

The more she thought of it, the more was Alice convinced that Uncle Stephen was the donor; but she was sorely puzzled in what way to express her thanks without giving offence. At length, after revolving the subject until a very late hour at night, she resolved upon a method by which she might do so. She was in the habit of writing two compositions every week; sometimes it was an abstract of her lesson, sometimes a simple tale, and often a Bible character. Her next, she resolved, should be a letter addressed "To my unknown benefactor." This she did in a neatly-written note of two pages, and, having shown it to Mrs. Stanley, and received her kind approval, she carried it to the parlor, and, watching her opportunity when she found Uncle Stephen alone, she told him she had a letter which she wished to show him,

before she gave it to her teacher for a theme. The old gentleman pushed back his glasses, and took the envelope, little thinking it was addressed to himself. He opened it, commenced reading, then gave a start of surprise; but, seeing Alice standing anxiously before him, he read it through with no other comment than by frequently wiping his eyes. He then carefully folded it, and returned it to her, saying, "Good child, *good child*," in such a tone of tenderness, that she knew her humble thanks had been accepted. When she presented the composition to her teacher, he did not, as was usually the case, return it to her with corrections; and, when she asked for it, told her he had forwarded it according to the address.

During the weeks following, the children, as they were called in the family, improved the fine weather until Alice became quite an accomplished equestrian, Clarence often obtaining another horse, and accompanying them to the village. But while this exercise was of great service to the young girl, Louis appeared more and more exhausted, until at length even his physician became convinced he could not endure the fatigue. Dr. Jenks then recommended a change of air, and Mrs. Stanley proposed starting with him and Alice on a journey to N——. Her husband accompanied her, and after waiting a few days, and finding the change likely to prove beneficial, he returned home, leaving her to prolong her visit while the poor boy continued better. It was his first journey, and Louis was not soon weary of talking with Alice, about places of interest they had passed. He gained rapidly in strength, and was able to ride almost every day. His

mother went with him to C——, her native place, visited the house where she was born, pointed out to him and his companion the study where her father wrote his sermons, received the calls of his people, and heard her recitations. She showed them the garden, and arbor, with its clustering vines trained by her own hand. Nor did she fail to visit with them the graves of her father and mother.

Seated on a low mound, Mrs. Stanley called to mind the early teachings of her beloved father, the only parent she had known, and repeated them to her attentive listeners. She reminded them of the home, the Saviour has provided for all those who humbly believe on him, who love him, and try to do his will. Pointing to the grave before her, she told them how she had longed to lie down there by his side. "But," she added, "that desire was a murmur against the kind hand that had for so many years given me a teacher, guide, and friend. Long ago I learned to thank Him that my prayer was not answered. I have now many dear ones for whom I desire to live and labor;" and she drew the children nearer to her side. "I want you, my dear Alice," she continued, "to remember that God sends no more trials than he sees to be needful for us, and no more than he will give us strength to endure, if we call upon him. Sometimes he takes away our friends, sometimes deprives us of the affections we most highly prize, lest we should make idols of them, and forget him, the author of all our blessings. Let us trust him, feeling sure that he doeth all things well; and let us prepare for that mansion above the skies, where

there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, but where all will be free from sin."

"Mother," said Louis, gazing for one moment into her face, and then letting his eye rest upon the graves "I shall go there very soon. I often dream about it."

Mrs. Stanley pressed the dear child to her heart, and felt that it would indeed be a trial to part with him, while Alice caught his hand, her eyes filling with tears. "Don't, Louis, don't say so! You know I couldn't do without you; and you are a great deal better."

"Yes," replied Louis, "I'm better; but it won't last long. I lie awake at night, and think about it; and sometimes I'm glad, because then I shall never do wrong any more. And now it's so hard not to feel impatient when my head aches; but," and he drew a long sigh, "sometimes I feel afraid to die and lie in the cold grave."

"My own dear Louis!" exclaimed his mother, while her tears fell thick and fast, "*you* will not lie there. You will be with God, with your Saviour, with your dear mother. It is only this poor feeble body which will be put in the grave to rest until the morning of the resurrection."

"Alice reads to me about heaven," replied the boy, raising his eyes to the clear azure sky above them. "I love to hear about it."

"Oh, Louis!" exclaimed the weeping girl, "I never knew why you wanted me to read those chapters in the Revelation so many times. You didn't tell me you were going there so soon."

Mrs. Stanley was received with great joy by her old

friends, and she passed nearly two weeks among them, going from house to house with her children. On the evening before she returned to N——, she once more bent her steps to the quiet cemetery, and there alone, on her knees, at the side of her dear father's grave, she implored wisdom to guide her in all her efforts to do good. She prayed that her faith and patience might never fail, but that all her afflictions might be so improved, as to become blessings to her soul. She besought her heavenly Father to grant unto her the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing her dear husband a child of God, and all the children following the example of their brother, and looking forward to an inheritance in the skies.

Louis seemed so much benefited by the journey, and his constant exercise in the open air, that Mrs. Stanley postponed, from time to time, her intended departure. It was the last week in August when she wrote her husband that she should return in a few days. She had not yet sent the letter to the office, when she was summoned to the parlor by her kind friend, Mrs. Churchill, and there found Louis tightly clasped in the arms of Mr. Sydney. He had been absent from Lindenwood for six weeks, travelling with Uncle Stephen.

“And where is the good man, now?” asked Mariou, eagerly.

“He is at the public house, but a few rods distant.”

“That is, indeed, good news! Will he return directly home, from here?”

“He says he cannot decide until he has seen you.”

Mrs. Stanley started. “I will go to him at once. I have a letter written to my husband, informing him of

my intention to leave here in a few days. Perhaps it will not be necessary to send it."

"Is Alice well?" asked Clarence, when she had returned to the room, equipped for the walk.

"Perfectly so, here she comes, up the yard."

The young man started toward the window. Alice had thrown off her sun-bonnet as she came through the gate, and was singing gayly, when her attention was attracted by a sound in the street. With her neck and arms bare, her small head bent slightly forward as she listened, her lips parted, disclosing two beautiful rows of pearly teeth, Alice stood for one moment unconscious of the eyes gazing upon her with pride and affection. But turning to enter the house she saw Clarence, stopped suddenly for one earnest glance, to assure herself it were really he, then, with a light bound, sprang forward into the room, her eyes sparkling, and her whole countenance lighted with joy.

"Clarence! Oh, Clarence!" she exclaimed with delight, as he grasped both her hands and imprinted a kiss upon her willing lips, "I'm so happy to see you."

The young man said nothing in words, but the complacency with which he regarded his enthusiastic pupil told his pleasure at the meeting.

"Uncle Stephen is at the Hotel," remarked Mrs. Stanley to the child. "You and Louis may go with me to see him. As I should like to have some private conversation with him," she continued, turning to Mr. Sydney, "I will entrust you to the care of the young people for half an hour."

"I am well convinced there is some plot going on,"

said Clarence, archly. "Uncle Stephen is very mysterious about business he must arrange with you."

Mrs. Stanley glanced toward the children, and he said no more.

The old gentleman was extremely pleased to meet his friends; though he expressed great displeasure at his ward for being gone so long, saying, "I suppose you thought I had no feeling. Now this little girl, I dare say, is just as glad to see me, as she is to see you—hey, Alice?"

Thus suddenly addressed, the child replied, archly: "Dear Uncle Stephen, you know I love Clarence because he's your ward, and because you love him."

The whole company burst into a merry laugh at her answer.

"Complimentary to you, Clarence," resumed Uncle Stephen; "so you don't like him at all on his own account?"

"I know, sir," she answered, with a heightened color, as she caught a glimpse of the young man's earnest face, "that you would not love him as you do, unless he were very good."

"What have you been doing to the child?" he asked of Marion, "giving her lessons in flattery? This air don't agree with her; must get her home." But while he said this, he held fast her little hands, and gazed lovingly into her face.

When Clarence had taken the children for a walk, Marion drew a chair near him, and imparted her success. She had finished her tale, and prepared it for the press.

"That being the case," he replied, "I shall proceed at

once to New York, and make arrangements for its publication. Will you leave the business with me?"

"Certainly, *certainly*,—I am entirely ignorant how such things are managed."

"I have an acquaintance with a publisher, who will, I think, be glad to take it upon my recommendation." He didn't consider it necessary to say to her, that he would furnish the requisite funds.

Mrs. Stanley then presented her kind friend with a small case, containing the miniatures of herself and the children; and he had not done admiring it when they returned.

Mrs. Churchill cordially invited Mr. Forsyth, and his ward, to spend the night at her house; but the old gentleman preferred remaining at the hotel, as they were to start for New York early the next morning.

Mrs. Stanley parted from her friends with regret, after receiving from them a promise of a speedy return of her long visit; and arrived at home greatly improved in strength and spirits. The children were delighted to be again at home, and resume their wonted occupations. They visited the stables to see Felix and Dobbin, the names they had given to their favorite animals, and found them in good condition, having by order of Mr. Stanley been exercised every day.

When Uncle Stephen returned, he informed Marion that he had been able to make satisfactory arrangements in regard to the publication of her tale, which would soon be issued from the press.

As the time approached for the work to appear, the author began to tremble for its success; and, though

it was entirely anonymous, she almost wished she had never undertaken it. These fears, however, she was obliged to keep to herself, for Uncle Stephen was indignant at the first doubt she expressed, and took it as a reflection upon his power of judging, when she said, timidly, "The public will not receive my little work as kindly as you have done."

The next few weeks passed rapidly away. Mr. Stanley was in unusual spirits at the return of his wife, and the apparent improvement in Louis. Gertrude was occupied with Clarence, who gave himself up to the pleasure he experienced in her society, though as yet he had kept his promise to his guardian, and had not disclosed to her his love. He had, indeed, experienced a sudden pang, when he observed any appearance of asperity in her temper; but love is proverbially blind, so that many events prejudicial to her passed before his eyes without his notice, or if he observed them, he was ever ready to invent excuses for what appeared unlovely in her conduct.

Gertrude loved Clarence as much as with her cold, proud temperament she was capable of loving. But she was vexed at his delay to ask her hand, and ascribed it to the influence of her step-mother. She was also distrustful of Alice, and determined that the child should be made to feel that she was too familiar, and that she must learn to keep her appropriate place. She begged her father to send the child to school, as Louis was so much better; but when he mentioned the proposition in the presence of Clarence, the young man would by no means consent to give up his pupil; and said, with

warmth : “ It will be quite time for her to attend school and learn accomplishments, when I leave here ; that is, if you are satisfied with her progress.”

So Alice went on, quietly laying the foundation for a thorough education ; though her instructor sighed, as he thought of what might be her future destiny. And Louis, who was always present, at her recitations, and who of late had listened very attentively, became fond of study, and progressed rapidly.

CHAPTER VIII.

“To meditate, to plan, resolve, perform,
Which in itself is good, as surely brings
Reward of good, no matter what be done.”

Pollock.

ABOUT the middle of October, the family at Lindenwood Hall were seated at their evening repast. Uncle Stephen, having finished his meal, requested Alice to pass him the New York Journal of Commerce. He was an inveterate reader of newspapers; and, after reading to himself several columns of shipping, and matters connected with trade, he came upon the following notice, which he read aloud: “*Works in Press.*—A Simple Tale of Home Life, published by S. D. & Co. This work, from an anonymous author, is now before the public. With an unostentatious title, it makes its way to the heart, stirring our very souls to purer, higher, and nobler purposes. It is full of pathos and simple beauty, and the style is chaste and clear. We prophesy for it a wide circulation.”

“Then follows a score or more of similar notices of the same book,” continued Uncle Stephen, as if he were about to pass on to something else.

“What is the title?” inquired Gertrude, eagerly.

Clarence looked over Uncle Stephen’s shoulder, and repeated it.

“Will you send for it, father? I should like to read it’

“Yes, my daughter, though probably we should be able to obtain it from the bookstore in the village.”

During the reading of the notice, Mrs. Stanley grew very pale, but the family were so intently listening that they did not notice her agitation.

The next morning, Gertrude borrowed Felix from Alice, and, accepting Clarence as an escort, was just starting for the village, when a bundle was brought to Uncle Stephen. He untied the wrapper, disclosing a pile of books elegantly bound.

“Pshaw!” said he, impatiently, as he saw several pairs of eyes earnestly watching him. He took up a letter lying at the top of the bundle, and, having hastily read it, muttered, “A pretty piece of imposition, truly! Send me a dozen books to give away for Christmas presents! Wonder what will be done next? Turn author myself, most likely.” Then, taking one volume from the pile, “there, Gertrude,” he said, “no need of going to the bookstore, unless you want to take these and sell them there. Here are a dozen copies of the very book you were in search of.”

Gertrude advanced eagerly, and took it from his hand. “Well,” he resumed, “suppose can’t send ’em back, so you may keep that one, if you’ll promise to read it, and profit by it.”

“Thank you,” she replied, gayly, “I’ll certainly promise to do the first.”

He then placed a volume in the trembling hands of Mrs. Stanley, and also of Alice, and of Louis, who were present.

With a flushed face, the authoress retired from the

room, while Clarence proposed to Gertrude a ride in another direction.

In the evening, when the family drew around the fire, Mr. Stanley proposed reading aloud, while the ladies employed themselves with their needles. This proposition was joyfully received; and Uncle Stephen, finding he could hear distinctly when his nephew held the tube a short distance from his mouth, raised the horn to his ear, and sat back in his chair with an appearance of perfect content. Alice nestled herself close to Mrs. Stanley, who had turned a little from the light, while Louis, who begged to be allowed to sit up an hour, and hear the new book, laid his head in his mother's lap. Before her father had read many pages, Gertrude dropped her work, and, leaning her head upon her hand, gave herself up to the enjoyment of listening. As the work progressed, no one was more interested than Uncle Stephen, who clapped his hands, then, as if fearful of losing a word, he caught up his tube, and as suddenly shed tears. And, indeed, Mr. Stanley, who was a fine reader, was often obliged to stop and clear his throat. At length they came to the death of the heroine, whose touching story had come home to every heart, who was represented as a young bride yearning for the affection of her husband. He had mistaken her character, and found, when too late to atone for his neglect, her diary, where she had poured out freely all her sorrows. Here Mr. Stanley was unable to proceed, and passed the book to Clarence, while Uncle Stephen wept aloud, wholly unmindful that the trumpet had for some time been lying unused upon the table. Mrs. Stanley also wept,

but hers were tears of joy and gratitude. Her agitation attracted the attention of her husband, who, ascribing it to a wrong cause, made many noble resolutions suggested by the subject of the tale.

At a late hour the book was reluctantly laid aside, to be finished the following evening, when Uncle Stephen said, "I forgive the old fellow for sending me the books. If it ends well, I'll order a dozen or two more."

It was with great difficulty that Gertrude restrained herself from reading in advance; but Clarence put his hands over her book, telling her it was not fair. Through that day, nothing else was talked of.

"Marion!" exclaimed her husband, "I have not yet heard your opinion. Are you not interested?"

"The characters are dear to me as personal friends," she replied, while her lips quivered from suppressed emotion.

There was something inexplicable in her manner, and, addressing her with unwonted tenderness, he said, "My dear wife, you take it too much to heart."

Early in the evening the family assembled, eager for the reading to begin. Clarence suggested that Uncle Stephen should take a copy of the work, and read to himself, which he willingly agreed to do, and Mr. Stanley commenced.

As the story progressed, the hero, rendered desolate by the death of his wife, gave himself up to bitter remorse, and then, through the instrumentality of the earnest prayers in his behalf, which he found interspersed through the pages of her private journal, became a humble, consistent Christian. There were no unheard of escapes

nothing, indeed, different from the every-day experience of many families; but through the book there was a high moral standard, an earnest appeal to one's better feelings, together with a thrilling beauty of language, which, coming as it evidently did from a heart acquainted with sorrow, could not fail to reach the heart of its readers.

Mr. Stanley choked and coughed, as he tried vainly to suppress his agitation. At length, as on the previous evening, he passed the book to Clarence, who only shook his head. Then, turning to Marion, he asked, "Will you read?"

She took the volume, and though at first her voice trembled, her emotion was ascribed to her interest in the tale, and she soon became wholly absorbed in the reading. Alice, who was seated on a low chair at her side, leaned forward with parted lips, while the tears were streaming unconsciously down her cheeks. To her it was all a reality.

It was nearly midnight when Mrs. Stanley concluded; but no one had thought of the hour. All sat as if spell-bound, until she closed the book, when her hearers drew a long sigh of relief from their over-excited feelings.

"Excuse me," said she, looking at the time-piece. "Indeed, I was not aware it was so late."

"We could not rest," responded Clarence, "until it was finished."

"We must find out the author!" exclaimed Gertrude, with enthusiasm. "I know I should love her."

"I think," remarked her father, with great tenderness, "you would find she had learned from her own grief,

how to move the hearts of others. The book is above praise. I am willing to confess that I owe to it many new resolutions; many desires after the peace experienced by that desolate husband, as described in the closing chapter.

Mrs. Stanley left the room hurriedly, to conceal the tears of gratitude which were welling up from the deepest fountains of her heart.

For a number of days the characters described in the new book were the all-engrossing themes of conversation. Favorite chapters were read again and again, and each time some new beauty was discovered. Gertrude was exceedingly anxious to ascertain the name of the author, who, she said, "must be a lady of the keenest susceptibilities, as well as the most refined taste, for there is not a low expression in the whole book."

Nor was Gertrude the only one who was curious to know the writer of this popular tale, the most flattering notices of which were daily coming from the press. Mrs. Stanley saw one day an extract from a New York paper, which pained her exceedingly. It was as follows: "The question has repeatedly been asked, who is the author of 'A Simple Tale of Home Life.' She is, as we understand upon good authority, a lady residing not a hundred miles from this city, who lives a very sad life with a cruel, tyrannical husband. The story is said to be a history of her own trials, embellished with some fiction."

Marion took the paper to her own room, and tore it to pieces, wondering who could have thought of such an explanation. But the next day the mistake was rectified, and the author was said to be a young lady residing at

the south, — name unknown. After reading the latter, the author breathed more freely.

Uncle Stephen conducted himself in a most mysterious manner. He had ordered bundle after bundle of them from the publisher, and sent them to his friends in every direction. Louis watched him one day, as he sat reading selections from the "Simple tale," while he chuckled to himself, as if very merry at his own thoughts. "Alice," he whispered, "I shouldn't wonder if Uncle Stephen wrote that book."

"No, he didn't," she replied, decidedly.

"Well, he can say it all by heart. He has read nothing else since it came out, except the notices in the papers."

And indeed Uncle Stephen might well be interested in Marion's complete success. "I prophesied it from the first," he repeated to her again and again. He had been the only one in her confidence; had heard it as soon as written; nay, had talked over and over the plan with her, and she had realized much assistance from his hints. Now, he thought, was the time for her to make herself known. But she said, "Not quite yet." She shrank from the denouement, even in her own family.

In less than two months the publisher wrote to Uncle Stephen that the first edition was exhausted, and that he had many orders for the book yet unanswered. He was ready to make his first payment of one thousand dollars, and he should immediately put to press a second edition of ten thousand copies.

When asked what she would have done with the

money, Mrs. Stanley answered, "Please direct them to deposit it in a New York bank, subject to your order."

"But what shall I do with it?"

"I wish to use it here," she answered, laughing.

"I won't promise to keep your secret much longer," he said to her one day, when they were alone. "I wouldn't, on any account, fail of being present when the family discover the author."

"I shall tell my husband," said Mrs. Stanley; "but you shall have the pleasure of revealing the secret to the others, though I am far from wishing it known, except to the immediate members of our own family."

It was a joyful, merry Christmas, that year at Lindenwood. The trees, bushes, and ground, as far as the eye could see, were covered with pure, white snow. Emma and her sister had returned for the holidays, and with them also, by especial invitation, Alfred Huntington. So that, with the family already at home, they made quite a large and pleasant circle.

Louis, whose health had not been so firm for years, ran from room to room, wishing his friends a "merry Christmas." The choice of suitable gifts had been a grave question of discussion between him and Alice, especially as on the previous week, each received, from an unknown friend, five dollars to be appropriated in that way. But at length they took Mrs. Stanley into their confidence, and she at once relieved them. Alice had, during the summer and fall, employed her leisure in working a pair of slippers for Uncle Stephen, as a small token of her gratitude for his kindness. She also wished to make something for her teacher; but had been unable

to decide upon any article, until her kind friend suggested a purse.

After breakfast there was a general distribution of gifts, followed by joyful exclamations of delight; none, however, were received with more pleasure than that of Alice to Uncle Stephen, who immediately threw off his richly-braided India slippers, substituting hers in their place. Mr. Stanley threw over the neck of his wife a heavy gold chain, from which was suspended a valuable watch. In return, she gave him a quaint old-fashioned ring, of great worth, begging him to wear it for her sake. Clarence and Gertrude exchanged books, while Ally and Louis were perfectly delighted by a present, from his father, of a bright-yellow Canary bird, in a handsome cage.

When the confusion arising from the pleasant scene had somewhat subsided, Marion took her husband by the hand, and led him to the small room she had used for a study. Inviting him to be seated, she presented him with an envelope containing bills to the amount of one thousand dollars. He took them out— one, two, three, four, and so on, until he had counted ten one-hundred dollar-bills. He looked at his wife in surprise, but she only blushed and laughed.

“What do you intend to do with all this?” he asked.

“It is your Christmas present.”

“From whom?”

“From your wife, if you will accept it.”

“But where did you get it?” and for one instant a pang shot through his heart, as he thought of the original of the miniature she prized so highly. But she sat

there, looking in his face with her calm, truthful eyes — and he spurned the idea as unworthy of her.

“Will you forgive me, if I tell you all?”

“Certainly, my dear,” he replied, unconsciously laying the notes upon the table, and growing pale about the mouth. He evidently shrank from the disclosure.

“You are ill,” said Marion, kindly, though with a shade of sadness passing across her features, as she saw the contraction of her husband’s brow, and little dreamed the cause. “Some other time will do as well.”

“No! no!” he replied, “I am quite well. It has been already too long delayed.”

“You know it then, and are displeased,” — and Marion brushed away a tear, that her surprise should have resulted so differently from what she had anticipated.

“Go on, Marion, I know nothing. At least, nothing definitely, I only had my suspicions.”

“Oh!” said the young wife, laying her head on his shoulder, and weeping bitterly, “I had hoped so much from this, I did not imagine that you would be displeased, or I would never have undertaken it.”

“Undertaken what, my dear wife? I do not understand you,” — and he put his arm about her.

“To write the book,” she answered, sobbing.

“What book, Marion?” he asked, starting to his feet.

“Why, the one Uncle Stephen gave you.”

For a full minute Mr. Stanley stood gazing at his wife, as if he could hardly believe his senses. Then he caught her in his arms, and held her tightly to his breast. “My own Marion!” he whispered, “can you forgive me, who have so misjudged you?”

“Oh!” exclaimed the loving wife, if you will only love me, I shall be so happy.”

At that moment, a servant knocked at the door, and requested her mistress to go below. There was to be a great dinner at the Hall, to which Mr. Badger, their good rector, and his family, together with other friends from the village, had been invited. Mrs. Carey had the supervision of the whole, and had sent for Mrs. Stanley to advise. Alice could set the tables, and adorn them with flowers, but she wished for her mistress's approbation of the general arrangements. Mrs. Stanley accompanied the servant to the pantry, though keenly disappointed at the interruption.

In the meantime, Mr. Stanley replaced the bills in the envelope, returned them to Marion's desk, and commenced a vigorous walk across the room, as he impatiently awaited her return. He was filled with remorse that he had given her pain, and caused her to utter an exclamation expressing a fear that she did not possess his love. “If she had remained,” he soliloquized, “I would have asked her to have explained all—could it not have been her father's picture?” he exclaimed, stopping short in his walk. “But then, why should she conceal it? Yet, I am sure she is innocent of wrong.” Then his mind reverted to her late disclosure, and he thought of her with pride, as the author of a book which had found such great favor with the public. “How could she have accomplished it without his knowledge?” Then he became convinced that Uncle Stephen had been in her confidence. But what would his daughters say? Would she be willing they should know it? Or was

she determined to remain the *unknown* author?" Pride at the thought of the rare talents of his wife, and regret that he had not better appreciated her, by turns swelled his breast, until at length he became tired of waiting, and determined to seek her below. But neither in the parlor nor dining-room could he find her, and he reluctantly joined the family.

Mrs. Stanley was by this time deep in the mysteries of the kitchen. Different kinds of soup, game, and other meats, by turns, engaged her attention. There was, indeed, much to be done, and she saw no way but for her to spend the forenoon in its accomplishment. She ran for one moment to her room to put on a large apron, hoping to find her husband still there; but he had just gone below, and she returned to her work.

Alice flew about here and there, beating eggs, grating lemon and nutmeg, while Louis was busily engaged in picking raisins and sultannas. When the puddings were prepared for the oven, Alice ran gayly to the dining-room, and Mrs. Stanley having unlocked the side-board, proceeded to take from thence plate and glass. Ever and anon shouts of laughter came from the parlor, in which the young girl most heartily joined, though without knowing the cause. She had carried all the dishes to the table, and was singing gayly, as she placed them in order, when Clarence, attracted by her full, melodious voice, came to find her.

"I have been wondering for the last five minutes," he said, as he stood in the door-way, "who could have imported that nightingale. Really, Alice, you are a famous

singer. What are your other accomplishments, which you have kept concealed?"

"Oh!" she replied, archly, "setting tables, and making bouquets."

"Where is Mrs. Stanley?"

"She has returned to the kitchen. She has been taking out the plate."

"Cannot her daughters assist her?"

Alice laughed merrily. "They don't know anything about cooking."

"Well," said he, "If you will accept my assistance, I will help you make the bouquets."

The young girl looked inquiringly at him for a moment, but finding he was in earnest, said she should be nappy to accept his proffered help, but disliked to keep him from the company.

Having laid the plates, knives and forks in order, and put a snow-white napkin, in the form of a fan, into the goblets, Alice hastened to the cellar, and brought from thence a large basket of flowers, which had been placed there to keep them fresh. These she carried into a small ante-room, leading from the dining-hall, and having put up the leaf of a large table, poured the flowers carefully upon it. She then went for vases and champagne-glasses, and having made all her arrangements, invited Clarence to take a seat.

"What shall I do?" he asked.

"You may pick out all the small flowers with long stems. Those I shall put in the glasses; the short ones you may place here to be tied into bouquets."

For nearly an hour Clarence worked busily as she

had directed, stopping occasionally to watch the taste with which his young companion assorted colors, and the despatch with which she formed the flowers into cones, tying the stems of the roses and camellias upon short pieces of wire. She was using up her last flowers, when they heard a sound of suppressed mirth, and, turning quickly, saw Emma and Edith standing at the door.

The girls laughed merrily as they entered, and Emma said, good-humoredly, "I would gladly have assisted you, Alice, though I doubt whether I could have been so successful."

"There has been great inquiry about you in the parlor," said Edith. "One young lady has been exceedingly anxious concerning your welfare."

Young Sydney started up in haste, and, taking two of the vases from the table, followed Alice to the dining-room, and then returned to the parlor. Soon after, Mrs. Stanley, having finished her preparations, and dressed for dinner, entered in season to receive her guests.

Gertrude cast a reproachful glance upon her lover, and a haughty one upon her mother, supposing her to be the cause of his absence. But he made no explanation; and, as Mr. Badger, the aged clergyman, and his family, were soon announced, the conversation became general.

Mr. Stanley took an opportunity, however, to speak in a low voice to his wife, saying, "My love, where have you hid yourself? I looked in vain for you to return to the chamber."

Marion had only time to give him a glance of affection, before she was addressed by one of the company.

When the more substantial viands had been disposed of, and the dessert brought in, Mrs. Warren, one of the company, remarked that the flowers were exceedingly fresh, supposing they had been brought from the city.

With a smile, Mrs. Stanley replied, "I have a fairy who arranges my flowers for me," and, looking around the table, for the first time noticed that Alice was not present. "Where has the child vanished?" she asked, quickly.

"She did not come to dinner, mamma," replied Emma.

"Go to her room, Sarah," said Mrs. Stanley, addressing a servant, "and tell her I cannot excuse her." From the expression on Gertrude's face, she feared the child had been purposely kept away.

Sarah soon returned, and whispered to her mistress that Alice was weeping bitterly.

A shade passed over the bright countenance of the hostess, but she said no more. She noticed, however, that Gertrude was talking in an excited manner to a gentleman opposite, and that Uncle Stephen, who was the first to miss his little favorite, and to suspect something wrong, scarcely moved his eyes from her face.

The very first moment Mrs. Stanley was at liberty, she hastened to Alice, but found Louis had preceded her. The poor child had wept herself sick, and was leaning her aching head upon her arms, which were lying on a table. It was a long time before her kind friend could obtain any satisfactory account of the cause of her grief. She at length told her, however unpleasant it might be to complain of another, it was plainly her duty to confide it to her.

"I know," said the child, with an affecting appearance of humility, "I know that I ought not to feel so badly. I do forget that I have no right to be treated like the others, for I am only a ——"

"Alice!" said Mrs. Stanley, with decision, "tell me instantly what has happened. You are as dear to me as any of my children."

The young girl tried to suppress her sobs, as she said, "After I had finished arranging the table, I came to my room to prepare for dinner. I had just curled my hair, and mother had been up to assist me to dress, when Gertrude came in, and told me that my conduct had been so improper that I could not go to the table; that the whole family were ashamed of me for forcing myself upon them as if I were a daughter, or any thing but a servant."

"What had you been doing that she considered so improper?"

"I think it was that Clarence helped make the bouquets; but I did not ask him to do so. I told him he had better return to the parlor."

"Yes, I understand," said Mrs. Stanley, sighing heavily. "Now, Alice, I am sure you have no wish to render me unhappy."

"No, indeed, ma'am."

"Then bathe your eyes, go down and eat your dinner. Your mother is at the table now. Then I will come up and dress you, for I must have my little girl look her best to-night."

"I had rather not go into the parlor," murmured Alice. "I could not keep from crying."

“ You will at least try, when it will please me,” and she led the child to the sink, and stood by her until she had bathed her eyes and head. She then accompanied her to the dining-room, and said to the nurse, “ I want you to see that my little fairy has a good dinner.”

Mrs. Carey's appearance puzzled Mrs. Stanley. She averted her face, and seemed determined not to answer. Her conduct only made her mistress the more determined upon a plan she had long thought of, and which will be mentioned in another chapter.

It was nearly an hour before Mrs. Stanley could find an opportunity to leave her guests. When she did, she found Alice intently occupied in reading, having for the time forgotten all her trials. The kind lady had taken great pleasure in preparing a suitable wardrobe for her young friend, it being her husband's wish that there should be no difference in the appearance of the children.

She now went to her own drawer, and, taking from it a yard of wide blond lace, basted it for a berthe into the dress, which was crimson merino, and which was highly becoming to her fair complexion. Her hair, which curled naturally, afforded a sufficient covering to her white and plump neck. Mrs. Stanley was delighted with the appearance of her protégé, as she stood unconscious of her beauty, her eyes cast down with winning grace.

When they entered the parlor, Alice accompanied her friend around the room, giving to each her hand as they expressed their pleasure at seeing her. There was nothing like forwardness at any time in Alice; nothing that could appear like a wish to put herself in the way of others. Neither was she bashful; but on this occasion

there was a slight diffidence, arising from the reflections called up by Gertrude's unkindness, which deepened the color in her cheeks, and added greatly to her beauty. The young people pressed forward to speak with her, and to interest her in some games they were planning for the evening. But during the whole afternoon she kept her place at Mrs. Stanley's side, with Uncle Stephen near her.

At length Clarence approached, and, in a grave tone, asked her if she were doing penance, that she sat so quietly while her companions in the recess were in such a frolic.

"She is not doing penance for her own sins," replied Marion, quickly, seeing Alice was distressed.

"Nor for mine, I hope," exclaimed Clarence, his brow contracting with a sudden thought. He did not wait for an answer, but, drawing a chair near the group, entered warmly into conversation with Mrs. Jenks, wife of the family physician. They talked of India, and Clarence persuaded his guardian to give the ladies an account of one of the feasts of the natives. Before he had finished, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Badger joined them; and, when they were called to tea, Alice thought she had never passed a more pleasant hour than the last.

CHAPTER IX.

“Alas! I am but a woman, fond and weak,
Without even power my proud, pure love to speak;
But, oh! by all I fail in, love not me
For what I am, but what I wish to be.” — *Mrs. Osgood.*

THE Christmas holidays were certainly not wanting in excitement to one, at least, of the family at Lindenwood Hall. Having gained the ready permission of her husband, Mrs. Stanley proposed to Mrs. Carey to adopt Alice, and educate her as she would her own child.

The mother's only response to this proposal was a sudden burst of tears.

“I have property of my own,” continued the lady, and I have no claims upon me. If I should be taken away, I do not wish her, with sensibilities and tastes highly refined and cultivated, to be left to the cold charity of the world. If you will give her to me, I promise at once to make suitable provision for her, and henceforth to treat her as a child, though I can hardly love her more than I do at present. You will probably see as much of her as you do now, for I shall certainly do nothing to diminish her affection for you.”

“Well, then, take her,” answered Mrs. Carey, abruptly, “and may she prove a comfort and a blessing to you;” and she turned suddenly away, and hastened to an inner room, leaving her friend in doubt whether her strong emotions were to be ascribed to her excess of gratitude,

or to her great affection for the child. If the latter, she certainly had a strange manner of exhibiting it. Her singular conduct had sometimes led Mrs. Stanley to think her even prejudiced against Alice. But, thankful for the permission to take her, she left Mrs. Carey's cottage and walked slowly home, wondering what Alice would say to the change in her relation to the family.

She had scarcely entered the park, when a merry shout of laughter reached her, and she soon saw the young girl drawing Louis, who, loosing his hold, had fallen off the sled, with which Alice was running away at full speed, unconscious that she had lost her charge. Mrs. Stanley joined in the laugh at Louis's expense, and left them, requesting Alice, on returning to the Hall, to come to her room.

An hour later they joined her, when she beckoned the rosy girl to a seat at her side, while Louis took his favorite place on an ottoman at her feet.

"I am glad you came, too, my son," she said, pushing back his soft hair from his white forehead, "because I have some good news for you."

"And for me, too?" asked Alice, gayly.

"Perhaps so," she replied, smiling pleasantly. "Louis," she added, "how should you like a sister about your own age?"

The boy started to his feet, and gazed earnestly at her for a moment, and then said, in a plaintive tone, "I should rather not have one, if Alice must go away. Nobody else will love me as she does."

"Well, then," said his mother, "you shall have her for your sister. What say you to this, Ally; will you be my little daughter?"

The poor child arched her eyebrows, and looked at Mrs. Stanley in astonishment.

"She will! she will!" shouted Louis, joyfully. "I know she will!"

"I should love dearly to have you for my mother," said the child, "and Louis always has been like a brother but I don't understand how it can be."

Mrs. Stanley then told her that she and her husband had long wished to adopt her, and that her mother had consented.

"And will she come, too?" inquired the child, eagerly

"I said nothing to her about it, and I presume she will prefer to live at the cottage, as she has done; but we shall always welcome her here for your sake, my love."

Alice was very thoughtful for a moment, and then asked, "Would it be exactly right for me to leave my mother? Sometimes she likes to have me there; and if she should be sick —"

"You can do everything, in such a case, as if you had never left her. I should be the last one to keep you from her."

"And she is willing?" asked the child, her countenance growing very bright.

"Yes."

"Well, then, I shall be very happy to be your little girl," and she threw her arms about Mrs. Stanley's neck, to beg for a seal to their new contract. Louis pressed up for his share, and the good lady laughed as she declared there would soon be nothing left of her.

"Save a piece for me," said a manly voice, close at hand, and the merry group started to see Mr. Stanley

behind them. When he had heartily joined in the laugh his sudden appearance called forth, his wife introduced her new daughter, who looked very lovely as she stood before him with downcast eyes.

“Remember, you are mine, too,” he said, tenderly, as he drew her to him, and kissed her brow.

Louis could not sufficiently thank his parents for so dear a sister, and said earnestly, “I had rather have Alice for my own, than a whole bag full of Uncle Stephen’s money, about which Edith talks so much.”

“Well, she is your own, now,” replied his father, though rather sadly, as he thought of the mercenary spirit his daughter displayed; “but go now to play. I want to see your mother.”

When they had gone, Marion resumed her sewing, while her husband took a seat near her; but seemed somewhat embarrassed. The truth was, he had watched her very closely for a few days, and had become fully assured that she could explain the circumstances connected with the miniature, to his entire satisfaction. He had come now to her room, to ask her to confide all her trials to him; but he found her looking so happy in the loving embrace of her children,—and, indeed, he thought her unusually so since Christmas eve,—that he did not like to allude to so disagreeable a subject.

Marion glanced up from her work, and smiled pleasantly, though she wondered a little that he did not speak.

“My dear wife,” he said at length, “I have one question to ask you, and I am sure you will answer it, if you can properly do so. You know I am a very plain man,

perhaps rather too reserved in my expressions of affection; but I hope you have never doubted my true love for you."

The young wife dropped her work, and hid her face on her husband's shoulder. Her heart beat wildly; but she suppressed every outward demonstration of her feelings and said, with as much calmness as she could assume, "Is that the question?"

"Yes, that is a very important one to me, my love, but not the one to which I then referred;" and he drew her nearer to him.

"I cannot think of any subject upon which I should be unable to be perfectly frank with you," she resumed, with some surprise.

"It referred to a miniature I once saw in your hands, and which you thrust out of sight," continued he, speaking quickly, and not without some difficulty.

The light beamed from her eyes, as she drew a locket from the pocket in her boddice, and held it up to him; "was it this?" she asked, eagerly.

He recognized the setting at once, and the deepest mortification took possession of his breast, as he saw it was a flattered likeness of himself. His eyes seemed to fastened upon it, as he held it attached by a chain to her neck.

"I hope you are not displeased?" asked Marion, not understanding his grave looks. "I painted it from memory, before we were married; and it was only a foolish pride, which I much regret, if it has given you pain, which prevented me from showing it to you."

"I regret only, my true-hearted wife," said Mr. Stanley

with moistened eyes, — though he seldom shed a tear, — “that I have never known your real worth, and that I should, even for a moment, have been distrustful of you.”

A long conversation ensued, in which all former coldness was explained, though Marion passed very lightly over her own trials. She wondered now, how she could ever have called them so; though she frankly acknowledged what had led her to undertake the task of writing a book. “Now,” she added, “that I am sure of the confidence and love of my husband, I have done with publishers forever.” When the supper-bell called them below, she said, archly, as she replaced the precious miniature, “I will give you anything but this, in my possession. This is my dearest treasure. When you are grave, I have only to come up here, and gaze at your smiling face.”

“It is very much flattered,” he said, pleasantly.

She shook her head and whispered, as they went through the hall, “It looks just as you did then, and just as you do now.”

“I will endeavor never to drive you to your locket for a smile,” he added, impressively.

Their countenances expressed so much happiness, that the whole family gazed earnestly at them as they entered. “What a fine-looking pair!” whispered Mr. Huntington to Edith, who laughed merrily.

“Alice came to my room to tell me some news,” remarked Uncle Stephen, when they were seated at the table; “I rejoiced with her in having found such a mother, and now I rejoice with you in having found such a child.” This was a great speech for the old

gentleman, and a more flattering one than he was often known to make. But his oddities were fast disappearing, and this evening the family were destined to witness the abrupt termination of one of his strange whims.

As he was at quite a distance from her, Marion could only bow her thanks, as she proceeded to pour the tea; but the other members of the family warmly discussed the subject. Clarence noticed, with pain, that neither Gertrude nor Edith expressed pleasure at the new relation of Alice to them.

When the rest had retired from the table, Uncle Stephen detained Mrs. Stanley, and asked her to allow him to communicate to the family the fact of her being the unknown authoress. He added, "I have a secret of my own to reveal, which will not a little astonish them, and I may as well tell yours at the same time."

"Have you, too, become an author?" asked she, quickly putting the trumpet to her mouth.

Uncle Stephen leaned forward, and whispered four short words in her ear. There are few shorter in the language; but Marion started back in astonishment, and gazed at him, wondering if she had heard him aright.

"You, certainly, are in no danger," said the old gentleman, clapping his hands, and laughing aloud, "whatever some of your daughters may be. Mum is the word," he added, as he followed her to the parlor.

The evening proved stormy, and the family drew up before the fire, and sat down to enjoy a pleasant chat. After conversing for half an hour upon the general topics of the day, Mr. Sydney said: "I wish we had another

book for this evening's reading, as good as 'The Tale of Home Life.'"

"Oh, Uncle Stephen!" interrupted Emma, "I have not thought since I came home to thank you for my beautiful present."

"Nor I," added Edith, getting up, in order to speak.

"I wrote my thanks at once," said Mr. Huntington to Edith. "The way that book sold, at the stores in New Haven, was a caution, as the students say; but there was great enthusiasm to know the author. Have you ever heard the work ascribed to Mrs. L——?"

"No," answered Edith; "but I think it likely it may be hers."

"What does she say?" asked the old gentleman, leaning forward in his chair.

Emma repeated her sister's remark.

"No, it is n't!" exclaimed he, starting up from his seat, and looking very triumphantly around, as if he were about to claim the authorship himself.

Mr. Stanley gazed proudly at his wife, who bent over her work; but the rest exhibited unmitigated astonishment.

"Ask him if he knows who *is* the author," enjoined Gertrude, impatiently.

"Your mother does," he replied.

"Then," said Clarence, "I hope, Mrs. Stanley, you will urge her to use the talent God has given her for writing, and give us another work speedily."

"I should think," resumed Gertrude, in a low voice, "she might have gratified our curiosity by telling us before this."

Mr. Stanley took no notice of this speech if he heard it; but, as his wife seemed painfully embarrassed, he remarked, "I heard the authoress say that she only wrote for a specific purpose, and, having accomplished that, she was satisfied to lay down her pen. This, however, I agree with you, Clarence, she ought not to do."

"Then you know her, too, father," said Louis, after looking earnestly in his father's face.

"I declare," exclaimed Edith, "I do believe, after all, it was Uncle Stephen himself. Just see how mysterious he looks." And certainly he did appear rather suspicious. He clapped his hands, and shouted, "It's the best joke I ever heard. Can none of you guess?"

"I can," replied Alice, walking up to him, and taking the trumpet. "I can, if I may."

"Out with it, then," said the old gentleman, unable longer to contain himself.

"I think," continued Alice, pausing a moment, and looking at Mrs. Stanley to see if she disapproved, "my new mamma wrote it."

"That's it!" shouted the old man, catching her in his arms.

The whole family, with the exception of Marion, rose to their feet with astonishment. "Yes," responded Mr. Stanley, taking the hand of his wife, who would have been glad to escape from the room, "I am proud to recognize, in the writer of that exquisitely touching tale, my own dear wife, who wrote it in order to prove to her husband what he well knew before, that she was worthy of his love. It has been as great a surprise to me as I see it is to you; but I have been almost equally aston-

ished to-day to find that writing is not her only accomplishment."

"Oh, don't! not now!" urged Marion, imploringly.

"Yes, let us have it," said Uncle Stephen. "We'll dedicate the evening to surprises; and she may weave another tale about them."

"I find," resumed the happy husband, "that my wife is not only an authoress, but an artist, and paints miniatures with equal skill and secrecy."

"And I find," exclaimed Uncle Stephen, throwing his speaking trumpet across the room, "that I can hear as well as ever I could," and he fell back into his chair, and laughed so heartily that his nephew really feared he would have a convulsion. "It's as good as a comedy," he shouted, when he could speak. "This surprise is worth all the trouble I've had with the old serpent" (alluding to his coiled trumpet). "It has served me a good turn," he said, recovering himself, "and I may as well keep it for the good it has done."

It is impossible to describe the emotions experienced by the different members of the family. Indeed, one surprise had so quickly succeeded another, that they had not yet recovered from the first. Mrs. Stanley, her husband and two younger children, felt only delight that Uncle Stephen was so suddenly relieved from his infirmity. Emma's thoughts recurred to various expressions she had used, which mortified her extremely; and Mr. Huntington's mind, to several tender speeches made in his presence to Edith, under the false impression that he could not hear. But to Gertrude and Edith the announcement was anything but pleasant. To the eldest,

particularly, the fact was specially annoying, as she thought of her free conversations with her sister concerning Clarence and himself, and the disposal of his property — conversations which she had no doubt he had repeated to his ward.

But Uncle Stephen soon relieved their embarrassment, stating his reasons, which within a few weeks he had begun to think were very foolish, for pretending to be deaf. "My principal motive in it," he added, "was to learn the characters of those with whom I wished to pass the remainder of my days. My object, I must confess, has been achieved, and the ordeal to which I have subjected you has proved highly honorable, far more so than I dared to hope. If in any case it has been otherwise, and I have heard myself denounced as 'a great Mogul,'" he added, laughing merrily, "I have no doubt I well deserved the title; and in every case I have kept the knowledge thus acquired sacredly to myself."

At these words, Gertrude began to breathe more freely; and the family burst into a hearty laugh, as Louis, from the force of habit, walked up to his uncle, and asked, earnestly, "And were you playing blind, too, with the goggles? I think your eyes are very bright."

"Yes, Louis, I must confess to the goggles too. I frightened you well at first; but you soon grew to love your old, blind, deaf uncle, and I hope you wont stop now, when you know I can see and hear as well as you can."

When they separated for the night, Gertrude and her sisters each gave their mother a kiss, as they expressed their great pleasure in recognizing her as an authoress

and an artist. It is but just to the first to say that in her embrace there was more of real cordiality than she had ever shown; for she felt not only pride at her mother's talents, but something of tenderness toward one who, as she had often repeated of the unknown author, must be possessed of the keenest susceptibilities. After she retired, and the subjects of the evening had been earnestly discussed with her sister, she lay awake many hours, keenly regretting the course she had pursued toward her mother. She now realized that she had wofully misjudged her; and, after a tedious effort to solve many things which she never had been able to understand, and wondering how Mrs. Stanley could have treated her and her sisters so kindly when they had so underrated her, light began to dawn upon her mind, and she acknowledged the power and the beauty of religion, as exemplified in her mother's daily life.

Marion too passed a sleepless night. The events of the afternoon, as well as of the evening, had been exciting to her in the highest degree. The restoration of Uncle Stephen to his hearing had been so sudden and unexpected that she could hardly realize how he would appear without his invariable accompaniment, the cart-rumpet. She could not refrain from laughing to herself at the strange whim which had prompted such a course, though she acknowledged the shrewdness of the stratagem. She recalled numerous instances in which he must have found it difficult, with his impulsive feelings, to maintain silence. But, more than everything else, the cordial embrace of Gertrude, and the whispered words, "Father may well be proud of you," were sug-

gestive of so many thoughts that she tried in vain to sleep. Next to the respect and love of her husband, she had earnestly craved the affection of his daughters. Emma was already dutiful and childlike. Gertrude, though considered amiable, had always treated her with great reserve. Now she shed tears of joy at the thought that this icy coldness was passing away, and that her daughter would return her love. All former unkindness was for the time forgotten, and Marion looked forward with bright anticipations to a happy future. With respect to Edith, her mother well knew that nothing but divine grace could change so lofty a spirit, and cause her willingly to bow to authority; but she did not feel wholly discouraged even with regard to her. She determined to go on cheerfully in the path of duty, thankful that she could pray for her children, and that God could turn their hearts to himself and to her. She doubted whether she should ever again be subjected to the annoyances which, on her first coming into the family, had been so wounding to her feelings. And she was right.

The next morning, her midnight prayer seemed to have been answered. When she entered the breakfast room, Gertrude alone was there, who came directly to her, though not without a heightened color, and, like Alice, gave her a morning kiss, saying, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "Good morning, mother. I came down early in the hope of getting my share in your embrace."

Mrs. Stanley's eyes were humid as she replied, tenderly, "Good morning, my dear child."

At the breakfast table much merriment was caused by

Uncle Stephen. From the force of habit, Mr. Stanley passed him his plate without speaking, and then requested Emma, who sat by his side, to ask him if he would be helped to anything more. Each time the old gentleman burst into a merry laugh, as he said, "So, you're determined the old man shall be deaf, whether or no." He told them he had had some difficulty to bring Clarence into the plan, and that he himself had often been obliged to leave the room hastily, for fear of exposing himself.

During the forenoon he went to the parlor for the morning papers, and found Alice there with her books. He sat down to read, but noticed that every time he glanced at her, her eyes were fixed upon him with a sad, inquiring expression. At length he became so nervous under her earnest gaze, that he asked, "What is the matter, child? What makes you look at me so?"

Alice blushed, and began studying vigorously.

"Why don't you answer me?" he asked, rather impatiently.

"I didn't know what I was doing, sir," she answered, timidly; and she took her book and was hastening from the room.

"Alice!" he called, authoritatively, "come here?"

She instantly obeyed, though he saw it was with reluctance.

"Were you thinking about me, child?"

Her lip quivered, and for one moment she hesitated; but, seeing that he was determined to wait for her reply, she faltered out, "Yes, sir."

"And pray what have I done that you should be gazing at me with tears in your eyes? Come, now, tell me all;" and he affectionately took her hand.

“I was only wondering,” replied the child, in an almost inarticulate voice, “whether it were wrong to make us all think you couldn’t hear, when you could.”

“And you feared your old friend had been deceiving, hey?”

Alice burst into tears, but soon recovered herself, and answered, “I was afraid so. I didn’t think it was quite right. But you know better than I do, sir?”

“No, I don’t know half as well!” he exclaimed, pulling, with a jerk, his handkerchief from his pocket. “There, don’t cry any more for an old sinner like me.”

For the first time in her life the young girl put her arms around Uncle Stephen’s neck, and tried to soothe him; for, indeed, the idea that his conduct had caused this truth-loving child to weep for his sins, sent a keen pang through his heart. “’Twas all wrong, child, all wrong from the first; I see it was,” he sobbed out, “and you must ask God to forgive me. You’re a good girl to tell me so. It’s the way my sister used to do, and you’re just like her, so don’t you feel badly any more; but if you ever see me doing anything you think wrong, come and tell me. Will you promise to do so?”

She bowed her assent, and ran from the room.

“There,” said he to himself, “I don’t believe there’s another creature living who would mourn over my sins as she did; but it was hard for her to tell me of them. I’d give all I’m worth if she was mine.” From this time Mr. Forsyth seemed to associate the thought of Alice with his deceased sister, and regarded her almost with veneration.

On New Year’s day the family at Lindenwood en-

joyed a fine game of blind-man's buff. The tables and chairs had been removed from the dining-hall, and the whole circle, with the exception of the millionaire and his nephew, were actively engaged in the game. These gentlemen had drawn their chairs into the most retired corner, beyond the sideboard, and made themselves merry with watching the evolutions which the young people made, in order to escape detection. Uncle Stephen entered most heartily into the sport, shouting by turns, "There, you've caught her!" "Hold on!" "Now she's gone!" "There, you have her again!" "Who is she?" "Gertrude? no! I'll be blinded myself next time; with my goggles on, I could do better than that!" and his merry laugh rang through the room.

But their sport was suddenly suspended by a loud scream in the entry, where the whole company rushed, and found the cry proceeded from Louis, who, in coming from the kitchen with an apple, had encountered one of the monkeys. The animal tried to snatch the fruit from his hand, and, in consequence of defending himself, caught his finger and bit him severely. Poor Louis cried and sobbed with pain, long after the cross anima' had been carried back to his confinement.

Uncle Stephen was very wrathful, and catching his cane from the rack, in the hall, went quickly to the shed to give the offending creature a cudgelling. Pollo was evidently expecting punishment, and had slunk away into the farther corner of the cage.

"Come out here, sir!" shouted the enraged man, stamping his foot. But the creature only nestled closer in the corner. He put in his cane and struck Pollo a

blow, when he felt some one gently pulling his coat, and a sweet voice asked, "Did he know any better, sir?"

He dropped the stick, and replied, in an excited voice, "Yes, he did know better, and he shall be punished."

Alice looked distressed.

"Well, what shall I do with him?"

"Do you love them very much?" she asked, smiling, as he stood before her, his velvet cap turned awry, so that the tassel hung down by his cheek.

"No," said he, "not very much."

"I don't like monkeys at all!" exclaimed the child, with a strong expression of disgust; "I think they're very troublesome."

"Well, shall I get Thomas, the groom, to kill them?"

"Oh, no!" answered Alice, in unaffected horror.

"What, then? You may decide."

"May I? Oh, thank you! Robert Perry would like them so much, and his father promised to buy him one."

"Well, Robert Perry shall have them in welcome."

"Thank you," she repeated. "How glad the servants will be to get rid of them." And, indeed, there was great rejoicing at the hall, when, the next day, Pollo and Sally appeared chained together, and were led away to the village, by the groom. No less rejoiced was Master Robert at the reception of what he considered a most valuable commencement of his long-desired menagerie, and at being informed that the cage in which they were kept would immediately follow.

Alice stood at the window with Unele Stephen, when Thomas led them down the avenue. "I should like to know," he said, "what I am to do now for sport."

“ You may take me,” answered the child, laughing heartily at the half-regretful look he cast at his old favorites. “ They don’t love you half so well as I do.”

He turned to catch her in his arms ; but she playfully eluded his grasp, and for the next ten minutes there was a merry game, the like of which Pollo and Sally in their palmiest days, never enjoyed. Uncle Stephen was satisfied with the exchange of playmates.

CHAPTER X.

“ Let them die,
Let them die now, thy children ! so thy heart
Shall wear their beautiful image all undimm'd,
Within it to the last.” — *Mrs. Hemans.*

It was a clear frosty morning in March. The night had been tempestuous, and the snow, which had fallen the whole of the preceding day, was blown into deep drifts, leaving spots of ground entirely bare.

The inmates of Lindenwood Hall had scarce left it for more than a week ; but they had received a daily visitor. No matter how cold, wet, or stormy, morning and evening the light vehicle of Dr. Jenks, the family physician, was seen driving up the avenue, to the front entrance.

On the morning in question, Gertrude stood at the parlor window, hearkening impatiently for the sound of the sleigh-bells. Her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, and ever and anon she took her handkerchief from her pocket, to wipe away the falling tears. “ He cannot get here,” she murmured, as she gazed down the street and saw how completely it was blocked up with snow ; and, turning from the window, she ascended the stairs.

In a large, square chamber, at the back of the house, the family were assembled ; for Louis lay pale and panting upon the bed. *Yes, Louis was dying*

He had for ten days suffered from an attack of congestion of the lungs ; and no skill had sufficed for his

cure. The most tender mother could not have been more watchful over an only and dearly beloved son, than was Mrs. Stanley over this dear child of her adoption. For a week she had not left his couch, and now, exhausted and faint, she sat on the side of the bed, holding his head upon her breast. Alice knelt before him. On the opposite side of the bed stood the afflicted father. Not a tear relieved his bursting heart. He stood gazing intently on his only son, his ashy countenance resembling death, in the calm rigidity of its suffering features. As he stood there his soul cried out, in agony, "Spare, Lord! spare me this stroke!" How he longed for the arm of strength which supported his wife in this hour of trial; nay, which was safely carrying his beloved Louis across the deep waters of Jordan.

Near the window, at the foot of the bed, sat Uncle Stephen, and by him Clarence, who was saying something in a low, earnest tone. When Gertrude entered, he advanced to her with great tenderness, took her hand, and led her to the seat he had occupied. Beyond Alice sat Mrs. Carey, her face entirely concealed by her handkerchief, with which she was vainly trying to stifle her sobs.

At length the dying boy aroused from the stupor in which he had been lying for more than an hour, and from which they feared he would never awake, languidly opened his eyes, gazed for a moment upward, and, turning his head slightly, recognized his father. Alice sprang to her feet, and wet his lips with wine and water, when feebly murmured "Papa."

His father bent over him, when he lisped, in a broken

voice, "I want you to hold my head, and let all the rest go out."

Trembling in every limb, Mr. Stanley did as his son requested, and took the place of his wife to support his dying boy. At a signal from her, the family retired quietly from the room.

"Dear Papa," said the child, "please lay my head back so I can see your face." When this was done, the slight motion had so distressed him that he breathed with great difficulty. With what hopeless sorrow did the poor father witness the agony of this darling boy, and feel that he could do nothing for his relief. After a short pause Louis raised his eyes, and said in broken accents "Papa, I'm going to God, and I'm not afraid, for Jesus has pardoned my sins. But before I go I want you to promise to meet me there."

Mr. Stanley bent forward in uncontrollable grief, and tried to speak; but his voice was thick and husky, and the words indistinct.

The dying child gazed earnestly in his face, and continued, "Mother, and Alice, and Uncle Stephen, will go because they love the Saviour! but oh, father! I shall want you and my sisters there!"

The father groaned in agony.

"Jesus loves you, papa. He wants you to go. I have prayed for you, and mamma prays every day that you may become a Christian. I don't think you know how much she loves you, and wants you to become good." After another pause to rest, he added, "I have asked mamma to give you my miniature, which she painted and I want you to look at it, and think how much you

little Louis wanted you to become good, and prepare to go to Heaven. Will you, papa?"

Mr. Stanley bowed; he dared not trust himself to speak.

"You have been very, *very* kind to me, papa, and so has my dear mamma; and I want you to love her very much. I have seen her kiss your picture a great many times, and heard her pray, 'Oh, God, bless my dear husband!' but she didn't know I saw her."

Again Mr. Stanley groaned, as he cried out, "Oh, God, forgive me!"

"*And — I want — my — dear — Alice — to —*" his voice faltered, and his head sank back more heavily on his father's arm. Mr. Stanley hastily called "Marion!" apprehensive of his immediate death.

The young mother was instantly at his side. His eyes were fixed; one low sob, and the soul of little Louis took its flight to its heavenly home.

Awe-struck and motionless at the presence of the dread visitor, the family stood by the bed until the kind physician, who had silently entered, gently leaned forward to close the eyes. Then, the awful reality burst upon them, and amid weeping and lamentation, the bereaved circle retired from the chamber of death.

Mrs. Stanley accompanied her husband to his study where, for a time, he walked the floor in comfortless sorrow. At length, she prays that the sorrowful event may become a great and lasting blessing to her husband and remaining children. After a moment he comes forward and, kneeling by her side, ejaculates, "Pray for me!"

Marion continued her supplications. She plead earn-

estly for her husband, wrestling like Jacob : " I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." She seemed borne on wings of faith and love to the mercy-seat, and there boldly entered into the presence of the Eternal. Her Saviour was interceding in her behalf, and she received an assurance that her prayer was heard.

The subject of her intercession was lost in wonder at her fervency and importunity. " Is she then so earnest in imploring a blessing upon me ?" he asked himself, " and shall I not strive to attain the same grace which supported my dear Emma, and my only son, in their dying hour ?" The arrow of conviction penetrated his heart. Who shall say it was not in answer to the prayers of his wife and son ? He bowed his head in agony for his own guiltiness. The language of his heart was, " God be merciful to me a sinner."

Marion arose, and silently left the room ; but he knew it not. One thought alone occupied his mind : " Is there mercy for me ? Can a holy God pardon guilt like mine ?" For a long time he despaired of mercy.

The day passed, and also the night ; but he still remained locked in his study. When the servants knocked, he made no reply. His wife gently called him by name, but received no answer. Yet she heard his step as he walked back and forth through the room, and retired to her own chamber. Fatigued and exhausted as she was, by incessant watching, yet she could not retire, but alternately read portions of Scripture, and poured out her heart before God. At a late hour she again descended the stairs, passed noiselessly through the hall, and listened at the study door.

What caused her heart to leap for joy, and sent the bright flush of heaven-inspired hope over her countenance, as she raised her tearful eyes to Heaven? Ah her prayer is answered. For the first time, she hears the voice of her beloved husband addressing his Maker. Pressing her hands to her heart, she returns to her room, and throwing herself upon a couch, gives vent to her joy and gratitude until, at length, she falls asleep.

But with the first ray of light the devoted wife arises from her couch, and again approaches her husband's door. Hearing no sound, she knocks gently, saying, "It is Marion." She hears him approach and unlock the door; one moment more, and she is in his arms. Happy pair, now truly united, by the enduring tie of Christian love; henceforth sharing, truly, each other's hopes, and sympathizing in each other's fears!

Mr. Stanley has not yet spoken of the heavenly peace which has taken the place of his midnight despair. But she reads it in the holy calmness which rests upon his brow, in the gratitude and love which beam from every feature. He is, indeed, a new man; born of God, an heir of glory. Thy faith, gentle Marion, hath inherited the promise, and saved thy husband. While thou didst sleep, he was left like a lone voyager upon the sea of time; his bark wrecked, and his companions lost. He cried aloud, attempting to save himself by the stray waifs drifting in the current. Even these soon failed him. He found there was no hope, and gave himself up to the rude tide, to be carried whithersoever it drifted. Suddenly, he heard a voice of mercy, saying, "Look unto me, and be saved." He raised his eyes to Heaven,

and from his inmost soul the cry went forth "Help, Lord, or I perish." A strong arm was outstretched for his relief. Eagerly he seized the offered help. *He was saved!*

On the evening of the same day, Mr. Stanley sent for his family to his study, which had been to him as the gate of heaven. Here for the first time he met them since they stood side by side in the chamber of death. All were present but Clarence, who had gone to T—— for Emma and her sister. Gertrude was pale and sad, and wept afresh at sight of her father. Alice nestled close to her mother, and hid her swollen face upon her shoulder. Uncle Stephen sat with his eyes shaded by his hand, vainly trying to repress his sobs, while Mrs. Carey, Sarah, and the other servants, occupied places about the apartment, wondering why they had been called together. At length, Mr. Stanley, in a voice which was at first so tremulous as scarcely to be audible, imparted to them the hope that out of his son's natural death, God had brought unto him eternal life. "I have found," he added, "the compassionate love of my Saviour to be more than sufficient to compensate me for the loss of dear children and friends."

"Thank God! oh, thank God!" ejaculated Uncle Stephen.

After a few moments, Mr. Stanley continued, "I have called you all together to tell you that henceforth, by grace assisting me, I hope to live a different life, and to set before my family an example more worthy of imitation. I have prided myself in being a moral and an honorable man, and so perhaps I have been in the eyes

of the world; but God has been pleased to open my eyes to a sense of my vileness, and I have found that mere morality will not, cannot sustain one at the bed of death." He then read a short passage from Scripture, and called upon the family to kneel for prayer. Marion could hardly realize the happy change. Her heart was ready to burst, and her eyes ran down with tears.

The grief of the sisters when they arrived at Lindenwood, rendered desolate by the loss of their dear brother, showed itself in a manner characteristic of them. Emma stood over the beloved form shrouded and confined for the sepulchre, and gazed tearfully upon the countenance so lovely in death, while Edith, after one hurried glance at the cold and lifeless body, rent the air with her shrieks. Her convulsive sobs and doleful lament did not, however, touch the heart of her father like the silent sorrow of Emma; and he hoped that this great affliction might result in good to her soul.

The grief of Alice at the loss of her beloved companion at length convinced her kind friends that, however painful the separation, it would be better to send her to school with her sisters. Strange as it may appear, Mrs. Stanley, and even her husband, felt more reluctant to part with her than with one of their own children. In the mind of the latter she was so intimately associated with his deceased Louis, that he considered her almost sacred. For so many years had they been seen constantly together, that the bereaved father, as he saw her approach, often detected himself in listening for the low voice or the light footstep of his dear boy. But she

never forgot. Not once since he had passed from her sight had a smile been seen upon her lips. In the presence of the family she seldom wept; but she had often been found alone in the bay window, the heavy curtains shielding her from view, weeping as if her young heart would break. She had carefully treasured up every scrap of writing or drawing with which her dear Louis had amused himself, and begged a box of her mother for their preservation. When it was proposed to her to accompany her sisters to school, she shrank from the thought of going among strangers, and begged to be allowed to remain at home. But one day, after a long conversation with Clarence, she expressed her willingness to do what her friends thought best.

At the same time, Uncle Stephen sought a private interview with his nephew, during which he said it was his wish to give Alice a thorough education, for which purpose he would put money into his hands, and that he would be glad if Mrs. Stanley would provide her a suitable wardrobe at his expense. His nephew decidedly refused this kind offer. "She is as dear to me as an own child," he added, earnestly, "and I promised my lamented Emma I would educate her as such."

Uncle Stephen was not at all pleased that his little protégé should be taken out of his hands, and used many arguments to persuade his nephew to consent. But Mr. Stanley was firm. At length, however, he was induced by the evident disappointment of his uncle to take the money which had been designed to pay her expenses at school, and to put it at interest for her use; and with this the benevolent old gentleman was obliged to con-

tent himself, saying, "I shall add to it the same sum every year; but I know you have too much good sense to let the child or any one else suspect me in this matter."

In the month of June, the sisters, accompanied by Alice, returned to school. Mr. Stanley, in private, urged his daughters to treat her in every respect like an own sister. This Emma's own heart prompted her to do, but, from the haughty toss of Edith's head, her mother had many fears in regard to the happiness of her adopted child.

There were two in the family who rejoiced that the young girl would go to school. These were Gertrude and Mrs. Carey. The latter had been unwell ever since the death of Louis, and her illness had brought on an attack of her temporary insanity. At such times, the sight of her child always aggravated her disorder, and Mrs. Stanley had now procured a faithful woman to remain with her as companion and nurse. This woman was a widow from the village, in destitute circumstances, who was very grateful for the home thus afforded for herself and child.

Poor Alice had been very much troubled about her mother; but, as she had seen her afflicted in this manner at times from her earliest childhood, the severity of the trial was somewhat diminished.

Gertrude could ill conceal her pleasure at the departure of one whom she conceived occupied far more than her share of the time and attention of Clarence. But her pleasure was shortly changed to keen disappointment and chagrin, when she found the reason of the child's

willingness to go, and heard from Clarence that he advised her to such a course in consequence of his intending to be in Philadelphia for a year or two, and therefore unable to teach her longer.

For a few days after this announcement, Gertrude appeared so sad, her eyes, usually brilliant, were so heavy, that the young man was constantly in danger of breaking his promise to his guardian, and of beseeching the pledge of her hand before he left. He even went so far as to request to be released from it, but in this he was entirely unsuccessful. Uncle Stephen would give no reason, but said, promptly, "If she is what you deem her, she will wait your return."

But the very day after this conversation, and while the disappointed lover feared his guardian had forgotten his own youthful feelings, he was forced by the change in the young lady's manner to own that the delay might in the end be promotive of his own happiness. Unconsciously, his address had been more tender since her evident sorrow at his intended departure. On the morning in question, he seated himself by her side, and attempted to engage her in conversation. She listened coldly, only replying by monosyllables, until at length, in answer to some question, she turned haughtily toward him, fixing her eyes full upon his, as she asked, coldly, "What did you remark, sir?"

Had an iceberg fallen upon him, he could not have been more chilled. He could scarcely believe his senses. He started from his seat, and, approaching the window, stood for a long time gazing out upon the lawn. No one but her mother noticed the triumphant smile which

curled her lip as she dropped her work to gaze at him. During the day, he avoided her as sedulously as she did him; but after tea, when the diminished circle drew around the centre-table, he took a seat near her, and appeared determined to treat her with his usual attention. In truth, he had convinced himself her apparent coldness had only been the result of his own imagination. He tried to devise some plan to draw her to a distance from the rest of the family, and offered to give her one more lesson in drawing before he left, when she replied, "I have already wasted quite too much of your time and my own, upon an accomplishment for which I have no taste."

The entrance of company put an end to any farther conversation; and when Clarence saw her whom but that very morning he had believed possessed of every charm, arouse from her gloom and become the life of the circle, evidently delighting in the thought that she had inflicted pain upon him, he grew colder and more distant than ever. She paid the most marked attention to a gentleman who had called with a friend, at the same time casting glances of triumph at her disconsolate lover, who soon plead his early departure as an excuse for leaving the room.

Uncle Stephen followed him, but his presence afforded his ward but poor comfort, for never since the death of Louis had he appeared so gay. He rubbed his hands, and chuckled to himself merrily, as he saw Clarence with knitted brows walking impatiently back and forth through the room; and at length could not forbear say-

ing, " It's a hard thing to get one's eyes open ; but when they are — "

" Yes, when they are ! " interrupted Clarence, bitterly
" it is not so easy to shut them again "

CHAPTER XI.

“For true charity,
Though ne'er so secret, finds a just reward” — *May.*

IN a room in one of the college buildings in New Haven, a young man might be seen sitting in a large rocking chair, with his feet on the table before him. He had just returned from dinner, and on his way had taken a letter from the post office. Now, having placed himself in what he considered a comfortable position, he proceeded to tear it open. From the deep flush which suffused his cheek, as well as the smile playing about his mouth, one might reasonably infer that the intelligence was agreeable. When he had finished it, he opened a smaller envelope it had contained, and disclosed a roll of bank bills. “Generous friend!” he exclaimed, aloud, “how can I ever repay his kindness? He says, by never alluding to it. How little he realizes the difficulty of keeping silent, when the heart is overflowing with gratitude.” He counted the money, saw that there was more than sufficient to pay all his college bills, then crossed the room and locked it in his trunk; after which he again seated himself, with the open letter in his hand. It was as follows:

“DEAR ALFRED:— Your letter was duly received, and perused with great pleasure. As you have at length made up your mind to study for the ministry, I will con-

fess to you that nothing you could have told me regarding yourself, would have given me equal pleasure. For years I have hoped that you would choose the profession to which your father devoted you in your infancy; but I have never, as you well know, expressed my hopes upon this subject, fearing they might have undue weight. If, however, as I hope and pray, you enter upon your studies for the sacred work, from a desire to be wholly engaged in your Master's service, and have not chosen it merely as an honorable profession, though your trials may be great, yet such, also, will be your reward.

“I have recently received letters from India, which I will show you, if you feel a desire to comply with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley's invitation, and spend the coming vacation with us. As ever, your friend,

STEPHEN FORSYTH.”

While Alfred Huntington reclines in his chair, with his eyes fixed dreamingly upon the name of his kind benefactor, let us go back twenty years, and learn the commencement of their acquaintance.

During the fourth year of Uncle Stephen's residence in India, and before he heard the sad intelligence which blighted his hopes of happiness for this life, he was one day introduced to Mr. Huntington, as a young American who was on the point of returning to his native country, and who would be glad to take letters, or anything he might wish to send. Mr. Forsyth gazed at him in surprise, such was the sadness, amounting to melancholy, depicted on his fine, manly countenance, and

remarked, "You hardly look as I should on the eve of my departure for home."

"This is my home, my chosen field of labor," replied the young missionary, "and it is the greatest trial I ever experienced, to be obliged to leave it."

In the course of the conversation which followed, Mr. Huntington related to his interested listener some of the circumstances of his early history, when he was early an orphan; but, by the kindness of a charitable lady, he had been educated for the ministry. The desire of his life was answered when he was sent to India as a missionary, the bishop, who had always been a kind friend to him, having interested himself particularly in his welfare. He was married, and had had three children, one of whom had died within a few hours of its birth. On his arrival in Calcutta, he proceeded at once to his station, about fifty miles from that place; and he believed his labors had not been entirely unsuccessful. Schools had been established; his wife, whose heart was wholly in her work, had drawn around her about twenty females, mothers of the children under their care, and was teaching them the arts of civilization, at the same time that she endeavored to instil the principles of the gospel into their benighted minds. A small church had been gathered, consisting of seven male and three female members. "And now," said Mr. Huntington, with great emotion, "we must abandon our little charge, our schools must be given up; now, when we have spent years in acquiring the language, and when we have become so hopeful of good to these poor ignorant natives, we must leave our feeble church to be torn to pieces."

“But why?” asked Mr. Forsyth, eagerly.

“For want of means, my dear sir. A year ago I was notified that the usual sum had not been raised, and that the society, though with great reluctance, had been obliged to cut down the salaries of all their missionaries. Now they have written that they can no longer support this station — that they are obliged to give up all the new stations, and confine their operations to the larger fields.”

For a long time Mr. Forsyth sat with his head resting on his hand. His companion, overcome with emotion, walked with hasty strides through the apartment, occasionally casting a glance of wonder at the man before him, until at length he turned to leave the room. This aroused Mr. Forsyth, and he started forward, saying, “I will see you to-morrow,” and abruptly took his departure. Summoning his servants, he was carried in a palanquin to the house of a friend a few miles distant, from whom he obtained satisfactory information concerning the labors of Mr. Huntington, corroborative of what he had already heard. The next day he called at the house of the American merchant, who had invited the family of the missionary to remain with him until they sailed. There he entered into conversation with the devoted wife, who wept as she thought of leaving the children she had so earnestly taught, and as she realized the danger of their forgetting all her instructions. Here he soon learned that the whole expense of carrying on the small mission was scarcely a quarter of his own income. His only remaining doubt, namely, of his ability, was thus removed. He crossed the room and caught his astonished

companion by the hand, when he suddenly blushed, stammered, and became painfully confused.

"I shall ever be grateful to you for your sympathy," said Mr. Huntington, kindly.

"Poh! poh!" exclaimed Mr. Forsyth, "I don't mean to give you up. Go back to your work. I will see that you receive regular supplies at least for one year."

In her eagerness to hear aright, Mrs. Huntington sprang from her seat, wholly unmindful of the little boy clinging to her dress, and advanced to the side of her husband. With tears of joy streaming down her cheeks, she exclaimed, "Oh, sir! did you really mean that we may stay in India, and labor for our poor Hindoos?"

"Yes, *yes*, I said so!" replied the young merchant, while a sympathizing tear stood in his eye, and "here's something that will convince you so. There, *there*, enough has been said," as Mr. Huntington warmly pressed his hand, and uttered a fervent "God bless and reward you, sir! I have no words to tell you how happy you have made us." His wife caught Mr. Forsyth's bronzed hand, and pressed it to her lips, saying, "In the name of our ignorant, depraved people, we do, we must thank you." She was interrupted by an impatient gesture, and Uncle Stephen trying to leave the room; but her husband stepped forward to detain him. With his face perfectly radiant with happiness, he said, "We will not offend you by expressing our gratitude for your bounty to the heathen; we will only ask your prayers to accompany our efforts."

"I see you have mistaken me; I am not a professing Christian;" and a deep shade passed over his face, "but

I have a mother up there," said he, pointing to heaven, "and a praying sister in America;" and, before his companions could say another word, he hastily left the house.

After his abrupt departure, the missionary and his wife sat for some minutes in profound silence. They found it difficult to realize the sudden change in their prospects, and had it not been for the envelope which he held in his hand, Mr. Huntington might have feared it was all a dream. Upon opening the note he found it contained a draft to the amount of two hundred dollars, and a promise of the same sum quarterly. This was three hundred dollars in advance of the salary they had heretofore received, and the visions of enlarged schools, with books and apparatus, so overcame them that they gratefully sank upon their knees, to give God the praise.

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity," said Mr. Huntington to his wife, when they became more composed. "This morning we expected to be obliged to leave our little flock, and we feared lest the years of labor among them would soon be forgotten; but our great Shepherd has watched over us, and provided for us. At the very moment when our need was greatest, he has put it into the heart of this good young man to come forward to our relief."

But little, even then, did they realize what a friend had been raised up for them. They returned to their station, where they were received with tumultuous joy, and gladdened the hearts of their pupils by collecting them again into the school, enlarged their operations, and entered with new zeal upon their work, feeling that God was with them; "and they were prospered in the work of their hands."

Two years after this, Mr. Forsyth returned to his native country; but, before leaving India, he made ample provision for Mr. Huntington, toward whose enterprise he felt an increasing interest. During the six years he remained in America, he carried on a constant correspondence with the mission; and after his great afflictions had been sanctified to his soul, he became more than ever alive to the importance of such a work. On his return to India, though his means were less, he sent another laborer into the field, as an assistant to Mr. Huntington, depriving himself of some luxuries in living he had heretofore considered indispensable. During his residence of sixteen years, he visited the station at stated intervals, and every time he did so he blessed God for having put it into his heart to do this great work. The school which, on his first introduction to Mr. Huntington, was on the point of being broken up, was now flourishing under the efficient care of Mr. Potter, the assistant missionary, whose wife also taught the girls. This seminary had sent out twenty native Christian teachers, well educated and fitted for their work.

Alfred, the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Huntington, who had been spared to them, accompanied Clarence to America on his return a few years before his guardian, who had offered to educate him. Mr. and Mrs. Huntington had learned to look upon their benefactor as a dear Christian brother; and when, in addition to his years of kindness, he made this offer, their knowledge of him led them to suppress any acknowledgment but such as their tearful eyes and beaming countenances afforded. They gave up their only child to him, with perfect confidence

in his protection and care. It had been their greatest trial that their child could not receive a suitable education, and now this was removed, they devoted themselves with new diligence to the work in which they were engaged.

CHAPTER XII.

“ I've sometimes grieved

That one so formed in mind and charms to grace
The brightest scenes in life, should have her seat
In the shadow of a cloud ; and yet 'tis weakness.
The angels watch the good and innocent,
And where they gaze, it must be glorious.”

A LARGE party was again gathered in Lindenwood Hall, making the house ring as of old, with merry voices. Two years have passed since we last gathered with them around the social hearth. To Mr. and Mrs. Stanley time has brought no visible marks of advancing age ; but with Emma, Edith, and Alice, the change has been great. Edith is by far the tallest of the three, and, at the first glance would by many be pronounced to be the handsomest. But neither in the style of her beauty, nor in her manner, did she at all resemble her sister Gertrude, being a brilliant brunette, with luxuriant black hair disposed very gracefully around her head, large black eyes, and red, pouting lips, while her imposing and self-confident air, joined with a playful sarcasm in her conversation, had, among her school-mates, gained her the reputation of a genius and a wit. She had learned to curb her temper, and now appeared a warm-hearted, impulsive girl. To Mr. Huntington she seemed the most beautiful and talented young lady he had ever met.

But Emma, who was two years older should have

been described first,—yet she had so long learned to lean upon her younger sister, that she almost forgot that Edith was her inferior in years. She had regular features, light-blue eyes, and a very sweet mouth. Her complexion was very pale, and rather sallow; but she was easy and graceful in her manners, and a very lovable young lady. At school one had been admired, the other loved, by their companions.

Alice Carey is much more difficult to describe. There was a perfect fascination about her; and yet, one could hardly tell in what it consisted. She was slightly below the medium height. Her form was well-proportioned, and full of symmetry and beauty. Her hair, which had changed to a rich chestnut-brown, she still wore in curls, which afforded a partial covering to the slender neck set so gracefully upon her shoulders. Her broad, low forehead, her nicely-arched eyebrows, her clear, truth-telling eyes, her rose-bud mouth, and her ever-varying complexion, soft as that of an infant, impressed alike the most casual, and the most critical, observer. But none of these, nor all of them combined, constituted the charm in the face of Alice. Perhaps it was her perfect unconsciousness of her beauty, perhaps it was the intellect which beamed from her eye. Her mother thought it was the holy expression, which pervaded and animated every feature. Alice was very happy. She had left school with the highest honors, and was rejoiced to be again in her dear home, and among her kind friends. She could hardly restrain her joy. Sometimes, it bursts out in a merry warble, inciting Fanny, her Canary bird, to still greater efforts; then, it exhibits itself, in a desire to per-

form some kind act of love to those around her. Now, she places a foot-stool for Uncle Stephen, whose eye follows her as she flits here and there about the room; next, runs to set a chair for Mr. Stanley, then picks up a spool for her mother, who rewards her with a fond kiss, and, finally, springs to the window to shade the sun from the eyes of Gertrude or Edith, or cheerfully performs some errand to their room. And all this she does with such childlike grace and activity that it is a delight to gaze upon her.

“Dear Uncle Stephen,” said she, one day, when the family were assembled in the parlor after dinner; “How glad I am that you have done wearing that velvet cap and wig. Do you know,” she whispered, “that you look very handsome now that you have taken off those horrible old goggles? what did you ever put them on for?” she asked, looking archly in his face.

“Nonsense, child!” he replied, catching her hand as she was darting away; “to prevent my seeing too much. Some people are in danger by seeing too little; but I was troubled with too much light. In order to be at all comfortable, I was obliged to shade my eyes.”

Alice laughed heartily at the curious expression which passed over his face.

“There, take that, you little puss,” exclaimed Uncle Stephen, giving her a hearty kiss, “and look out how you come round here, catechising me, or I may have to get out my speaking-trumpet again.”

The young girl blushed deeply, as she saw the eyes of the whole family directed to them; but she replied, gayly: “Please don’t; I’ll try to be a good girl;” and she withdrew to the other end of the room.

“ I should like to know,” muttered the old gentleman to himself, “ when you ever were anything else.”

I have as yet said nothing of Gertrude or of Clarence, who had returned to Queenstown, and taken an office in the village ; though at the earnest request of the family, he retained his old room at the Hall, and took breakfast and tea with them. As yet he had not much practice, and generally spent a part of every afternoon with the pleasant circle. He treated Gertrude with marked politeness ; but she missed his former looks of love, and felt that she was not now regarded by him as in former years. She determined, however, to win him back ; for though she had received several offers of marriage, her affection for him had led her promptly to decline them. Now that he was in a position to be married,— and to be permanently with them, she was fully assured of success.

In the visits he had made to Lindenwood, during his stay in Philadelphia, he had never been able to forget her conduct on the evening before his departure. In all his thoughts of her when absent, one image alone presented itself, and that was, of her as she turned coldly and haughtily to him, saying : “ I have wasted quite too much of your time, and of my own, upon an occupation for which I have no taste ;” and this, from one whom he had always considered lovely in her truthfulness, and amiable in her character.

The weather had now become settled, and the young people enjoyed many fine excursions, both walking and on horseback. Clarence had purchased a fine horse for the saddle, as he usually rode back and forth to the

village. Then Alice, who had become a thorough equestrian, still retained her beautiful Felix, and Mr. Huntington had broken in a spirited animal, kept for the carriage. For his daughters, Mr. Stanley procured saddle-horses from the stable.

During their first expedition, Alice accompanied them. She was arrayed in a riding-dress of dark-green cloth, fitting neatly to her form, and displaying to advantage her fine bust and taper waist; and a jockey of green velvet, with two plumes of the same color tipped with black. As she stood on the steps of the portico, holding the skirts of her riding-dress in one hand, she looked perfectly bewitching. At least, so thought Uncle Stephen. She had been beseeching him to accompany her as her especial knight, — and while he laughed at her odd fancy, and shook his head, he wondered where the eyes of the young men could be, that they did not seek her as a companion. She looked so lovingly at him, that he felt he could refuse her nothing, and said, “Well, *well*, child, some other time, I’ll see about it, if your heart is set upon me for a companion, but not to-day.”

“But, Uncle Stephen,” she replied, with a comical expression of mock gravity, “I have no beau.”

“Beau, indeed! and what does such a child as you are, want of a beau? Let me see, there are four lassies, and two laddies. Here, Clarence, take care of this young miss, who is bewailing her want of a beau.”

Clarence, who unobserved, had heard the whole conversation, started forward, saying in a low voice: “I shall be most happy to resume my care of my former pupil.”

“Poor Alice!” her smiles vanished in a moment, the color mounted even to her brow, as she feared he would think her soliciting his attention; but she said, quickly, “Oh, Uncle Stephen, how could you!” and turned abruptly away.

Clarence bit his lip with chagrin. He had never been able to resume his former intimacy with her, since she returned from school. During the ride she galloped in advance of the party; and if he attempted to follow, made an excuse to ride back to the side of Emma.

Mr. Huntington kept close to Edith, who certainly never appeared to better advantage than when on horseback. She sat like a queen, and evidently was aware of it; for she took unusual pains to torment her lover with her assumed indifference.

Several times, when Clarence left Gertrude and rode round by Alice, she appeared so really distressed that he left her, determined to lose no time in ascertaining the reason of her loss of confidence in him. Free, frank, and open in her conduct to all, yet toward her former teacher she exhibited a shyness, and a disposition to avoid his society, totally unlike her former childish affection. If she were singing gayly when he entered the room, her voice suddenly ceased. If he took a seat near her, she soon found an excuse to vacate her place. At length, this change in her appearance became so marked that the young lawyer was exceedingly pained by it. So much so, that often while seated in his office, with his eyes fixed upon his papers, his thoughts, instead of bearing upon the case in hand, were wandering to Lindenwood, and there trying to solve a problem which

was daily becoming more difficult, and also more interesting to him. One day, when alone with Mrs. Stanley, he took an opportunity to converse with her about her adopted child. He commenced by asking: "Do not you think Alice much changed?"

"Yes," she responded, earnestly, "I think she grows more lovely every day."

"But," continued Clarence, hesitating, "she is not as artless and affectionate as formerly."

"You surprise me," exclaimed Mrs. Stanley. "She is open as the day, and has the warmest heart I ever knew. See what an influence she has acquired over Uncle Stephen. He can never see any one else when she is present."

"Oh," said Clarence, laughing; "she is indebted to the speaking-trumpet for that. Yes, I believe he considers her a paragon of goodness."

After this conversation, however, Mrs. Stanley watched her daughter, and became convinced that, for some cause, she avoided receiving any attention from the young man.

Two days after their first ride, it was proposed to visit a beautiful glen about two miles distant. They were to start early, taking a lunch with them, and pass several hours at the place. When the arrangements were completed, Alice turned quietly to Gertrude, and offered her the use of Felix.

"But what will you do?" asked Gertrude, her countenance brightening with pleasure.

"I am not going," was the quiet response.

"Why? *why?*" asked many voices.

“ I cannot stay to give all my reasons,” she answered, laughing, and blushing, as she met a pair of blue eyes fixed half-reproachfully upon her ; “ but hereafter I will try to persuade Uncle Stephen to ride with me, at another time, so that you can have him for your excursions.”

“ Thank you ! thank you ! ” exclaimed Gertrude, as Alice was leaving the room.

“ With her own hands the young girl put up cold chicken, sliced ham, with sandwiches and tarts ; then ran to her room to procure her jockey for Gertrude, who preferred it to her own ; then stood upon the steps, with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, to see them start, wishing them a happy day, and a safe return.

Uncle Stephen was not at all satisfied that his favorite should remain at home ; but she archly told him, she would compel him to say differently before the day closed. She read to him, sang for his especial benefit all his favorite songs, until he was obliged to resort to his handkerchief to wipe the moisture from his eyes. She talked to him of her school companions, and her studies, and, indeed, she had never appeared half so cheerful and happy.

After dinner, she mesmerized him by combing his thin, gray hair ; then, when he lay back in his easy-chair, his nasal organs giving sure evidence of the soundness of his slumber, and not till then did she retire to her own room. When there, her over-excited feelings found vent in tears, for she had denied herself the pleasure of joining the party, from a stern sense of duty, and she felt keenly the disappointment. Poor child ! her heart was

all in a tumult, and for a time she could only weep ; but at length her tears, though bitter, brought relief, and she began to look calmly at her own situation. For Alice loved ; yes, with her whole heart she loved — her teacher. But the conviction which had so lately been forcing itself upon her mind, brought no pleasure, but the keenest mortification and self-reproach. She laid her head upon her arms, and almost unconsciously her thoughts went back to his arrival at Queenstown. She was but a child then ; but oh, how kind he had been to her, and to Louis. Her tears flowed afresh as she thought of her dear little companion, to whom she could have confided all her grief ; but now she must keep it locked up in her own breast. Then how unwearied had he been in instructing her, how interested in all her welfare. While at school her great desire was, though unacknowledged even to herself, to convince him that his pupil had honored his instructions. How earnestly she had counted the weeks, then the days, before her return home, because her mother had written that Clarence was to be there. But oh, how changed to sorrow and chagrin were all her bright anticipations !

A day or two after her return, she heard Gertrude and Edith in earnest conversation about Clarence. “ I have every reason,” said Gertrude, “ to know that he loves me ; indeed, he has often told me so ; but he does not wish it known at present, especially to Uncle Stephen ; so be very careful not to betray us.”

“ Oh, I’ll remember,” answered Edith ; “ but I advise you to keep Alice out of his way, until you’re positively engaged. I wouldn’t allow Alfred to give such glances

to another, as I have seen Clarence bestow upon Alice."

"Nonsense, Edith! He considers her as a child; and you know she always puts herself forward; but I do wonder what there is about her he considers so wonderful."

She could hear no more. Pressing her hands tightly upon her heart, she quietly left the room, and retired to the little closet, where she had formerly slept. There she sat, for hours, almost stupefied. It was then she first became aware of the nature of her affection for her teacher; else, why should she be so pained at hearing that he had already declared his love for Gertrude. When it commenced she knew not; but she was crushed beneath a sense of shame and mortification that she, the daughter of a nursery woman, should have bestowed her love, unsought, upon any one; but above all, upon a man she considered superior to all she had seen. Yes, in that dark hour, she tore off the mask, and looked at herself without disguise. What if, for the sake of his deceased wife, Mr. Stanley had treated her like a daughter! What if Louis had loved her like a sister! What if her dear Mrs. Stanley had been more than a mother to her, and Uncle Stephen her kind benefactor! She was no less the child of poverty and dependence. How dared she then to harbor such feelings for one moment? She bowed her head upon her hands, and prayed for strength to overcome; and strength was given her. She went out from that humble closet with firm resolves, with noble purposes, with full determination to root out every lingering feeling of affection for the one she had

so long and so unconsciously loved. But this resolution was not so easy to carry into effect. Every time she beheld him, she saw more in his character to esteem and respect, and not many days passed before she found her only safety was in avoiding his presence.

CHAPTER XIII.

“It was sufficient that his wants were known;
True charity makes others' wants its own.”

Dauborne.

LINDENWOOD was about a mile from the village of Queenstown, and for nearly half that distance there were no houses except those belonging to servants from the Hall. The town contained between three and four thousand inhabitants, who were divided into four religious denominations—the Episcopal, (to which Mr. Stanley's family belonged,) the Orthodox, the Methodist, and the Universalist. An academy was located there, which, during the summer season, was quite full, as the public schools were in session but half the year. It was this academy the young ladies from Lindenwood had attended until they went to T—— to give a finish to their education.

Queenstown was considered a very desirable place for a residence, not only on account of the beauty of its location, the facilities afforded by the boat and cars for reaching the neighboring city, and the quiet, peaceable character it had acquired, but also from the number of educated, refined families who had chosen it as their home. Here it was that young Sydney had taken an office as attorney, and here it was the scenes of the present chapter transpired.

For several days the weather had been stormy, so that

the party of young people at Lindenwood had been confined within doors, but on Tuesday morning the sun rose in cloudless splendor, flinging his bright rays on every side. After breakfast an excursion was planned for the afternoon, when Clarence could join them. They were merrily discussing it, and anticipating its pleasures, when the door opened, and Alice entered, equipped for a ride.

“So soon ready?” exclaimed Uncle Stephen, and he let his paper fall to the floor as he started in haste to meet her.

“Why, Alice, where are you going?” inquired half a dozen voices; but she only smiled and shook her head, while the old gentleman hurried from the room to prepare to accompany her. Her neatly fitting boddice displayed to great advantage her beautifully rounded form, and as she stood, gracefully holding up her long skirt, exposed to view the toe of a tiny gaiter matching in color her dress. The surprise she had given them, and the interest awakened as to the cause of her early start, had lent a deeper tint to her fair complexion, while the dimples were playing about her mouth as she tried to evade their inquiries.

The young attorney gazed earnestly upon her, and thought his eyes had never rested upon a lovelier object; but he suddenly caught a glimpse of Gertrude, who stood behind him, and her countenance was so full of bitterness that poor Alice started from her in terror.

At that moment Uncle Stephen entered, grumbling, “I’m making a fool of myself. I’ve not mounted a horse for twenty years. There’ll be amusement enough

for the whole town, to see the old codger escorting a fair lady through the main streets. I dare say she'll make me parade myself everywhere."

He stopped short on seeing that Alice did not, as usual, make any reply to his bantering, and was really distressed, as they stood waiting at the door for the horses, to see that she silently wiped a tear from her eye. "There, child," he commenced, "I'll take it all back, old barbarian as I am," when Clarence, who was standing by his side, whispered, "Take no notice now. It is nothing you have said," when his thoughts turned in another direction, and he replied, "If you've worried her, I'll —"

There is no knowing what he would have said, for Alice sprang down the steps, and, before Clarence could reach her, placed her foot in the outstretched hand of the hostler, and sprang lightly to her seat. The young man, much annoyed, turned to his uncle, who was really making a great effort in order to oblige his little friend. Three times the animal was led to the block, and the awkward attempt of the rider caused him to shy off, so that it was necessary to turn him, and lead him up again. "I shall give it up next time," he exclaimed, petulantly, and you may take my place, boy."

"Oh, no, *no!*" said Alice, earnestly. The instant she had spoken, the color mounted to her very brow, and, as she met the expression of sad reproach in Clarence, she added, quickly, "I will dismount; I will give no one the trouble to accompany me; I do not care to go now."

But this time Uncle Stephen had been successful, and they started off, when Clarence reluctantly returned to

the parlor, and said that he might be prevented from coming home in season to join them, but he hoped his absence would not prevent their going, as Mr. Huntington was with them. Before he arrived at his office, he made a determination to seek an explanation from Alice herself of her evident avoidance of him. He began to suspect that she was not treated with kindness by every member of the family.

In the meantime, the subject of his thoughts was trying to forget that anything unpleasant had occurred, and to render herself as agreeable as possible to her kind benefactor, who had taken so much pains to give her pleasure. After a cheerful conversation, as they rode slowly on, she told him she thought it was quite time she was doing something for her own support. "If I have kind friends," she continued, "that is no reason why I should be a burden to them."

"Humph!" replied Uncle Stephen, "all stuff and nonsense! Pray, what can you do? Teach an academy, hey?"

Alice was too much accustomed to his manner to feel at all discouraged by his remark; so she pleasantly replied, "I can do some things better than anybody in the world, yourself being judge."

"What, pray?"

"Why, combing your hair, for instance, or reading you to sleep."

Her companion stopped his horse in his eagerness to reply. "Well, child, I have a plan, so set your heart at rest. I'll employ you to wait upon me, and humor all my whims, which you have done for years without pay.

Now, I'll pay you well, so that you'll have no desire to run around seeking other service."

Whatever Alice thought of this proposal, she had no time to reply, for just then her attention was called to a child apparently about three or four years of age, who was running along on the sidewalk, crying bitterly. The equestrians stopped their horses, and inquired the cause of her sorrow. At first the child was frightened, and did not answer; but Alice said, tenderly, "Little girl, can't you tell me what is the matter with you?"

"My ma is sick," at length she sobbed out.

"What is your name, my dear?"

"Lizzie Gates."

"And where does your mother live?"

"There," pointing to a small house a few rods distant.

"Well, run on, and I will go with you, and see what I can do for her. Will you stop for me?" she added, turning to Uncle Stephen, "or will you ride on, and call for me when you return?"

"Never mind me, child. I'll wait here, but I don't dare to get off, for fear I never could mount again."

When the young girl entered the humble abode, she saw a woman sitting in a low chair, with a babe across her lap, while her head was resting on her arms, that lay upon the table. Lizzie pulled her mother's dress to call her attention, but she only moaned in reply, until the child said, "Ma, see the lady." The poor woman raised her head, and displayed a countenance pale as death, except her eyes, which were swollen and red with weeping.

"Your little girl told me you were ill," said Alice, advancing toward her. "Can I assist you?"

Mrs. Gates burst into tears. "No, *no!*" she sobbed out; "nothing can do me any good."

The tone was so despairing and heart-broken that the young girl was deeply moved. She sat down on a low stool near her, and, taking Lizzie upon her lap, said, kindly, "You must try to feel comforted for the sake of this dear little girl; and what will the baby do if you give way to your grief?" She had touched the right chord — a mother's love. Perhaps it was the only one which would at this time have vibrated to the touch. The tears of the poor woman still flowed, but she became more composed, and soon was able to relate, though with much shame, the cause of her trouble. Her husband, who was a blacksmith, had a profitable business, and had supported his family well, until the owner of the public house, with a company of others, built a bowling saloon. He was enticed there to see them play; then he himself played, until he spent every evening in gambling. At length he gave up business entirely, and passed his time lounging about the hotel. He had plenty of money, but she did not know how he obtained it. The night before, there had been a robbery committed in the village, and, as soon as it was light, her husband was apprehended, and placed in confinement to await his trial. "But he never did that," she added, vehemently; "he never would commit such a crime, to bring disgrace on himself and me. But the others will try to prove it upon him, and he'll be carried to prison; and then what will become of us?" and she pressed her babe convulsively to her breast.

"When is he to be tried?" asked Alice.

“They said they were taking him to a magistrate at once.”

“You say the robbery was last night; was your husband at home through the night?”

The poor woman cast down her eyes in great confusion, as she faltered out, “He came home about midnight.”

After a short pause, Alice arose to go, saying, “Mr. Stanley, with whom I live, is a magistrate, and he may be the one who will try him. At any rate, I think I can promise, if his case is not already decided, that he will have justice done him in his trial. I have a dear friend, who is a lawyer, and I will ask him to examine the case. If your husband is innocent, he shall be befriended.”

Mrs. Gates leaned forward with parted lips, eager to catch every word of her young comforter. It would have been a beautiful scene for a painter. There was the poor young wife, with her babes clinging to her side, eagerly gazing into the bright face of the young lady, who in cheerful tones was endeavoring to inspire her with hope and trust for the future. “I will see you again to-morrow,” she added, going towards the door. In the meantime, have you sufficient for yourself and children?”

“Oh, yes, miss! quite enough; and who knows but Justin will be cleared, and return to his work, and then how happy we shall be!” She caught up her babe to hide her tears of joy at the thought.

“My good woman,” said Alice, meekly, “you must pray that God will bring good out of this trial. He is able to convert this affliction into a great blessing. It

may be the means of showing your husband the danger of evil companions, so that he will shun them in future?

“ Oh, miss! you talk so much like my dear mother! She taught me to pray; but, since I was married, I have had so much to take up my time, I have forgotten all about her instructions. After Justin was carried off, I did try to ask God to let his innocence be known; but I gave it up. I couldn't expect he'd hear me when I've been so forgetful of my duty to him.”

Alice sprang forward, and caught her hand, saying, “ Do not give up praying. Ask him to forgive all your sins for Christ's sake, and to make your husband a good Christian. Will you do this ? ”

The breast of the woman heaved convulsively, and she bowed her head in token of assent as the young girl paused.

“ Good bye, then; I hope to bring you good news to-morrow. Good bye, Lizzie; I will come again soon.”

As she started quickly toward the door, all at once she remembered that Uncle Stephen was waiting for her; but, when she stepped into the entry, to her surprise she saw him sitting upon a low stair, and exhibiting traces of deep emotion. Making a quick sign for her to keep silent, he thrust a well-filled purse into her hand, at the same time pointing to the room she had left. But Alice shook her head as she whispered, “ Another time,” and they went out quietly together. Approaching the fence where she had tied her horse, Alice was wondering how she should contrive a step for Uncle Stephen, when a laboring man came by, and offered his assistance, with which the old gentleman was once more safely

seated upon his horse. But Alice secretly determined the next time she invited him to accompany her, to take some conveyance which would not subject him to such inconvenience. She would have preferred returning immediately home in order to consult Mr. Stanley about the trial; but, as her companion did not propose it, with the self-denial which had become a part of her nature, she rode on for nearly a mile. On their return they saw Clarence coming out of a book store, and, forgetting everything else in her joy at meeting him thus early, she eagerly beckoned him to her side. "Oh, Clarence!" she exclaimed, joyfully; "I'm so glad to see you. We have found a poor woman in great distress, and I promised her that you would interest yourself for her." She then proceeded to give a brief account of Mrs. Gates and her family, to which there was no want of pleased attention on the part of the lawyer. He promised to go directly and see the woman, and learn if there were any facts to throw light on the case.

"I knew you would!" exclaimed Alice, with a glowing countenance.

Almost unconsciously Clarence stood watching them until they were out of sight, when he turned and walked quickly to Mrs. Gates's. Her tone and manner had carried him back to the time when she used to run to him with a story of distress, as if she felt sure he would relieve them if it was in his power. The words, "I knew you would," so frankly uttered, rang in his ears, caused a bright smile to play around his mouth, and rendered his step more elastic. He determined to do all he could for

the release of the man, if, as she supposed, he had been made the tool of his more depraved companions.

It is unnecessary to narrate his interview with Mrs. Gates, or the one with her husband that followed. In the latter he became convinced of the innocence of Mr. Gates in the robbery, though the young man confessed, with shame, the wicked course of idleness and sin he had pursued for a few months. Suffice it to say, that when he returned at a late hour for tea, he carried Alice the report of Gates's release, and the conviction of two of his associates. She listened with tears as he recounted the joy of the young wife at the restoration of her husband, which Clarence assured her she ascribed entirely to the influence of the kind lady who called to see her. He did not, however, repeat what Mrs. Gates had said of her visitor, whom she considered an angel sent from heaven to comfort her in her distress; nor how a simple question she had asked concerning the relation existing between himself and her, had caused his heart to beat with sunny hope. He was too happy in her returned confidence to think of the past; and until the arrival of the party of equestrians, an hour or two later, he gave himself up to the enjoyment of the present hour. Alice had never appeared more cheerful; her clear eyes shone with a pure light, and a beaming smile played around her small mouth.

Uncle Stephen gayly described his own awkwardness in dismounting at Mrs. Gates's door, and the merry laugh he had occasioned a group of boys who were playing near. "In truth," he added, Alice was gone so long, I was afraid some evil had befallen her, especially as she

had just been imparting to me her wild scheme of setting up for herself."

Alice tried to cover his mouth, but he continued, "No, child, you deserve to be punished for your naughty thoughts. She wants to be more independent, and be able to act according to her own fancies; but I soon put a stop to her rebellion, and I've taken her into my service. She is to do just as I tell her, and I'm to — well, no matter what I'm to do; so look out and not interfere with her," glancing toward Clarence, who appeared half amused and half annoyed. "I wont have her worried. But seriously, child, what could put such thoughts into your head? Aren't you happy here? What do you think I should do without somebody to scold, or to bring me to reason when I'm out of humor?"

For a moment the poor girl appeared much embarrassed; but then, thinking that the present might be the most favorable time for mentioning her plan, she said, endeavoring to speak calmly, "It is not a new thought with me. Indeed, I can hardly remember when it first occurred to me; but by your kindness, my dear friends, I have received a thorough education, and can therefore not only relieve myself from being dependent upon your bounty, but hope I may prove myself useful in some humble situation. If my presence were necessary to my poor mother, I should feel it my duty to remain with her; but as it is not, I have long thought I ought to make some use of the education furnished me by your kindness."

For one moment no one spoke. Astonishment at the words of the young girl kept them silent. They had

been so much in the habit of considering her as a child that it was difficult to realize that she had ever indulged a thought of acting for herself. Clarence started forward eagerly, but Mrs. Stanley drew the child of her adoption closer to her heart, while her husband, who was much affected, said, "Alice, when your little companion, Louis, was dying, I promised him that I would be a father to you, and give you a home; you would not wish me to violate that pledge."

His manner was so solemn that she could only reply by her tears, as she caught his hand and pressed it to her lips.

Uncle Stephen arose and walked hastily from the room, when Mr. Stanley continued, "My dear child, let me hear no more of this. Your mother," glancing at his wife, "cannot spare you. There is only one condition," he added, pleasantly, "in which I shall give my consent to your leaving us, and that is when a husband claims you."

Poor girl! a conscious fear suffused her cheeks and brow with a burning blush, as she replied in a low voice, "That time will never come."

The sound of the returning party put a sudden termination to the conversation; but not before Clarence had taken her hand, saying, "Dear Alice, remember wherever you go, and whatever you do, you have one firm friend."

"Thank you," she replied, without raising her eyes; "I love to think it is so."

The tall and queenly Edith entered first, having, in the company of her admirer, passed a delightful afternoon,

Her sisters soon followed, with Mr. Huntington. Gertrude was weary and out of spirits, and exceedingly annoyed to find Clarence at home with Alice. During the half hour which followed, she was so ill-humored, and spoke so sharply to the young girl, who had run to assist in bringing the supper upon the table, that even her father noticed it, and when Alice had left the room, said reprovingly, "My daughter, I cannot allow you to speak so unkindly to your sister."

"What sister?" asked Gertrude, opening, to their fullest extent, her large eyes.

"Alice; and I wish to have her treated, in every respect, as if she were really such."

An expression of scorn distorted her beautiful features, as she replied, "I thought my father had too much pride to adopt the child of a servant. However, it is nothing to me"

"I think," suggested Edith, proudly drawing herself up, "it ought not to be expected of us to treat her as we do each other. I'm sure I wish her well, only if I were in her situation, I would prefer to live independently, even in the capacity of cook or chambermaid."

It was well for the haughty girls that Uncle Stephen was not present, else they might have received a sharp reproof from him.

The bitter words of Gertrude had caused the scales to fall from the eyes of young Sydney, who wondered how he could ever have been so blinded; and emotions of gratitude sprang up in his breast that he had not bound himself to her forever. When Alice came to the door and gayly informed them supper was ready, he hastily

left the room in search of his guardian, and found him vigorously walking back and forth, through the suite of rooms occupied by them. After sitting for a few moments with his head resting on his hand, and finding his companion took no notice of him, Mr. Sydney arose, and passing the hand of his kind friend through his arm, joined him in his walk.

“ I believe the child does it on purpose to torment me,” soliloquized the old gentleman. “ Wish I were twenty years younger, I’d give her a home in good earnest, and a husband, too ! ”

“ Who are you complaining of ? ” asked Clarence.

“ Why, of Alice, and all of you. I don’t see where your eyes are. So stupid of you not to see what’s for your own good.”

“ I am glad to assure you,” replied the young man, archly, though it must be confessed with a heightened color, “ that at length we view one subject alike ; ” and he uttered a few words in the ear of his guardian, which operated like magic. He caught Clarence by the shoulders, and, holding him at arms’ length, gazed earnestly in his face. Then assured that he had heard correctly, he started suddenly forward, and bestowed his approbation in the shape of a hearty kiss, after which he sat down and began to laugh and cry at the same moment. “ I declare,” he sobbed, wiping his eyes, “ it makes me young again. There, go and bring her here ; I want to give the child my blessing.”

“ Oh, no ! ” exclaimed the young man ; “ I have never given her any intimation of the state of my affections. I wish I were as certain of obtaining her consent as I was

of obtaining yours." He then spoke of the reserve which she had of late manifested toward him, and the difficulty he found in speaking with her, except in the presence of the family.

"Now hear me!" exclaimed Uncle Stephen, bringing his fist with great emphasis down upon his knee. "It's all the work of that artful Gertrude. Oh! I see it all. There is no end of her hints about dependants thrusting themselves forward, and all that sort of thing. No wonder they make her shy. Well, manage it your own way; but mind, now, if she wont have you, she's got to take me, that's settled. I wont be bothered with the little jade's fancies about going off to be a governess."

Entirely unconscious that subjects so nearly relating to herself were discussed within a few feet of her own room, Alice retired early. Her thoughts were all in confusion, and she longed to be alone, to commune with her own heart. The question of her leaving Lindenwood was settled, and she was troubled and vexed at herself for being pleased that duty called her to stay; for she could but acknowledge that it would be ungrateful and wrong for her to insist upon a line of action which her friends disapproved — friends whose care and affection entitled them to the greatest confidence. "And yet," she repeated to herself, "if they knew all, they would be the very ones to advise my removal; but as it is, I must struggle alone."

Her thoughts gradually grew more indistinct, and she fell asleep. In her dreams she again visited the young wife, accompanied her to the prison to see her husband, when to her intense surprise she found the prisoner was

Clarence. His deep blue eyes seemed to gaze earnestly into hers, as he implored her to procure his release; and when she promised to do this, his ardent expressions of gratitude as he clasped tightly her hand, caused her heart to beat wildly.

CHAPTER XIV.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” — *Christ.*

THE day following the events of the preceding chapter, Mr. Huntington was to return to college.

Soon after Clarence had left for his office in the village, Alice knocked at the door of Uncle Stephen's parlor, to see whether he were ready to accompany her to the house of Mrs. Gates. She started back on seeing that he was not alone. The old gentleman put his purse into her hand, as he said, “I cannot go with you this morning. I entrust this to you. Do not fail to call upon me for more, if you need it. Now is the time to make a strong impression upon the man. If needful, he must be set up in business, and encouraged to return to good habits.”

“Good bye, Mr. Huntington,” said Alice, presenting her hand. “I suppose you will leave before I return.”

“Good bye, Miss Alice,” he replied. “I wish you much success with your protégés.”

She had intended proposing to ride in the carriage, as she knew that would be more pleasing to him; but now that she was going alone, she preferred riding Felix, so she rang the bell for the servant to bring round the horse, gayly bade Mrs. Stanley good morning, and soon was on her way to the village. Upon knocking at the door she was rather surprised to find no sign of life about the premises, and stepped back to see if she had not mis-

taken the house. No, there was the very stair where Uncle Stephen had sat. She knocked again, and louder than before; and soon Mrs. Gates made her appearance, with her babe in her arms. An expression of great pleasure brightened her countenance, but this was quickly succeeded by tears. "Justin is very sick," she whispered, "very sick, ma'am. He don't know me or the children. The Doctor says it's the nervous fever, produced by the excitement of yesterday. Oh! it would make your heart ache to hear him talk. He has confessed all his sins over and over again; and when he came home, he told me he meant to be a different man from what he has ever been. When I repeated what you said, he did not answer for some time, and then he sighed and said, 'Maria, if I'd lived as my mother taught me, this would never have happened. We both resolved, last night, to try to be good, and to teach our children as we were taught, out of the Bible. But now he may never get well,'"—and the poor woman put her apron to her face to hide the tears which were streaming down her cheeks.

Alice quietly took the child from her arms, as she asked, "Have you no one to assist you in taking care of him?"

Mrs. Gates shook her head.

"Do you know of any one who would come if she were well paid?"

"Oh, yes! a woman who took care of me when I was sick."

"Where does she live?"

“ Only a short distance in the next street. Lizzie had been to her house yesterday, when you met her.”

“ Well, if Lizzie will show me the way I will get her if possible, to come here at once.”

“ I'm sure I can't see why you're so kind to me ; but I'm very grateful, though it an't my way to say so much about it as some do.”

“ No thanks, my good woman, are due to me ; I have a kind friend who delights to be of service to the needy, and it is by his wish that I attend to your wants. But where is Lizzie ?”

Mrs. Gates went to the back door and led in the child, who was playing in the yard. Having been washed and attired in a clean apron, the little girl walked by the side of the horse, as the long dress of Alice unfitted her for walking in the street. She found the nurse to be a motherly appearing woman, rather more than fifty years of age. She soon made known her errand, and was pleased to find her willing to go without delay. Alice then inquired whether they had a good physician, and having ascertained that it was her old friend, Dr. Jenks, she immediately determined to call upon him. She therefore paid Mrs. Green a week's wages, together with a sum of money for the immediate necessities of the family, and leaving Lizzie to return home with the nurse, jumped into her saddle, and rode to the house of Dr. Jenks. She was fortunate in finding him, for he drove up in his narrow buggy just as she approached.

“ Good morning, Miss Alice,” said he, gayly, “ is it I, you want ? Any body sick at the Hall ? Easy enough to see you're not to be my patient to-day. Come, jump

off, and give me a kiss from those red lips. What, refuse me? Why, child, I was the first friend you ever had."

In the meantime Alice dismounted, and followed the kind-hearted man into the sitting-room. He was a valued friend, as well as physician of Mr. Stanley's family. Alice, he had always associated with his little pet, Louis, and loved her for his sake as well as for her own. After shaking hands with Mrs. Jenks, the young girl at once made known her errand, and requested the Doctor to continue his attendance upon Mr. Gates, archly holding up her purse to intimate that she was the one to whom he was to look for his pay.

"Well, that's cool, I must say, to offer me a bribe if I'll give up my own patients. Where did you get so much money, that you are throwing it away in that style?"

"It's Uncle Stephen's," replied Alice, laughing.

"Won't you tell Uncle Stephen to attend to his own business, and I'll mind mine. Mr. Gates is my patient, and I shan't give him up to please any person;" and the kind man had a merry twinkle in his eye that told everybody that he had a large and warm heart beating underneath his elaborately frilled shirt. "Seriously, child," he continued, "I can't afford to give up Justin Gates, and such as he; they are the most valuable part of my practice; I couldn't, in conscience, ask God's blessing upon me if I turned a deaf ear to the calls of the poor. I consider my practice among them my best investments. My Master will repay me a thousand-fold when I get up there," he added, with a devotional glance

toward heaven. "So you see, child, how the matter stands."

"I'll do my best for the poor man, though I must confess he is in some danger; and as for anything else you or Uncle Stephen can do for the comfort of the family, I shall say amen to it."

"I have procured him a nurse," answered Alice, who had been much affected by what he had said. "Mrs. Green will remain there as long as she is needed."

"Ah! that's right; the best thing you could do. She's a model of a nurse;" and he rose to go.

Alice went across the room, put her arms around his neck, and kissed his furrowed cheek.

"Did you see that, mother?" he asked, turning to his wife. "Fine times these," and he heartily returned her embrace, saying to her, "I've rode you on my knee more times than I can count, and told you over and over again, 'This is the house that Jack built.' You wouldn't give me a kiss for the asking; but as soon as I stopped, you must needs come and volunteer. Well, that's just as mother used to do. It's natural to young girls."

"I couldn't help it," replied Alice, looking much amused. "I believe I gave it to you for your kindness to Justin Gates;" and bidding Mrs. Jenks a kind good morning, she was soon on her way home.

Upon her arrival, she found the family in some excitement on account of Edith's refusal to accept the hand of Mr. Huntington. Uncle Stephen had that morning given a reluctant consent to his suit. Her father was much pleased, hoping that his influence would do much

to soften the character of the haughty girl; but to the astonishment of all, when he made a formal offer of his hand, she had decidedly refused him, though she confessed that she liked him better than any other person. His profession was the insuperable objection in her mind, as she had determined never to be a clergyman's wife.

This was a keen disappointment to the young candidate for holy orders, and for one moment the thought was cherished, "it is not too late for me to change my profession;" but he cast it aside as unworthy of him. He had never made any secret of his pleasure in her society, and as she had not discouraged his attentions, he hoped his suit would terminate favorably. When he returned to the family, pale and sad, to bid them adieu, Mr. Stanley drew from him the fact that he had been rejected. He was very much displeased with his daughter, as he knew she had given the young man reason to believe she loved him. But Mr. Huntington would allow no blame to rest upon her, and with a sad weight at his heart bade them adieu.

Uncle Stephen greatly approved the course Alice had pursued with regard to the sick man; and asked her if she wanted more money to carry her plans into effect. In answer to which question, she held up the purse which was still well filled.

The next day, and for several days in succession, Alice rode to the village to call upon her protégés. Mr. Gates still continued very sick, and the kind-hearted physician began to look very grave. Mrs. Gates seemed every day more dejected. One week the nurse had remained with her patient, and Alice paid her another week's wages, and

at the same time providing for the wants of the family. One morning, however, when on her way to the village, she met Dr. Jenks. He stopped his horse. "Good news for you. I've just left the bedside of Justin Gates, and he was conscious. I think the crisis has passed, and that he is in a fair way to recover. It's hardly fair, I know, for me to tell the news, since Maria is watching so earnestly for you, in order to tell it herself."

"I am indeed pleased to hear it," said Alice, and she hastened on.

It was indeed so. A great change had taken place. For the first time, Alice went into the small bedroom to see the invalid. She stopped but a moment, for fear the excitement of seeing a stranger would injure him, in his weak state. When she left him, the grateful wife followed her into the small sitting-room, and, having carefully closed the door, expressed her wish that Miss Carey would remain for a few moments.

"I will do so with pleasure," replied the young lady, though she wondered a little at the serious tone in which the request was uttered. She drew a chair near the one where Mrs. Gates had seated herself, and said, kindly, "You have much to be thankful for, my good woman. Dr. Jenks told me he thought your husband would recover."

"Oh, I have, *I have!*" she exclaimed, raising her tearful eyes to the face of her companion, "not only for that, but for the blessings of a whole life. I have never realized who it was provided for all my wants, and supplied me with so many comforts. Now I seem to be just awaking out of sleep. I remember all my sins. Oh

how could I have been so forgetful of the instructions of my deceased mother!" Her feelings entirely overcame her, and she sobbed for some time without restraint.

Alice took her hand, and tried to soothe her. "Remember," she said, "that if you are truly penitent, God is able and willing to forgive you all your sins."

"But you don't know, you can't imagine, how very wicked I have been. Not that I have ever committed any open crime, but I have violated the sabbath. I have forgotten God. Weeks and months have passed without my ever remembering there was One who kept me alive, giving me food and raiment. I have not been inside of a church for three years; and now I can trace the commencement of all my troubles to that very time. Justin used always to be in his seat morning and afternoon; but I persuaded him to ride and walk with me, or make a social visit, as we had to work so hard through the week." Suppressing a sob, she continued: "Ever since the first day you called, and asked me if I prayed, I have had a dreadful weight upon me. Even when he was released, and your kind friend brought him home, though I was rejoiced to see him, yet I could not throw off my burden. And now this morning, when the doctor told me he was better, I didn't feel as I once should. Night after night, when the nurse was sleeping in her chair by the side of my husband's bed, I have crept away from my little ones, and come down here to read in the Bible but every word I read only made me feel worse, and many times I have thought 'twas no use to try to be better; but the next night I'd think I'd try once more. Miss Carey," she resumed, after a momentary pause of

great emotion, lowering her voice, and speaking in a hoarse whisper, while she gazed upon her companion as if upon her answer hung the power of life and death, — “Miss Carey, I’m afraid God has given me up.” Her eyes were now tearless; but there was in them an expression of unuttered woe, such as Alice had never seen.

For one moment she paused to wish that Mrs. Stanley or Clarence were there to speak words of comfort to the anxious inquirer after truth, and then, with a silent uplifting of her heart to God for wisdom to direct her what to say, she commenced: “It is the adversary who puts such thoughts into your mind, to keep you from your Saviour, who has invited you to come to him that you might have eternal life. If it were as you imagine, that you have been left to yourself, you would not be troubled with fears. The sins you have committed would not stare you in the face. No: it is the Holy Spirit striving with you, to bring you to repentance, to make you mourn over the follies of your past life.”

“I do indeed, I do repent of them with all my heart; but it makes me feel worse when I think that, in spite of all I’ve done, He has been so good to me. Oh, I haven’t deserved such goodness! When Justin was carried off, I had awful thoughts, and asked myself, ‘What have I done that such a dreadful affliction should be sent upon me?’ When I remember God knew my wicked thoughts, I am humbled to the dust.”

“It was for just such sinners as you are that Christ died. If you had never sinned, you would not need a Saviour. Your husband did not need or wish for a physician as long as he was well; but you feel that you

have offended God, violated his holy laws, and that you must be lost unless you are pardoned. Jesus has offered to be your ransom, and, if you put your trust in him, he will save you."

With a quick start, Mrs. Gates heaved a deep sigh, as if she could hardly realize so wonderful a plan of salvation. With a countenance in which hope and fear were striving for ascendancy, she gazed at her companion, then closed her eyes, and said, solemnly, "Oh God, for Christ's sake, save my guilty soul!"

Never has that plea been urged in vain. Never has a repentant sinner humbly called upon God, plead the merits and sacrifice of his Son, and failed to receive an answer of peace.

For a short time Alice paused. She did not wish to interrupt the work the Holy Spirit was carrying on in the soul of the penitent woman before her. Then she silently lifted up her heart to ask God to sanctify the trials and afflictions of the present hour to her salvation. Mrs. Gates instantly imitated her example, and the young girl poured out her full heart in prayer to her heavenly Father. Before she left, Alice indulged a strong hope that the interview had not been in vain. Instead of despairing sorrow stamped upon every feature, there was now upon the countenance of the good woman an expression of earnest and holy trust. She exhibited marks of strong feeling as Alice took her leave, and said, with deep emotion, "Oh, Miss Carry! don't forget to pray for my poor Justin, that God would bring him to repentance."

CHAPTER XV.

“ Oh, there is need that on men's hearts should fall
A spirit that can sympathize with all.” — *Carey*.

WHEN Alice returned home, instead of joining the family in the parlor, she retired to her own room, and passed the remainder of the forenoon in giving thanks to God for making her the feeble instrument of good to one soul. During these hours of meditation, she saw a great field of usefulness opening before her. She need not go to a distance to be useful to her fellow-creatures. She determined to seek one among the inhabitants of her native village. Where she found temporal distress, she knew that the hand of her kind benefactor was ever open to supply her with the means to relieve it. She was so much engrossed with this subject that she had no time to think of herself; and, when she went below to join the family at dinner, peace and hope irradiated every feature. But here she was destined to new trials. Gertrude, who was every day more convinced that Clarence had become wholly indifferent to her, unworthily ascribed the change to the arts of Alice to win his favor. The demon of jealousy had taken possession of her soul, and at times almost maddened her. In Edith she found a willing listener to all the abuse she wished to heap upon the innocent object of her displeasure. When she heard of Alice's proposition to leave Lindenwood, and

become a teacher, her heart bounded with joy; but, when made aware that her father and mother firmly opposed the plan, and insisted that she should remain with them, she hated them for not falling in with her views, or failing to see that they were thwarting her interests. She thought she loved Clarence; but now, as she confessed to Edith, she could almost wish him dead rather than to see him become the husband of Alice, who, by the kindness of her father, had been raised from abject poverty. She watched the poor girl with Argus eyes, and was ready to ascribe the worst motive to every action. It was fortunate for the young girl that she did not suspect half the unkindness that was cherished toward her. For years Emma had been a loving, confiding friend, one who sympathized in all her trials, and was ready to ward off, as much as in her power, the poisoned shafts aimed at her heart. When Alice appeared at dinner, Gertrude, who could neither appreciate nor understand the source of her calm happiness, ascribed her cheerfulness to other causes, and even suspected Clarence had confessed his affection. This suspicion was confirmed by a remark the young girl made in answer to Mrs. Stanley, who frankly said, "I think, my love, from your countenance, you must have found your patient convalescent; you appear very happy."

"Yes, mamma," replied Alice, in a low voice, intended only for the ear of her mother, as she sat by her side, "and my heart is at rest."

It was plain also that Mrs. Stanley attached a different meaning to her words from the one she intended to convey, for she gazed earnestly at her for a moment,

and then fell into a reverie so profound as to be making continual blunders during the remainder of the repast.

When her father left the room after dinner, Gertrude could no longer restrain her ill humor, and said, aloud, "I wonder, mother, that you allow Alice to be riding to the village every day. If she has not delicacy enough to perceive the impropriety, I should think you would use your influence or authority to restrain her."

Uncle Stephen grew very red, a sure sign he was waxing wrathful, but for once he kept silent.

"I cannot understand," replied the lady, "how she violates any rule of propriety, or of delicacy, by riding to the village to visit a sick person."

"Not when every one knows she goes there for the sake of seeing Clarence!" was the angry retort. "Remarks are already made upon it."

Alice started to her feet with indignation stamped upon every feature, and was about to deny any such motive, but, at a glance from her mother, again seated herself, though her heart palpitated so as to shake her whole frame.

"Gertrude," said Mrs. Stanley, with emotion, "such remarks do far more injury to you than to her. You, as well as each of us, know that Alice is the last one who would be guilty of an attempt to draw undue attention to herself. I could wish that all my daughters might imitate her example in that respect. I will not allow her to degrade herself so far as to deny the charge." So saying, she turned to leave the room, desiring Alice to follow her.

For a long time after they were alone, the poor child

could only hide her blushing face in her mother's lap, as she occupied a stool at her feet. At length she sobbed out, "It is cruel, *cruel*, in her to make such a charge. Indeed, I have never seen him, except on the morning when I rode with Uncle Stephen, and then only for a moment, and that, too, in the street."

"I knew it, my love," replied Mrs Stanley, soothingly "It is foolish to weep, and yet I know such insinuations are hard to bear. But which, Alice, would you choose — to be in your situation, and endure such a trial as she has inflicted upon your sensitive heart, or be in hers, and inflict it?"

"Oh, mamma, I never could say such unkind things to her. I had tenfold rather be the one to endure."

"Yes, dear, she is to be pitied; but she has this excuse. She has been disappointed in her dearest wishes and hopes, and she feels it keenly."

"In what has she been disappointed?"

"In the affection she hoped to gain from Clarence. It cannot be new to you."

"But she said," eagerly replied Alice, "that he had told her he loved her, but that Uncle Stephen was not to know it for the present."

Poor Alice became painfully confused, and covered her face with her hands. "I have done very, *very* wrong to tell you this, for I overheard it," she added, as a shade of keen disappointment passed over her mother's face, and the thought of what she had heard in the same connection caused her cheeks to burn like fire. A dreadful struggle took place in her breast — a desire to unburden her heart, even by confessing her folly in giving her

affections unsought; and opposed to this, the bitter mortification it would cause her to do so. Shame at length prevailed, and she said to herself, "I shall conquer, I *will* conquer, myself!"

At length Mrs. Stanley asked, quietly, "Can you not tell me why you were so happy at dinner?"

"Oh, yes," she answered, her countenance brightening, "I intended to tell you. But first will you tell me if you ever thought me guilty of—of what Gertrude said?"

"Guilty? No, my child! not in the slightest degree. I never shall see you doing wrong, without telling you of it."

Alice then related to her mother the events of the morning. Mrs. Stanley's sympathizing countenance bore ample testimony to her interest for the penitent woman.

In the meantime Gertrude sat at her sewing in the vain endeavor to appear indifferent to what had occurred. She was vexed that her charges had not at least satisfied her curiosity, whether Alice did meet Clarence in the village. She was mortified that she had been led by her jealousy to make the insinuation in so public a manner, and she was puzzled beyond measure by the appearance of Uncle Stephen, who sat chuckling to himself as if he had very merry thoughts, while, for a queer, quizzical expression upon his countenance she in vain endeavored to account, except upon the supposition that he knew, and was satisfied with the state of his ward's affections. He said not a word by which she could gain a clew to his thoughts; but sat twirling his heavy watch chain, as was his habit when in good humor.

When Mrs. Stanley and Alice were summoned to tea, not a trace of unkindness appeared upon the countenance of the latter. In her small closet, where she had so often sought and obtained strength to overcome her inward adversaries, she had gained a victory over every unkind feeling. She had even earnestly besought a blessing upon the one who had endeavored to injure her. The answer had come in peace to her own soul.

After tea, Uncle Stephen called her to his side, and engaged her in conversation; and when, at a distance from the family group who gathered about the centre-table, she gave him a brief account of her morning visit to the poor family, and in her interest for them forgot all which had annoyed her.

The next day was the Sabbath, and though Alice was very anxious to hear from her protégés, she concluded not to visit them. After service in the afternoon, as she and Emma were walking from church, they met Dr. Jenks. He stopped his horse, and told her Mr. Gates continued to improve, and he added, "His wife is so happy that she must needs tell everybody about it." The eyes of the good man were moistened as he said this, and not liking to have his emotion observed, he suddenly nodded his adieu, and drove on.

At an early hour on the following day, Alice walked to the village, taking with her one or two devotional books, and also a small basket of delicacies, from Mrs. Stanley, to the invalid.

"I almost envy you," said Emma, as she gayly bid her good morning.

"Then why not accompany me?"

“Not this morning,” replied Emma.

Alice found Nurse Green in the small entry of Mrs. Gates’s house, in earnest discussion with a poorly-dressed woman, who was weeping bitterly. The sight of grief always affected the heart of Alice, and she stopped to inquire the cause of this sorrow.

“Her sister,” replied the nurse, “is the wife of one of the men who were sentenced to prison a few weeks since. She came to see if I would go there for a few days when I’m through here. The poor creature has almost cried herself to death, though everybody thinks she is well rid of him. He used to beat and abuse her shamefully, because she wouldn’t uphold him in his wicked conduct.”

“Where does she live?” inquired Alice.

“A few doors beyond me, on the opposite side of the street, in a small, brown house.”

“Do you live with her?” inquired the young lady, addressing the woman.

“No, ma’am, I have a family of my own; but I feel so much for my poor sister that I am willing to pay Nurse Green if she will go there. I’ve been back and forth to take care of her for nearly a fortnight; but I have a baby, and I’d rather pay her than go as I have done.”

“I will call and see her, before I go home. Perhaps we can make some arrangement with Mrs. Green.”

After the woman had gone, Alice made more particular inquiries about her circumstances, and found her case really more necessitous than the one in which she was so much interested.

“I was just wishing,” said the good nurse, “that the

Lord would direct some kind friend to her door, as he did you to this. Maria Gates speaks of it every day."

"I suppose you are aware," responded Alice, "that I only distribute the bounty of a rich friend, who does not let his right hand know what his left hand does."

"La!" said Mrs. Green, smoothing down her apron, "I guess 'tisin't much of a secret who it comes from. I've known of his charities these four years, though he does take mighty queer ways to bestow them. The present way is the best, I'm thinking; but I'll speak to Maria."

When she opened the door into the bed-room, Alice saw the invalid bolstered up in bed, while his wife sat by his side, reading to him from an old, leather-covered Bible. The babe lay asleep at the foot of the bed. She came forward joyfully to meet the young lady, and grasped her warmly by the hand.

"Oh, Miss Carey!" she exclaimed, "my burden is gone. All is peace here," putting her hand to her heart. "I have longed for you to come, that you might talk with Justin."

Alice made a sign for her to be silent, as the sick man could hear every word, fearing lest in her zeal she should defeat her own object. They immediately passed to the bedside of Mr. Gates, who at first appeared very much embarrassed; but, as Alice sat down by him, and attempted to turn his mind from himself to other topics, he became at length more free, and expressed his gratitude for her attention to his family. "Maria would have had a tough time of it," he added, "if it hadn't been for the help you've been to her."

“Do you enjoy reading?” she asked; “I noticed your wife was reading to you when I came in.”

“Middling,” he answered, frankly. “To tell the truth I a’n’t much of a reader, myself; but I like to hear her, she enters into it so. It seems to come right home.”

“I have brought a little book which perhaps may please you. It is one which has greatly interested me.”

“If it wouldn’t bother you too much I should like to hear it. I find it’s dull music to lie in bed, and it’s what I havn’t been used to. I never was hauled up in my life before.”

“You have, indeed, much to be grateful for. Have you ever thought to whom you was indebted for health?”

“Why, no; can’t say I ever thought much about it. Suppose it’s owing to my having such a firm constitution.”

“But who gave you such a firm constitution?”

“Well, I can’t say. I allus supposed ’twas born with me.”

Alice was sorely puzzled. She did not feel at all sure whether this ignorance were real, or only feigned in order to get rid of religious conversation. She had never seen much of the world, nor of the different phases of human character, and was at a loss to judge how it would be best to proceed with him, for her heart was fully set on his conversion. She determined, however, not to press the subject upon him at present, but to gain his confidence, that she might converse with him in future with more hope of doing him good. Therefore, saying to Mrs. Gates that she would watch by the babe if she wished to be engaged with her family, she opened her book and

commenced reading. Mrs. Gates soon resumed her seat, after seeing that Lizzie was safe in the little yard, and with her sewing in her hand, was prepared to listen to her young friend.

The book was a short and simple narrative of a father converted by the death of his child. As she read on through some of the more touching scenes, she could see that her hearers were much affected. Mr. Gates was obliged repeatedly to wipe his eyes with his shirt sleeve, and when she stopped, fearing he might be wearied, she eagerly asked her to go on. But when she had finished, and his wife asked him if he had not enjoyed it, he replied, "If it had been livelier 'twould have suited me better."

Yet his benefactress determined not to yield to discouragement. She felt sure this indifference was partly assumed, to conceal his real feelings; and she trusted in the Spirit of God for the result. With her own hands she took the jellies and other articles from the basket, retaining only a couple of oranges for her next call, and then putting a small book of prayers into the hands of Mrs. Gates, she bade them good morning; but had proceeded no farther than the entry, when to her great confusion she found Clarence standing there. He had knocked repeatedly at the outer door, and, failing of being heard, had advanced to the inner. The conversation of the preceding day darted through the mind of the poor girl, causing her the most painful embarrassment; but, with an effort to speak calmly, she told him she would speak to Mrs. Gates, and was hastening to do so, when he said, gravely, "Alice, have I offended you by coming here?"

“ Oh, no, *no!* ” she replied, eagerly, “ only — ” she hesitated and then stopped. It was impossible to explain.

He seemed grieved that she did not reply more frankly, and the consciousness of this, and of not-being able to do so, greatly increased her confusion. Oh, how earnestly she wished that Emma had accompanied her, or that she had gone one moment sooner!

At length, after an awkward silence, she turned to go into the room, and he made no farther objection to her doing so. Mrs. Gates recognized him at once, so that Alice waited only a moment, and, with a slight bow, left the room. Now that it was too late, she keenly regretted her haste, since her evident avoidance of him had given him pain, especially as he would be at a loss to understand her reason for doing so. But her thoughts were soon directed into another channel as she approached the low-roofed cottage, to which she had been directed.

CHAPTER XVI.

"It is not well,
Here in this land of Christian liberty,
That honest worth or hopeless want should dwell
Unaided by our care and sympathy."—*Carey.*

AFTER knocking repeatedly at the outer door, she gently pushed it open and proceeded to the inner, where her application for admittance was immediately answered by a faint voice bidding her enter. Upon a low bed in the corner of the room lay a woman apparently about thirty years of age, whose pale, emaciated countenance called forth her warmest sympathies. A young child lay nestled close to its mother, in the sweet sleep of childhood, while everything in and about the room, though denoting great poverty, yet betokened the strictest regard for neatness.

"This," thought Alice, "is the work of her kind sister." But she was mistaken.

At a low call from his mother, a noble-looking boy made his appearance from a room in the rear. He came forward when he saw the visitor, and passed her a chair with a freedom from restraint and awkwardness very unusual for a boy of his age.

"My mother is very sick this morning," he said, addressing Alice, "and has not been able to rise; but she will be glad to see you." He then advanced to the bed

and gently relieving her from the child, he raised the pillows, and tenderly assisted her to turn to the side where Alice was sitting.

“You are very kind to call,” said the poor woman, making an effort to keep back her tears; “my sister told me you would do so.”

“I am sorry to find you so ill, replied Alice, “and regret that I did not sooner hear of your sickness.”

The woman, whose name was Hayden, suddenly drew up the bed-clothes to cover her face, and there was a sound of violent sobbing.

“My mother has not been able to talk much,” said the boy, apologetically, while he gazed with the utmost tenderness at the bed, where the motion of the clothes plainly showed the difficulty she found in suppressing her feelings.

“And who takes care of her?”

“I do,” said the boy, drawing himself up “My aunt has been here often, and watched with mother at night until she herself was taken sick. She has a large family of her own, and the additional care was too much for her.”

“What is your name?”

“Dexter, ma’am, Dexter Hayden.”

“Well, Dexter, you and I must do the business then. Has your mother had any breakfast?”

“Oh, yes, ma’am, I baked some potatoes for Minnie and myself; and aunt Lucy brought mother a nice bowl of gruel. If she would only be willing for me to stay at home from school, I could do all that she requires; but it frets her to have me absent from my class for a single recitation.”

Alice gazed at the boy with astonishment, as he stood before her, answering her questions with modesty, but perfect self-possession. But eleven summers had passed over his head, and yet there was a maturity and manliness about him which she had never witnessed in one so young. Thick clustering locks curled up from his high brow. His clear, gray eyes, his mouth of mingled sweetness and firmness, together with his strong self-reliance, convinced her he had already made resolves to free his beloved mother from poverty and disgrace. "That boy will distinguish himself," was her instinctive feeling as she listened to him. She would have had more reason to think so, could she have known of his standing in his class, and that the teacher of the Academy, prompted not only by motives of charity, but by a desire to retain a scholar who was a model of propriety as an example to the school, had cheerfully given him his tuition; that his good conduct, and willingness to oblige his companions, had caused him to be so much beloved and respected by them that never, in his presence, had the most distant allusion been made to the disgrace of his father.

But this had been a dreadful blow to the poor boy. For the sake of his mother, whom it had crushed to the earth, he had striven to be cheerful. Yet there were times when a sense of shame and disgrace overpowered him; and he was obliged to hide himself, in the low attic, over his mother's room, until he could obtain a victory over himself, and again be in a condition to appear cheerful before her.

Alice knew nothing of all this until a much later period; the longer she saw and conversed with him, the

more she became interested in him ; and she determined to recommend him to Uncle Stephen as a noble beneficiary. She had ascertained before she left Mrs. Gates, that they could dispense with the services of Nurse Green in a very few days, if Justin gained in strength as fast as he had done. Mrs. Gates, indeed, offered to release her at once, but she had not thought it best to run the risk of a relapse for want of proper care. She therefore asked Dexter if he knew of any one he could obtain for a short period. But he did not, and there was no way but for him to go on as well as he could until Mrs. Green was able to come. Alice secretly resolved to provide the necessary food, and to be there herself much of the time.

Little Minnie now awoke, and pulling the bed-clothes from her mother's face, began to kiss away her tears, lisping : " Mamma not cry, Minnie will be dood."

Her caresses did more than anything else toward restoring the afflicted mother to composure ; and Alice was much affected to see her press the child convulsively to her heart. It was indeed a beautiful face, peeping so brightly from under her long flaxen curls, while she raised her tiny fingers to brush away the tears that lay upon her mother's cheek.

Dexter was evidently very proud of his sister, and anxious to exhibit her to their visitor. He went to the side of the bed, and holding out his arms, said : " Come, Minnie, and speak to the lady."

The child sprang toward him, and hid her laughing face in his neck.

Alice took an orange from the basket, and held it up

as an inducement to Minnie to come to her. But for a long time the little Miss was very shy. She reached out to take the proffered fruit, and then clung tightly to her brother's neck if Alice offered to take her from him. The young lady was pleased to see that Mrs. Hayden's eyes rested upon the scene before her with an appearance of interest, forgetting for the moment her own heart-sorrow; and she trusted that time would moderate her grief, and restore her at least to partial cheerfulness. As it was near noon, she put a sum of money into the hand of Dexter, and requested him to buy some bread, a lump of butter, a pound of tea, and seven pounds of sugar.

The boy proudly put back the money, as if he could not accept charity; but after a single glance at his mother, with a heightened color, he took it, as Alice said with a smile, "I have been walking since breakfast, and begin to feel very hungry; if you will allow me I will dine with you to-day."

With a bright smile of gratitude, the boy took down his cap from a hook and darted away.

He was gone but a few moments before he returned with the parcels. When Alice, who, some time before this had laid aside her bonnet and shawl, arose, and putting Minnie in a chair by the bedside, accompanied Dexter into a small, back room, or shed, where a cooking stove had been set. Here, as in the front apartment, everything was scrupulously neat and clean. A small pile of brush lay in the box by the stove, the preparation of which had occupied Dexter on her entrance. He told her he would soon have a fire under the tea-kettle; and

the young girl, whose object in following him, had been to ascertain their most pressing wants, returned to the room she had left. Minnie had crept upon the bed by her mother, but soon left her place at the invitation of Alice to come and help her get dinner. A leaf of the large table was turned up, and the child tried to pull open the drawer, to show that the cloth and knives were in there. Then she drew her new friend to the cupboard, saying "Minnie's cup there, Minnie wants to drink with new cup."

"If mamma pleases," replied Alice; and the child ran to the bed to gain permission. Then the cups, plates and spoons were taken down, and laid in order upon the table. Minnie was almost wild with delight, at being allowed to assist in carrying them across the room. When the bread had been neatly cut in slices, and the butter laid upon a plate, the child could not contain her joy. She pulled the dress of Alice to have her stoop down, put her small, plump arms around her neck, lisping out, "Minnie loves you, Minnie do." Until then, Alice had never known that she was especially fond of children; but the frank avowal of the sweet little girl touched a chord in her heart which never after ceased to vibrate. She warmly returned the embrace, as she said, "I love Minnie very dearly."

Dexter soon came in with the tea, but said, hesitatingly, "there is no milk."

"Ah, I quite forgot the milk," replied the young housekeeper, and she laughed merrily as she requested him to buy a quart as soon as possible, as she intended

to make his mother a slice of toast, and Minnie was looking forward to a treat from her new cup.

Mrs. Hayden, from the bed, uttered a low remonstrance about the toast, but Alice cheerfully assured her that she should take great pleasure in making it for her. After a short time the dinner was announced. Mrs. Hayden was raised to an upright position,—all the pillows in the house being brought into requisition; a towel was laid before her in place of a napkin, and her toast and tea relished so well that she acknowledged, in a far more cheerful voice than she had yet spoken, that she was almost strong enough to sit up.

When they arose from the table, the little girl clapped her hands, exclaiming, “Minnie had dood dinner, Minnie want you to come next time.”

After assisting Dexter to carry the dishes to a table in the back room, where he preferred to wash them by himself, Alice reluctantly prepared to take leave. It was very easy for her to see that her visit had done the invalid much good, and she feared when she left, the afflicted woman would relapse into her former despondence.

Her presence had, indeed, operated like a charm. Her bright eyes, smiling face, and cheerful voice had inspired the heart-broken mother with a new feeling of courage to look into the future. She saw, too, that her young friend was interested in her little Minnie, and appreciated the excellences of her noble boy; and the mother's heart swelled with emotions of pride as she gazed upon them.

After putting into Minnie's hand a piece of silver to buy some milk for her supper, Alice left, promising to return on the morrow. During her solitary walk home,

her thoughts took a very unusual turn. "Oh," she said almost audibly, "I wish I were rich! How much happiness there is in doing good! I never passed a more pleasant morning."

There was an air about the family which assured her that they had seen better days. The manner and language of Dexter proved that he had not always been oppressed with poverty. But the father had proved himself a villain. How could he so forget his tender wife and beautiful children? What a trial his neglect and abuse must have been to her gentle heart! Had she religion? One only thing had occurred which led her to think so. When they sat down to dinner, Minnie reverently folded her hands, and closed her eyes, thus evincing a habit of acknowledging God. Dexter colored slightly, and glanced at Alice, who immediately repeated a form of prayer for a blessing on the food. The children had evidently been rightly instructed.

Occupied with her meditations, she soon found herself at home, and ran to seek Uncle Stephen to give him an account of her expenditures, and to consult him with reference to her new protégés. In the hall she met Mrs. Stanley, who pleasantly chid her for her long absence, saying, "We had difficulty in restraining Uncle Stephen from starting in search of you. He really was alarmed that you did not return to dinner, and said he wouldn't consent again to your going among thieves and robbers; there was no knowing what harm would come to you."

Alice laughed gayly, and invited her mother to accompany her to her benefactor's room, and hear an account of her morning adventures. "I saw Clarence," she

whispered, as they went up the stairs, "and after what passed yesterday, I was so much embarrassed I fear I did not treat him very politely."

"I am sorry," replied her mother, "for he knew nothing of the conversation, and the remarks were really not worth noticing."

The old gentleman was so much interested in her account of Dexter and Minnie, that he replenished her purse, and told her if, on inquiry, the boy proved to be what she supposed, he would be responsible for the means to educate him.

Alice was so delighted that, in her joy, she clapped her arms about his neck, and gave him a hearty kiss, just as she used to do when a little girl.

"There, child," he said, archly, "don't waste your kisses on an old man like me. There are younger ones, who would be glad enough of them."

"I shall give my kisses to whom I choose," answered Alice, with a pretty pout on her lip; and "I choose to give them to you, and Dr. Jenks. I like old men the best." But her strict regard for truth compelled her, though reluctantly, to qualify her assertion, and she added, "that is — of course" — when a merry peal of laughter from Uncle Stephen and her mother entirely disconcerted her.

"Why, child, it's no disgrace to tell the truth. Don't look so very rosy."

"Where do you buy your wood, Mr. Stanley?" asked Alice, an hour or two later, when they were alone in the parlor.

"That is rather a strange question from you, he an-

answered, pleasantly; "but I will tell you, on condition that you confess what you intend to do with it."

"Uncle Stephen has become interested in a poor family; that is, *I* have, and told him about them. He wishes me to provide everything for their comfort. I saw this morning they had only a small quantity of brush for fuel, and I don't know where to go to buy any."

"I procure mine in the village. At this season, if you go early enough, you will almost always find men in the square with wood, both oak and pine."

"I suppose oak is better."

"Not exclusively; I should advise you to get dry pine, for a part, to kindle with. Clarence will select it for you, and direct the man where to carry it."

"Will you please ask him to do so? It is to be carried into Cedar street, to the house of Mrs. Hayden, wife of the man who was put in prison lately. I will write the name on a slip of paper."

"Are you sure they are deserving? I fear you will be liable to be imposed upon."

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Alice, warmly; "I *know* these are deserving people."

Mr. Stanley smiled as he glanced at the enthusiastic creature before him, and said, "I have no reason to doubt it; but you had better ask Clarence to go in and see them himself, and inquire about them."

"I should like to have him inquire, but I hardly think it would do to have him call at present. The woman is confined to the bed, and beside her, there are only two children in the family." As she went on describing them,

and grew warm with the subject, the gentleman started as he gazed,—there was something in her whole appearance that reminded him so strongly of his deceased wife.

“Well,” he said, turning away with a sigh, as he thought of the wide difference between her and Edith, “I will attend to it;” and Alice felt that she was relieved from her greatest care. She could go to the store, and order flour and other articles; but she had been puzzled how to obtain the wood.

In the course of the evening, while the family were sitting around the table, Mr. Stanley came in from his study and said to Clarence: “Lest I should forget it in the morning, here is a small item of business for you. Though it is rather out of your line, I advised Alice to put it into your hands.” He read from the memorandum he had made: “Purchase load of wood, half oak or maple, and half pine, and send it according to the direction,”—passing him the paper on which she had written the name.

Clarence took it, gravely, without even glancing at her, and said, “I will send it in the morning.” He put the direction in his pocket-book, and resumed his reading.

His manner, so different from his usual cordiality, arrested even the notice of Mr. Stanley; but supposing him to be engrossed with his book, he merely added, “I feared it might be forgotten in the morning, and the protégés of Alice be in distress for the want of it.”

Clarence merely bowed.

Mrs. Stanley was much distressed, and feared that Alice, in her desire to avoid Clarence, had seriously

offended him,--- while Uncle Stephen removed the glasses which had taken the place formerly monopolized by the goggles, wiped and replaced them to see more clearly what had come over his ward. But the object of his solicitude seemed wholly intent upon the page before him, until Edith, who sat next him, laughingly asked, "How long, Clarence, are you going to read upon that one page? You have not turned over a leaf for the last ten minutes; the author must be very profound."

Not even this sally brought a smile to the face of the young man. He appeared somewhat annoyed, but did not attempt a reply. In a few moments he closed the book, and asked Emma to give him some music.

She complied at once; played and sung several pieces as he called for them. At length he named one requiring another voice, and she requested him to take it; but he bent down and said, in a low voice, "Call Alice." Emma turned upon the music stool to do so, but Alice had left the room. In answer to her inquiry where the young girl had disappeared, her mother answered, "She left the room soon after you went to the piano."

"I will run and ask her," said Emma, "to sing this tune with me."

"I think she has retired," responded her mother; "You had better ask Gertrude."

But Gertrude haughtily refused, and the music was dispensed with; and soon Clarence, and his guardian, left the room.

"My daughter, why did'n't you oblige your sister?" asked Mrs. Stanley, kindly.

"If I were in her place, I wouldn't play second fiddle

to a dependant like Alice," interrupted Edith, before Gertrude had time to reply.

"How many times must I remind you that she is not a dependant. Have not your father and I adopted her for our own? As our child, she has as much claim upon courtesy and kindness as yourself. Unele Stephen would gladly adopt her, but your father would not consent; not only from a regard to a promise he made your mother, but also from the esteem he has of her lovely character.

"It don't require glasses to see what she is after," exclaimed Edith, passionately, "fawning around Unele Stephen, in the style she does. She expects he will make her his heir."

"I should not be at all surprised if he were to do so," responded Mrs. Stanley, with much dignity. He has a right to do as he pleases with his money, and there is no one he loves as he does Alice. But you know, Edith, that she has never thought of his doing so."

"Sister Edith," exclaimed Emma, with feeling, "I don't see how you and Gertrude can treat Alice so unkindly. I'm sure I wish every day I were only half as good as she is."

"Gertrude and I have never aspired to be models," responded Edith, with warmth; and here the conversation dropped.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Half of the ills we hoard within our hearts,
Are ills because we hoard them.”—*Proctor.*

WE must pass over a period of several weeks, during which Alice divided her attention between the families of Mr. Gates and Mrs. Hayden. She usually went first to read for an hour to the former, who had become so much interested that he manifested great impatience if she were a few minutes behind her usual time. But she could not be satisfied that any permanent result followed from her reading. If she attempted to converse with him upon his own accountability to God, or on his duties to his family, he at once turned off to other subjects. She had of late chosen devotional reading, and closed every interview by a selection from the book of Common Prayer; and now that he was well enough to resume his work, she could do nothing more for his salvation, except to commend his soul to God, in private. His wife still continued hopeful of his conversion. The change in her was very marked, and exhibited itself in her softened manners, as well as in the principles by which she endeavored to regulate her life.

By the charity of Uncle Stephen, the shop in which he formerly worked had been refitted for his use; and as he exhibited no disposition to resume his idle habits, but on the contrary often said he shuddered when he thought how he had stood on the brink of ruin, there was every

reason to hope that he would become a reformed man, and be able to support his family in comfort.

We will now accompany Alice to the neatly-furnished home of Mrs. Hayden, where Nurse Green is fully established. Minnie is watching at the window, and when she hears the well-known step, shouts joyfully, "Mamma, *mamma*, dat lady come."

After a kind word to each, the visitor devotes herself for a full half hour to a lively play with her little friend, who, by her artlessness and attractions, has woven herself closely around the young lady's heart. The liveliness of the game she finds the best medicine for the afflicted mother, by drawing her thoughts for a time from herself. She thinks she has never seen a lovelier object than Minnie this morning presents. Her flaxen ringlets have received additional care, in anticipation of a ride she is to take with her kind benefactress.

Alice has expressed herself so enthusiastically in behalf of her children, as she playfully calls Dexter and Minnie, that the family at Lindenwood are quite impatient for a sight of them; and, as this is Wednesday, when Dexter has the afternoon, she has promised to carry them there. The carriage will come for her at twelve o'clock, so that she is only waiting for school to be done, in order to put on the little gypsy hat she has provided for Minnie, and be ready to start.

While she is waiting I will say a few words about the mother, Nurse Green, and Dr. Jenks. Mrs. Hayden is much stronger than when we first introduced her to the reader, and is able to sit in her chair, and occupy herself with light sewing, a great part of the day. But she has

a bad cough, and in the afternoon a bright, hectic flush beautifies her cheeks, giving her a most brilliant appearance. Her nights are restless, and her sleep unrefreshing, so that Nurse Green has insisted Minnie should share her brother's bed, that she might be near to attend to the wants of her patient. Alice has been able to make an arrangement with the good woman, which is very satisfactory to all parties. She has persuaded her to give up her own tenement, and to remain permanently with Mrs. Hayden, until her husband's term of one year's imprisonment has expired.

Mrs. Stanley and a number of other ladies who have become acquainted with the case, supply them with sewing, so that they need not feel that they are supported by charity. It was at first somewhat difficult to restrain Uncle Stephen, who would have had the nurse devote her entire time to the invalid; but his young almoner assured him she should find others with an equal claim upon him, and she knew that it would be far better for them to maintain their independence.

When she found Mrs. Hayden was likely to be a confirmed invalid, she went frankly to her old friend, Dr. Jenks, and, after telling him in what a situation she had found the family, asked if he were in need of any more gratuitous practice.

"Yes, *yes!*" replied the doctor, smiling at the arch way she put the question. "At the present time I am much in need of patients. Ever since your old friend Justin Gates gave me the slip, I have had nothing of that kind to do. Indeed," he added, with mock gravity, "these

are sad times for a physician ; there is an alarming degree of health prevalent through the town."

"But, Doctor," said Alice, "it is but fair to inform you that she will be likely to need medical advice for a long time. Not often, perhaps not for several weeks together ; but she needs a physician who will give her general directions as to diet and exercise."

"Just so. Well, I'll call. Where does she live?"

Alice described the place, and gave him a brief account of the children.

He started upon his feet, and exclaimed, "Mind you, if I live I'll make a doctor of that boy! I've had my eye on him for some time. He puzzled old Deacon Dane at the examination of the academy. Yes, I remember him. He's a noble fellow."

And now the carriage has come. Minnie is dressed, and they are only waiting for Dexter to return from school before they drive to Lindenwood. Alice notices an expression of anxiety upon the mother's countenance, and says, "I will bring them back safely."

"I hope they will behave well," was the response. While she speaks, the outer door opens, and Dexter enters, with his satchel of books. He quickly places them in the small cupboard, and runs to make a slight change in his dress. He is absent but a moment, before he returns, kisses his mother, whose eye rests upon him with fond affection ; then, taking Minnie in his arms, puts her into the carriage, and they drive rapidly away from the door. Nurse Green shades her eyes from the sun, and watches them as far as she can see.

Alice met with no disappointment in the opinion ex

pressed by her friends with regard to her little favorites. Minnie had never appeared so lovely as when hiding her face under the deep berthe worn by her friend, or nestling close to her side, while the curls of chestnut brown, united with those of light golden, presented a pleasing contrast.

Uncle Stephen was almost in an ecstasy, when, after refusing to leave Alice for any of the family, Minnie actually put out her arms to him. He took out his watch and held it to her ear; he gave her all the peppermints and cloves he could find in his pockets, and finally told Alice to give him a gold eagle, from the drawer, which happened to have a hole pierced in it. This he attached by a chain to her neck, and told her to keep it to remember him by.

“Her fortune is made,” said a clear bass voice behind him, and looking quickly around, they saw that Clarence unobserved, had joined the group. He seemed very much amused, and as he took the hand of Dexter, and inquired for his mother, his voice was more cheerful than for many days. But as soon as the little miss saw that a stranger was added to the company, she sprang to the floor, and almost with one bound jumped into Alice’s embrace, clasping her tightly around the neck. The cheeks of each of them were so rosy, their eyes so bright, and their countenances so radiant with happiness, that for one moment all stood motionless, gazing at the beautiful tableau before them.

“Alice!” exclaimed Enma, archly, “I don’t believe but you’ve been practising attitudes with Minnie, and that was why you wouldn’t bring her here earlier.”

Before she could reply, the child, as if she fully intended to heighten the color of her kind friend, put up her sweet lips for a kiss, saying with enthusiasm, "Minnie love her; Minnie *do* love her, and Dexter love her, too."

At that moment Mrs. Stanley met Clarence's eye, and it said, as plainly as eyes can speak, "*and Clarence love her, too.*"

"Minnie, go to the lady," rejoined Alice, wishing to turn the attention from herself, and at the same time holding her toward Emma, who had been longing to have the child in her arms; "I will find the pretty doll for her, I promised." She was glad to be alone to still the tumultuous throbbing of her heart. "He has forgiven me!" she exclaimed, aloud, when locked in her own room. "His coldness and reserve has passed away; and he does, yes, he does love me! Oh, I am too, *too* happy! What delight, to be loved by such a pure, noble-hearted man!" She pressed her hands upon her heart, as if she would thus keep it from bursting with excess of joy. But soon, too soon, came other thoughts. "What if I have mistaken him? What if it were only Minnie he gazed at so fondly, and I took it to myself?" She sighed heavily. "Yes, it must be so. Gertrude says he has often declared his affection for her, and he would not deceive. No, it is I who have deceived myself, and when I thought my affection for him was almost conquered." She sank upon a chair, and covered her face with her hands. For a time her heart was torn with conflicting emotions, as she reflected, "Gertrude can never make him happy. Why can I not try to gain his love? I have often doubted of late whether he really did love her. Oh,

I would not value any sacrifice as too great to enable me to contribute to his happiness!"

But she was too much in the habit of governing herself by the rule of right, to cherish such sentiments, and she sprang upon her feet with bitter self-réproach, that such thoughts had ever found their way into her mind. Making great effort to resume her cheerfulness, she took from the drawer a doll she had rejuvenated for Minnie, and carried it below.

Mr. Stanley and Uncle Stephen were much interested in Dexter. The former sat by his side, and in a manner very social for a man of his reserved habits, drew the lad into conversation upon his studies. When he had satisfied himself that the boy had uncommon powers of mind, he asked, "Do you wish for an education?"

He colored deeply, and cast down his eyes, as he thought of the change in his circumstances; but, with difficulty repressing his emotion, he replied, "I always used to wish I could be a doctor, but now I suppose I shall go to a trade."

"No, you sha'n't!" exclaimed Uncle Stephen, kicking his footstool half way across the room, "that is, if you still prefer doctoring."

"Oh, yes, sir! I prefer that to everything."

"But what makes you think you should like to be cutting off people's limbs, and pulling their teeth? Or perhaps you imagine you would have nothing to do but to ride about, make pleasant calls, and leave your jalap and picra for somebody else to mix."

The boy laughed heartily, as did all present, at the grotesque faces of the old gentleman, as he tried to rep

resent the duties of a physician in the most unfavorable point of view ; but he answered earnestly, though very respectfully, " I know, sir, doctors do not live an easy life. They are often obliged to be out at night, and to do much that is disagreeable ; but when I was a very small boy I can remember that I used to envy Dr. Jenks, as the greatest man in the world. He appeared to me to know everything ; and I have seen, since I have grown older, that he does a great deal of good. Then everybody is so glad to see a doctor. Mother is better for two or three days after every visit he makes."

" Well, my boy," responded Uncle Stephen, his bright eyes twinkling with pleasure, " you have given some good reasons for your choice of a profession. I suppose while we live in this wicked world, we shall always be obliged to have doctors ; so set your heart at rest, a doctor you shall be."

Dexter did not, by any means, appreciate the good intentions of the gentleman ; but he thanked him for his kind interest, and then the conversation turned to other subjects.

At an early hour Alice gave Minnie a nice bowl of bread and milk, and having received from Mrs. Stanley a basket containing cake and tarts, for the invalid, she returned with the children to their home. Gertrude, who had an errand at the village, accompanied her. She was left first, and directed the driver to call for her on his return, so that Alice had only time to delight Mrs. Hayden by her account of the good conduct of Minnie, and to assure her that both she and Dexter had made some warm friends, before she was obliged to hurry away.

Just as they reached home, Gertrude said, in a low voice, "Alice, I ought to tell you that Clarence sees through your designs, and despises you for them. You well know that father has fixed his heart upon a union between Clarence and one of his daughters, and it is very ungrateful for you to set yourself up in the way you do to attract his attention. When father raised you from poverty, and by his kindness made you all that you are, I wonder you do not see the impropriety of your conduct in wholly disregarding his wishes."

The profound astonishment of Alice kept her silent. Indeed, her lips seemed incapable of uttering a word; and as they had now reached home, and the coachman was letting down the steps, there was no farther opportunity to do so. Clarence, who had been sitting near the window, perceived the carriage drive up the avenue, and hastened to the door to assist them to alight. He almost started back, as Alice, who was next the door, mechanically put her hand in his, as she descended the steps. Her face and lips were perfectly colorless, while her small mouth was closely shut, as if she were in great pain.

"You are ill, Alice!" he exclaimed, with great tenderness; but she turned almost rudely from him, though she was obliged to catch hold of the door to save herself from falling. For an instant he gazed sadly after her, and then turned to give his arm to Gertrude, who received him very graciously, and whispered a few words in his ear. Whatever was their import, they only made him more grave, and by the time Alice returned to the parlor, which she did not for an hour or more, he had assumed an ap-

pearance of sternness entirely foreign to his character. She had only reëntered the parlor at the request of her mother, and did not even glance at the young man, until Edith touched her on the arm, whispering, "Just see Clarence! He looks like a cannibal, and as if he were meditating an attack upon our whole party, for the sake of a good meal."

Alice merely glanced at him, and then bent her eyes upon the page before her. That glance, however, sufficed to show her that he was not only displeased, but suffering. Her heart beat quickly, and it was with great difficulty she forced herself to keep her seat, and appear calm.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue,
Where patience, honor, sweet humanity,
Calm fortitude, take root, and strongly flourish.”

Thompson.

A WEEK after the visit of Dexter and Minnie at Lindenwood, Alice was on her way to the village, when she met a young man whom she had formerly known, but whom she had not seen for many years. This was no other than a son of Dr. Jenks, who had lately returned from sea. He was extremely cordial in his manner of meeting her, and declared, “By all that’s sacred, if I’d even suspected how handsome you’d grown, I couldn’t have rested until I had called to see you.”

The young lady was very much annoyed by his familiarity, and did not hesitate to reprove him for what she, in her conscientiousness, considered as almost an oath.

“Oh, I see you are just the same old sixpence,” he added, gazing passionately in her face. “You’ve given me many a scolding, but, by —— There! I was going to offend again. You see I’m provoked that I’ve lost so much time in calling upon you. I never dreamed you’d be such a beauty; but I’ll call very soon.”

“I don’t think that it would be convenient,” answered Alice, gravely. “I live entirely at the Hall, now. Indeed, Mrs. Stanley has adopted me for her child, though

my own mother still lives ;” and she walked very fast, that she might the sooner be free from his company. Finding it impossible to rid herself of him, she covered her face with her veil, and, with her head bent down, hurried on. But her trials were not yet over, for, upon turning the corner leading into the street where Mrs. Hayden lived, she almost ran into the arms of Clarence.

Each started back with apologies ; but Clarence’s lip curled with contempt when he saw who was her companion. Even when she reached her destination, she feared he would not leave her, as he insisted upon waiting to accompany her home. But she told him she could not tell when she should return, and, when she did, she preferred going alone ; and, finding he could gain no favor from her, he determined to wait another opportunity.

Poor Alice ! she had scarcely entered the house, and taken a seat, before she burst into a passionate fit of weeping. Her long pent-up emotions broke forth with violence, and for a time entirely overwhelmed her. Mrs. Hayden and Minnie looked on in wonder, and shed many sympathizing tears, while Nurse Green untied the strings of her bonnet, took off her shawl, saying, in a soothing tone, “There, dear, don’t cry so. What can it be ? Is anybody dead ?”

‘The poor girl could make no reply, but sobbed as if her heart would break.

At first Minnie was frightened, but now she pushed a chair close by Alice, climbed up into it, and clasped her neck, lisping, “Don’t cry, please don’t cry ; Minnie *do* ’ove her two whole barrels full.” Then she took nei

apron, and tried to wipe away the tears, which were pouring like rain down the cheeks of her dear friend.

The affection of the sweet child had the effect to draw her thoughts from her own trials. She dried her eyes, and expressed her regret that she should have troubled them with her grief. "I believe," she added, with a faint attempt to smile, "that I am growing nervous with not having enough to do. I must get you, Mrs. Green, to tell me of some families where they need assistance."

If Clarence could have seen the expression of patient endurance, as it then showed itself upon her countenance, he might have suspected that all was not quite as he had been led to believe."

"I hope," answered the good nurse, "that you will continue to feel so, for there is no telling what a comfort your bright face and cheerful voice carry into a sick room, to say nothing of all else you do. La, now! she continued, growing warm with the subject, which was a favorite one, "I've seen many people come in to visit an invalid with such a gloomy face, they were enough to frighten one to death. Now to my mind that's all wrong. Sick persons are usually nervous, and a good deal out of sorts, and it does them no manner of good to tell over all their aches and pains. Why, I've known folks that meant well, only they didn't understand human nater, talk by the hour together of the most horrid sicknesses and accidents, telling of somebody who had the same complaint and died with it, and getting the patient all worked up into a fever. I believe, if people would be cheerful, and talk about pleasing things, as you do, 'twould be a sight better."

"I am afraid," replied Alice, "that my visit this morning has not cheered your patient."

"There, don't now!" said the warm-hearted nurse, wiping a tear from her eye at the sadness with which the young lady spoke; "don't go to thinking I alluded to you in what I said, for I never thought of such a thing."

"Have you received a letter?" inquired Alice, seeing an open envelope lying in Mrs. Hayden's lap.

"Yes, I received it yesterday," was the reply. "Dexter brought it from the office on his way from school. He was so much excited about it, he wanted to carry it to Lindenwood, and show it to you; but I persuaded him to wait until you came. Perhaps you would prefer to read it at another time," she added, taking the letter into her hand.

"Oh, no! I will read it now." She had not proceeded many lines before she was convinced who was the writer, though no name was attached. It was written in a hand evidently feigned, and was as follows:

"To Mrs. Hayden:

Dear Madam, — Hearing a short time since that your son Dexter had a great desire to acquire an education, and that he was possessed of a good mind, capable, if rightly improved, of becoming a useful man, and having in my hands a fund for the education of worthy youth, I propose to devote such a part of it, as may be necessary, to his thorough education. Enclosed, find bills to the amount of fifty dollars, for one quarter's expenses. You will receive an envelope from the post-office, con-

taining the same amount, and directed to yourself, every three months, as long as your son remains deserving.

Yours, sincerely."

While Alice was reading, her companions watched her closely, to see if her looks confirmed their suspicions as to the writer. When she had finished, she only said, "I am glad Dexter has found so true and generous a friend."

"La, miss!" exclaimed Nurse Green, who was by no means without her own share of curiosity, "'tis by no means likely but what you've read it before."

"Indeed," answered Alice, "I knew nothing of it until now."

"And ha'n't no ideas on the subject?" inquired the good woman, archly.

"Oh, nurse, don't tease Miss Alice," interrupted Mrs. Hayden, before she had time to reply. "It is very plain to me, whoever this kind friend may be, he wishes to remain unknown to us; and I would be the last one to try to find him out. Only I thought, as I lay awake in the night, 'twould be a relief if I could let him know what a burden he's lifted off my heart with regard to my boy. For years I have tried to keep up and make the best of everything for his sake. I suppose I may be called partial and blind to his faults; but he has been everything to me. When pressed to the earth with sorrow, that child has talked with me, and pointed me to God, who could bring good out of evil. I have often ceased weeping; to gaze at him in wonder that such words could come from the mouth of a child; and now,

when I am gradually wasting away, and remember that he and Minnie will soon have no mother to watch over them, God only knows what a relief it is to me to feel that he has put it into the heart of some kind friend to feel an interest for him, and provide so nobly for his wants."

Alice had never before heard Mrs. Hayden make any allusion to her own declining health, and was much affected by the calmness with which the invalid was enabled to look forward to a change of worlds.

"For their sake," resumed the mother, "I have prayed to be spared yet a little longer; for though, in one sense, I can do nothing for them, and, indeed, am only a care, yet I hope to impress upon the mind of my little Minnie, as well as her brother, the love of truth—the desire to do right, let what will come, and then to leave the event with God. Night after night I spend in prayer for them, and for—" She checked herself, and then continued: "Sometimes I feel perfectly willing to give them up, and am confident that God will watch over them, and preserve them from sin, and bring them safely home to heaven. But then, again, Satan puts doubts into my mind, and I remember that they will probably be liable to great and peculiar temptations. I lose my hold on God's promises, and am overwhelmed with distress. When that letter came, I viewed it as a sign of my heavenly Father's favor, sent to convince me that he could take care of my children; and I was enabled to give them up into his hands. After that he granted me delightful views of himself. His love for sinners, his desire that the most abandoned should turn to him and

live, appeared plainer to me than ever before and I was enabled, with earnest faith in his promises, to plead not only for them, but for one nearly allied to them."

It was very unusual for Mrs. Hayden to speak of herself; indeed, there was a sensitiveness, and a shrinking from all subjects connected with her own peculiar trials, which had always restrained her young friend from making the most distant allusion to them. But the generous offer contained in the letter opened her heart, and caused this burst of feeling. Alice hid her face behind Minnie, whom she held in her arms, to hide the emotion she could not suppress, and soon after rose to take her leave.

CHAPTER XIX.

“Forbear sharp speeches to her. She’s a lady
So tender of rebukes, that words are strokes,
And strokes death to her.” — *Shakspeare.*

MAURICE JENKS was the only son of the good doctor, and the only child with the exception of a daughter, who was married, and lived in the West.

When a child, Alice was acquainted with him. They attended school together, and many times had he drawn her home upon his sled, or seated her upon the back of it while he coasted down hill. In this way, he had become acquainted with Louis, who was not able to attend school, but who extended a cordial welcome to the boy who was so kind to his beloved friend, and who also brought him whistles and other toys of his own manufacture.

Maurice was a frank, open-hearted boy, and on account of his generous, obliging temper, as well as for his father’s sake, he was a general favorite. From his earliest childhood he evinced a passion for the sea, and, when not more than eight years old, would spend hours in the manufacture of a miniature vessel, and in reading with absorbing interest any book connected with his favorite subject.

About the time Emma and Edith first left home for school in F——, and when he was in his fifteenth year he announced to his parents that he was going to New

York to become a sailor. They were very decided in refusing their consent; but, as they had always been excessively indulgent, and had heretofore allowed him to do pretty much as he chose, he did not for a moment give up his plan on that account, but, taking advantage one night of his father's absence, he absconded from home with only a small bundle of clothes under his arm, and two dollars of money in his pocket. Before his flight was discovered, he was far on his way, and, on reaching New York, found a vessel on the point of sailing for the East Indies, and the captain very willing to take a smart, active lad, as he appeared to be.

For a few hours he considered himself fortunate in escaping so easily from home, and entering upon the pursuit which had for years been the subject of his thoughts by day and his dreams by night. But, when the vessel was fairly out at sea, and the swell of the billows began to have their usual effect, he crept aft, away from the rough tars, who only laughed at his distress, and there, hiding behind a coil of rope, he laid himself down, and almost wished to die.

Poor boy! Now, for the first time, he began to realize the change in his situation, and to see his folly and ingratitude in having left his parents and his home. Oh, how he longed for one word of forgiveness from them! how he yearned for his mother to put her hand on his aching head! The bitter thought of the pain and anxiety he had caused them, and which they must endure for years, entirely overwhelmed him with remorse, and he covered his face with his hands, and cried aloud. For the next two days, he was so seasick and homesick

that he could not stand; and, had it not been for the kindness of one of the sailors, he would have suffered severely.

This honest fellow took compassion on him, and carried him below, conveyed his food to the hammock where he lay, talked cheerfully with him, and administered to his necessities with the tenderness of a brother, until he was able to be about the ship.

For a long time after it was ascertained that Maurice had sailed for India, Mrs. Jenks was inconsolable. The doctor had followed the runaway to New York, and there found that a boy answering exactly to the description of his son had taken a berth on board a ship ready for sea.

The mother and father severely reproached themselves for not having given their consent; and then he might have been well fitted out for his long voyage. Now she was sure he would take cold, be sick, and die.

But when, at the end of a year and a half, he came bounding into the kitchen, and put his arms about his mother's neck, kissing her again and again as he begged her to forgive him for leaving home, she only stopped for one long gaze, to be sure that the tall, bronzed youth taking such liberties with her was her own lost son, before she caught him in her arms, wholly unmindful of the prints of flour and paste she was leaving on his new sailor round-about. Nor until an hour after, when she was seated with him in the small south parlor, where we first introduced her to the reader, did she remember that her oven must have grown cold, and that her bread and pies were still upon the table.

Toward noon, when the doctor returned home, Maurice showed that he was still the same mirth-loving boy as of old; for no sooner did he hear his father's buggy come driving into the yard than he caught his cap, and darted behind the door; and, though his mother was fearful it would be too sudden for his doating father, yet she could not reprove her son when he had just returned home.

So the good doctor had an equal surprise with his wife; for, when he had seated himself, and taken a paper from his hat to read until dinner was ready, a voice from behind him whispered, "Father!"

He started from his chair, gazed around him, and, seeing no one, said, quickly, "Mother, did you hear that? If our boy was at home, I should say that was his voice."

"Father, *dear father!*" said the voice again.

The now excited father sprang to the closet, threw back the door, and his son leaped into his arms.

Finding that he was in no way weary of the life he had chosen, and that he had brought letters of good conduct from his captain, his parents wisely concluded to allow him to follow his inclination, and make another voyage. During this visit, he went to Lindenwood, and carried his father's little patient a beautiful model of a schooner he had made on board ship. Since that time they had never seen him, but Alice had heard with sorrow that of late he had so conducted himself as to be a great grief to his worthy parents; and, when she met him so unexpectedly in the street, his manner was so familiar, and even rude, that she determined to avoid

him in future, though, for the sake of his good father she would have been glad to treat him kindly.

Maurice had now grown to the size of a man. His visit to tropical climates had bronzed his cheeks, but his exercise on board ship had made his frame supple and elastic, and altogether he was in appearance a noble specimen of an American sailor.

His mother wept at home as she thought that all his noble qualities should be shadowed by the vices which are, alas! too common among the sons of Neptune. But his father believed there was a God in heaven, who would answer his earnest prayers for the salvation of his child. Morning and evening he was borne in the arms of faith to the family altar, and often, in his solitary midnight rides, the distance was shortened by the fervor of the good father's appeals in behalf of his erring son.

Alice had seldom been so oppressed with sadness as when she left the cottage of Mrs. Hayden, and started for home. Though the sun was now high in the heavens, and was shining in full splendor, yet to her everything appeared dark and gloomy. She was not superstitious; yet she had a sense of coming ill which she could not throw off. In addition to her secret trial of struggling against her affection for Clarence, and the unkindness of Edith and Gertrude, she had for some time been anxious about her mother, whose insanity seemed taking a new turn. At times she appeared wholly weaned from her child, and had even forbidden the title of mother. "You belong to them now who adopted you," she would urge; "and why do you come here troubling me?" But if, in obedience to her command, Alice

refrained from visiting her, she was extremely jealous, and thought it hard her only child couldn't remain with her mother.

Alice often determined to leave the Hall, and devote herself exclusively to the poor lunatic; but to this plan neither she, nor the young girl's friends, would consent, as the presence of her child, for any length of time, invariably made her worse.

Mrs. Carey had always been considered harmless, and wandered about wherever she pleased. Of late she had come to the Hall much oftener than usual. She would walk noiselessly through the spacious rooms, glancing into every apartment, until she found her child, and ascertained how she was employed, when she generally withdrew quietly, and returned home. Only a few days before this, she came in, and found Alice reading in the bow-window, and, unperceived by all but Edith, who was near the door, was gliding away, when the haughty girl exclaimed, "I wish father would have that woman shut up! It's enough to frighten one to death to see her ghastly face come up before you so unexpectedly. I declare, Alice, if I were you, I believe I should die of mortification!"

Alice stood up, her eyes flashing with indignation at this unfeeling attack, and was about to speak sharply, when the weird woman suddenly returned, and with a commanding gesture motioned her to be seated. She then advanced toward Edith, with a wildness in her eye which really frightened all present, and standing full before her, hissed through her teeth, "*Beware, the hour of retribution is at hand!*"

The rich bloom upon Edith's countenance faded instantly as these prophetic words met her ear; but, with a contemptuous, "Pshaw, none of your croaking here," she turned to the window, and the poor, insane creature, left the apartment.

As the mind of Alice recurred to this and other late scenes, it was with great difficulty she overcame the feelings of utter despondence which threatened to sink her; indeed, she already perceived the unfavorable effect upon her health of her inward conflict. Yet no member of the family suspected how severely she suffered. Mrs. Stanley, indeed, noticed that at times she was pale and careworn, and feared there was a misunderstanding between her and Clarence; but as her adopted child made an effort to be cheerful in her presence, she was far from being aware of the true state of her health and spirits.

On reaching home the poor girl felt so ill, that she went at once to her own room, and, locking the door, threw herself upon her bed. As she had met no one, the family did not know she had returned, and, excepting the ringing of the bell, there was no summons for her to dinner. It was, therefore, late in the afternoon when she awoke from a heavy sleep, or rather when she was awakened by the loud slamming of the door below, and a heavy footstep coming up the stairs. As she heard him kick along the chairs in his room, she recognized the sound as coming from Uncle Stephen, and wondered what had occurred to irritate him. But she soon ceased to think of him, as her throbbing temples warned her to fall back upon her pillow. After lying awhile, with her hands pressed tightly to her brow, she arose and bathed

it freely with cold water. She then prepared to go below, as she suddenly remembered that she had seen none of the family since her return from the village. Passing through the hall, she heard her mother's voice in the kitchen, and went in there to see her. Mrs. Carey evinced unusual anxiety for her child, and prevailed upon her to wait until she could make her a cup of sage tea. Emma soon came in, and expressed much surprise at finding she had returned. After Alice had taken the tea, she returned with Emma to the parlor, where the family were assembled, waiting to be called to supper. She took a seat near Mrs. Stanley, wondering as she did so at the cause of their unusual constraint and silence; but merely saying, "I have taken a long nap, and did not hear the dinner bell."

"I thought you still absent, my dear," answered the lady, with a slight gravity in her manner. "I think I must break up this habit of yours, of running away every day. You are getting to be quite too dissipated," and she glanced, with an expression of sadness, at her child.

"Oh, please don't, mamma!" urged Alice. "It would really make me wretched to be deprived of going to see my poor families; and I'm sure it can do me no harm."

"Come here, child!" called Uncle Stephen, in a tone so different from the one in which he had heretofore addressed her, that the color rushed to her face, and made her head throb painfully; but she instantly obeyed, advanced, and stood before him, while all present were impatiently waiting for what would follow. Trying to con-

trol his feelings, the excited man asked, sharply, "What do you mean, child, by such shameful conduct?"

Her quick start and glance of surprise around the room, affected him, and he continued, in a softened voice, "Oh, Alice! how could you break my heart? how could you deceive me so cruelly?" and he began to sob.

"How have I offended?" asked the bewildered girl, starting toward him; but he waved her off.

"How? Oh, that's worse than all the rest! Come, child, it isn't too late now. Confess all, and I'll forgive you, and do my part to make it all right with your friends."

Alice put her hand to her head. The excitement almost deprived her of sight.

"Come, speak!" urged Uncle Stephen, impatiently.

She shook her head; there was a ringing sound in her ears.

"No? Well, then, I must speak for you. You've deceived us all. You've made a cloak of your piety, to carry on a disgraceful flirtation with that young scapegrace, Jenks. And I wouldn't believe it. I scorned the idea, as unworthy of you, until Clarence assured me 'twas too true; that he met you in his company, and that your evident confusion convinced him it was even as we had heard."

Alice stood as if petrified, until he spoke of Clarence, when, with a suppressed moan, she fell senseless to the floor.

Instantly all was confusion. Clarence started forward to raise her; but, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, Mr. Stanley haughtily motioned him back, and requested

all but her mother to leave the room. He then gently lifted her from the floor, and laid her upon the sofa, when they used every effort to restore her to consciousness. But for a long time the poor girl lay in a deep swoon, until, becoming alarmed, Mr. Stanley rang the bell to order a servant to go for the doctor. Just as he hurriedly entered, Mrs. Stanley perceived a slight motion of the breast, and soon the innocent sufferer slowly opened her eyes, and gazed wonderingly about her.

The lady presented the salts, as her husband whispered to her, "Clarence is unreasonably prejudiced. He spoke too bitterly."

"Not for one instant have I believed this story," she replied, earnestly, though in the same low tone. "She will be able to explain all; but I can hardly forgive Clarence."

"What has happened, Mamma?" feebly asked Alice, making an effort to raise herself from the pillow.

"You fainted, my dear. Rest quietly awhile, and I will tell you all. I must go now, and prepare you a cordial."

"No, Mamma, I have had a very bad headache to-day, and would prefer not taking anything; but have you been to tea? Don't let me detain you; I am quite relieved."

"Well, my dear, I shall be gone but a few moments, and Emma will remain with you."

There was very little eaten at supper that night. Uncle Stephen was out of humor with everybody, but particularly with himself. "After all," he muttered, "if they're all against her, and even Clarence has joined in the ill treatment, there's the more reason for me to stand by her, poor thing. She's been abused, that's my opinion."

No one replied, but the countenance of his ward showed that he was far from insensible.

Immediately after family prayer, during which Alice lay upon the sofa, with her face concealed by her handkerchief, Emma noticed that Edith motioned to Gertrude to accompany her up stairs, and she followed them, intending to go to her own room, when she overheard the following. "We've got ourselves into a pretty serape. I'm sorry I ever had anything to do with it, and now I've a great mind to tell mother that the poor thing is entirely innocent."

"If you do," replied Gertrude, angrily, "I'll never forgive you."

As soon as she found an opportunity, Emma whispered to her mother a request to see her as soon as she could leave the room unnoticed. Alice lay as if asleep, and Mrs. Stanley arose and followed her daughter. The motion of shutting the door caused the poor girl to open her eyes, and Clarence, observing it, advanced hastily to her side. But the remembrance of his cruel insinuations was too fresh in her mind to enable her to speak calmly and she turned quickly away. He stood for one moment, hesitating whether to address her, and then withdrew from her side, when, thinking herself alone, with a burst of feeling she exclaimed, "Cruel Clarence! And even my kind friend, Uncle Stephen, has turned against me. Oh, my heavenly Father, comfort my poor heart, and give me strength to bear every trial thou seest fit to send. And oh, forgive those who are trying to injure me!"

The young man could endure it no longer; supposing she referred to himself, he silently left the room,

caught his hat from the rack, and wandered away at a rapid speed.

Uncle Stephen was in his own room, where, with no other light but the mild rays of the moon, he sat indulging in the most bitter self-reproach. His ill humor had entirely subsided, and he could only regret his late conduct toward one he so dearly loved. Deep in his heart there was a hard feeling toward Clarence, for leading him to such a course. At length a low tap at the door arrested his attention, and, in answer to his sad "come in," Mrs. Stanley entered, and seated herself at his side. "I fear," she said, with some hesitation at commencing the conversation, "that we have censured Alice without reason."

"I *know* it!" he exclaimed, quickly, "and hate myself for it. 'Twas all the effect of my horrid temper."

"Not *all*," answered the lady. She then repeated to him what she had heard from Emma. "I would not allow Alice," she continued, to explain to-night, as she wished to do. I saw she was not able to endure the excitement; but I am convinced there is no truth in Edith's story of her love for the young man. No doubt she will explain the occasion of her being with him, to our satisfaction.

"Humph," muttered the old gentleman, abstractedly; "wish I'd never left off my speaking trumpet."

Astonished at his calmness, when she expected an explosion of indignation, Mrs. Stanley left him, and soon assisted Alice to bed.

It was not until a late hour that Clarence returned to the hall; but Mrs. Stanley was waiting for him, as she

wished to repeat to him what she had done to his guardian. "Whatever may be your feelings with regard to the poor girl," she added, with some bitterness, "justice to her demands that you should know there has been an endeavor to ruin her character. Her persecutors, far more than she, are objects of pity, for I firmly believe that she will come from this trial with a character that will shine brighter than ever."

If she could have known the tumult of feeling occasioned in the heart of her companion by this statement, and the difficulty with which he found voice to respond with the simple word "amen," she would have left him with far different feelings; when he, thankful that the dimly lighted hall enabled him to conceal his emotions, hastily sought his own room. His guardian still occupied a chair by the window, and, not receiving an answer to his good night, he shut himself up in his bed-room, for the first time within his remembrance with the serious displeasure of his kind benefactor resting upon him.

CHAPTER XX.

Better confide, and be deceiv'd
A thousand times by treacherous foes,
Than once accuse the innocent,
Or let suspicion mar repose.—*Mrs. Osgood.*

Poor Uncle Stephen! His thoughts, during that long night, did not serve to render him more cheerful. As he called to mind the earnest piety of Alice from a little child, and thought of the artlessness and purity which had developed more and more every year, he found it difficult to frame any excuse for his hasty accusation. "I have borne with Gertrude and Edith," he soliloquized, "and formerly with Emma, when I have heard them talk unkindly to one another, and disrespectfully of their mother; but at the very first fault of Alice, if, indeed, it were a fault, I burst out upon her in the presence of the whole family, and I could not blame her if she never forgave me; 'twould be no more than I richly deserve. And after all, if she did love Maurice Jenks, he may not be the vile character they have represented, or she may not be aware of it. Yes, I may as well confess it, — my anger was all caused by disappointment in finding my plan defeated of marrying her to Clarence. Just as if she had not a right to marry whom she chose; and she shall marry him if he proves himself worthy; and I'll set them up for life;" and the good man swallowed a

great sob, and wiped his eyes, as he sacrificed his darling project of her union with his ward. "Clarence," he continued, "has proved himself false, and he may get along as he can. If he didn't love her more than that, he isn't worthy of her."

In the meantime the young man, who was one of the subjects of his soliloquy, lay in a very unenviable frame of mind, despising himself quite as heartily as his guardian did, and feeling intense mortification that he had been so easily led to believe deceit and wrong to exist in one whom he had pretended to love. At times, he heard the sound of Uncle Stephen's voice, though he could not distinguish the words, which certainly would not have had a tendency to soothe him. Not for one moment did he lose the sense of his sorrow in sleep; and it was not until near dawn that he heard the old gentleman go into his bedroom, and shut the door.

The next morning, when the family assembled for breakfast, neither Uncle Stephen nor Alice made their appearance; but when the rest were about to separate, after prayers, Mrs. Stanley said: "I am desired by my adopted child to request you to suspend your judgment of her until evening. She feels that a grave charge has been made against her moral character; and that, too, by those whom she has regarded as among her best friends. Though it will be a great effort; yet, this evening she wishes to explain some circumstances, hoping by that means to retain the good opinion of those she values so highly."

Poor Clarence! Every word thrust like a dagger to his heart. But merely bowing his assent to the ex-

pressed wish, he left the house. It seemed to him as if he must be under the influence of a dreadful dream,—the idea appeared so impossible that he should be placed in such a relation to one in whose heart he had so earnestly hoped to awaken affection for himself. He knew that it would be useless for him to attempt business, and, therefore, instead of going to the office, he took a circuitous route, which brought him again to the Hall, where he succeeded in gaining an entrance to the parlor unseen by any one; and taking a book from the table, withdrew into the bow-window. Here, after screening himself from observation, he determined to remain until dinner, as he knew at this season of the year the family usually occupied their own rooms during the early part of the day.

For the same reason Alice, an hour later, sought the darkened parlor; and languidly throwing herself upon the sofa, sought to compose her mind for the task she had undertaken. She was still far from well. The continued excitement of the previous day had operated upon a frame already reduced, and she dreaded her self-imposed explanations.

In the meantime, Gertrude and Edith were contriving some way to prevent Alice from this open refutation of the charges against her. There was much recrimination between them; Edith charging her sister with being the one to plan this injury to the poor girl, while she angrily retorted, "You were ready enough to follow my suggestions;" but both agreed that, as they had gone so far, they must go farther, and in some way prevent the discovery of their falsehood and persecution. At length,

it was decided that Gertrude should see, and try to quiet Alice, by offering to explain all that was necessary for her, to the family. For this purpose she sought her in her chamber, then listened intently at Uncle Stephen's door, but hearing no conversation there, she feared the object of her search had gone, as usual, to the village. On opening the parlor door, however, she discovered her lying, apparently asleep. She carefully closed the door, and advancing to the sofa, inquired, "Are you ill, Alice? I will get you something to take."

The young girl opened her eyes at the unusual kindness of the tone, and answered, "No, not ill."

Though her words were brief, there was a depth of sadness in them which pierced even the heart of Gertrude.

For an instant she stood irresolute, devoutly regretting the part she had taken, but now she must go on, or be herself ruined, not only with Clarence, but with Uncle Stephen. Then the old spirit of jealousy came up, and she asked herself, "Shall Alice, the child of poverty, succeed in gaining the affections of one I love?" and she hesitated no longer.

"I am very sorry," she said, as the young girl lay with her face averted, "for what occurred last evening. I could not have believed Uncle Stephen would have talked to you in the manner he did."

Alice sighed heavily, but made no reply.

"He would not have done so," continued she, relentlessly, "but for Clarence, who came home very much excited at the idea that you were associating with so worthless a fellow as Maurice Jenks. He thought it was a

disgrace to all of us, particularly to yourself, for whom your friends had done so much. Just think of what you would have been if it were not for the kindness of our family. Really, I have wondered, as I told you once before, whether you had no pride about you. Why, if I were in your place I would no sooner marry a man so much above me as Clarence is, than I would cut off my two hands. I should feel as if all the world would say, "Why couldn't he marry one in his own station, instead of throwing himself away."

"Don't, oh, please don't!" plead Alice, putting her hands to her throbbing head.

But Gertrude had not yet done. "And that is not the worst; Clarence loves *me*. Formerly he respected you; but the efforts you have made to attract his attention have disgusted him, so that he says he can hardly look upon you with any degree of complacence; and he says, too, that, even if otherwise, he should never for a moment think of marrying the daughter of an insane woman."

"Oh, stop, *stop!*" cried Alice, as she raised herself to a sitting posture, and pressed her hands convulsively to her side.

Gertrude thought she had now nearly reached a point where her companion would gladly accept her offer to procure for her a better state of feeling in the family; and she resumed: "I know there is no truth in what Clarence supposes to be your intimacy with Maurice. I don't think you would stoop to that."

Alice started to her feet. Her eyes kindled almost into a flame, and her whole countenance absolutely

glowing with indignation,—"Have you done?" she asked, in bitter scorn. Do you intend to drive me mad with your horrible insinuations? Do you suppose I have not known who it was that was making an attempt to blast my character in the eyes of those I most dearly love? Yes, I have known, and every day I have prayed that God would open your eyes to a sense of your injustice, and that He would enable me to forgive you. And you will not succeed. I deny all your foul charges. I scorn your hints of my immorality;" and she drew herself up to her full height, as if she were ready to assert her innocence before the world. "As for Uncle Stephen, I know him so well, that I believe by this time he bitterly repents his momentary injustice, to which he was unwillingly led by the suggestions of others."

"Why not express your opinion of Clarence?" asked her companion, tauntingly, and trying to conceal the effect of Alice's manner upon herself.

"I am willing to do so," she replied, proudly; "I believe that my character has been misrepresented to him; for what purpose, you perhaps can best judge; and seeing me yesterday walking with Maurice, seemed for the time to confirm some slanderous reports though, how our names could have been connected, I cannot easily conceive, as yesterday was the first time I had seen him for years. I also believe that when I tell them this, and ask the ground of their suspicions, for I intend to be deterred by no false delicacy from thoroughly investigating the whole matter, that all my friends, and he among the rest, will restore their confidence to me, and I shall once

more be happy. I believe him to be all that is true, noble, and generous, and I sincerely wish him all the happiness he so richly deserves. But I *do not* believe he ever spoke of me in the way you mention. I deny wholly ever giving him reason to suppose that I was seeking his affection. I would die before I would be guilty of so unmaidenly an act; and *I know* he does not cherish such an opinion of me, if I am, as you so tauntingly remind me, the child of an insane mother, supported by the charity of your parents. Neither do I believe that he loves you, for you are wholly unlike. He is a man of truth, of honor and unbending integrity; you have been guilty of the meanest falsehoods, and restrained by no principles of honor or justice from a series of persecutions toward a poor girl, who has never offended you, but whom you fancied in the way of your own wishes.

“Did you never hear that even a worm would turn upon those who would crush it to the earth? Did you never think that there was a God in the heavens, who sees all that we do, and who will avenge the wrongs done to his children? I fully believe that he will help me to prove my own innocence; for, as I stand here in his presence, and realize that he is acquainted not only with my actions, but with the secret purposes of my heart, I again repeat that I am not guilty of the charges you have from time to time brought against me.”

Alice still stood proudly erect, her chest expanding as she uttered the last sentence, with her eyes raised, and her whole countenance beaming with a holy trust and confidence in her heavenly Father. But the excitement

had carried her beyond her strength; and, when she ceased, she had only time to gain her seat before she sank upon the pillow in a state of perfect exhaustion.

It would be in vain to try to describe the indignation, grief, and self-condemnation which struggled for mastery in the breast of Clarence, as he stood, with parted lips and clasped hands, behind the heavy curtains. Bitterly he reproached himself for his conduct toward the gentle girl, who had now so nobly defended his character, and ascribed to him traits he was deeply conscious of not possessing. Sometimes he started forward, unable longer to restrain himself from rushing into her presence, avowing his love, and claiming the right to protect her; but the very fervor and disinterestedness of his affection restrained him, as he knew it would keenly mortify her, and wound her delicacy, if she were made aware of his being present. Still more difficult was it to restrain himself, when, upon hearing a step in the entry, Gertrude hastily retreated. He gently parted the curtain, and saw her pale and trembling, and he dared not expose her to the additional excitement if he should suddenly appear. But he determined to see her without delay, and to make a formal demand of her hand from Mr. Stanley, her guardian. He did not feel at all sure that she would accept him. The events of the last few weeks had not increased the favorable prospect of a happy termination of his suit; but, with a full resolution to end his suspense as soon as possible, he was obliged to content himself for the present, for Alice, after lying so quietly for a few moments that he hoped she was asleep, silently arose, and left the room. He dared not

venture to catch a glimpse of her face, but he saw that she walked feebly, and with her hand still holding her side.

He lost not a moment in leaving his position, and, avoiding the front of the house, went to the stable, saddled his horse, and rode to the village.

It was well he had gone so soon, for Mrs. Stanley, immediately after, entered the parlor in search of Alice, advancing at once to the recess; here she picked up the book Clarence had let fall. Having failed to find her below, she returned to her chamber, and found Alice seated on a low stool, wearily resting her head upon the cushioned chair.

“I am waiting for you, mamma,” she said, looking up, with a sad attempt to smile.

“And I have been in search of my daughter,” replied Mrs. Stanley, as she seated herself, and took the head of Alice in her lap, caressingly putting back the curls from her brow, and laying her cool hand upon the burning temples.

“Come, my little Ally,” she said, cheerfully, “what do you say to a journey with me to N——? From there we will go to my native place, just where we went with dear little Louis.”

“Oh, mamma!” murmured Alice, mournfully, while hot tears forced their way down her cheeks, “I would like to lie down by his side. My heart is sad and weary. It seems a great while since I was a child; but oh, how happy I was then! I am tired of struggling with myself, and trying to do right. I fear that even this forenoon I have done wrong, and exhibited an unforgiving temper:

but I was tried beyond my strength and only this morning I enjoyed such a delightful season of communion with my heavenly Father, and felt so safe to leave myself in his hands! I was willing to forgive every one who had tried to injure me."

A low knock interrupted them, and Emma entered. At a motion from her mother, she came and kneeled down by her weeping sister, putting her arms tenderly about her neck. Alice gently responded to her embrace, and then continued: "I don't know but I am doing wrong; but I cannot help envying Mrs. Hayden, who is wasting away. She looks forward with a certain hope of being received into the presence of God. I have often thought of late that I should soon be called to die, and the idea has not been unpleasant."

"My dear Alice," exclaimed her mother, "don't talk so; I fear it is wrong. I used to indulge the same wish after my dear father was taken from me. I thought my happiness had fled forever; and I longed to lie quietly by his side rather than struggle with my poor, desolate heart. I found out afterwards that I had been indulging an unsubmissive spirit, and was rebelling against the afflictions God, in his wisdom, saw to be needed by me. I do not wonder, my love, that the world looks darkly to you now; but, be assured, the clouds will pass away, and I shall yet see you as cheerful and light of heart as when you returned from school. Do you remember how gay you were then?"

"Oh, yes, mamma, but ——"

"No *buts*, miss," interrupted her mother, cheerfully, "there are no *buts* in this case. All will come out right.

depend upon it. One heavy cloud has already blown over. Uncle Stephen is a stauncher friend than ever. Suppose you go now and tell him you forgive him."

"Where is he?"

"In his own room, where he has shut himself up as a prisoner. He has not left it since you fainted last evening. Clarence said at breakfast that he did not go to bed until morning."

Alice started up, saying, "I am sorry I did not know it before. I will go now, if he will admit me." She turned to leave the room, but suddenly stopped, and, grasping the hand of Mrs. Stanley, asked, in a voice trembling with emotion, "Do you think I shall ever be insane?"

"Why, my child, what could have put such a question into your mind?"

"Ger — Gertrude —" she hesitated, and then added, "my mother was."

Mrs. Stanley shuddered at the horrible cruelty of such a suggestion, and said, "There is no more danger of it than in my case or Emma's."

After the poor girl had left the room, she told Emma of her determination to put a stop to such a system of persecution, blaming herself severely that it had not been done earlier.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive ! ” — *Scott.*

ALICE knocked several times at Uncle Stephen's door before she received any reply. At length he asked, “ Who is it ? ”

“ It is a little girl, who wants to see you.”

“ Well, then, come in.”

She entered, and went up to him as she used to do when a child, and seated herself upon his knee.

He made no motion, either to invite or prevent her.

She put her arms in a childlike manner around his neck, and laid her head upon his shoulder, as she asked, softly, “ Don't you love your little girl ? I can't think what I shall do if you don't love me.”

With a deep sob from his swelling heart, the old man strained her to his breast as if he would never let her leave him. “ Love you ? yes,” he exclaimed, when he could speak. “ This is the first happy minute I've had since I blurted out upon you yesterday. But will you love me ? is the question I want to hear answered. Can you forgive me, my child ? ”

“ I forgave you long ago ; I knew you would be sorry.”

“ Well, then, I'm all right. I feel as if my sister, who has been dead and buried these twenty years, had come back to me. And now, child, ask anything in the world

that it is in my power to grant, and you shall have it, even to the half of my kingdom."

"I don't want anything," she replied, laying her head on his shoulder to hide the sadness that was beginning again to steal over her, "but to have all my friends love me as they used to do when I was a little girl. Oh!" she added, with a burst of feeling, "how I do long for Louis!"

"Well, I can't bring Louis back, and I wouldn't if I could, for this world is a hard place to live in, and the faster we get ourselves ready to go out of it the better, I'm thinking. But what is it about this Maurice? Is he a good, trusty fellow? If you say he is, I'll contrive to bring it about so that you shall be married to him, though I don't know but 'twill break my heart."

"You have been deceived, Uncle Stephen. Maurice Jenks is nothing to me. Yesterday was the first time I have seen him for years, and though the meeting was far from pleasant to me, yet I can't understand why so much should be made of it."

"Not love him!" and the excited old gentleman pushed her off that he might look her in the face, "and no idea of marrying him! Why, Edith said the reason you went to Mrs. Hayden's so much was to meet him there, and Gertrude told Clarence, a week ago, that you had loved him from a child, when you went to school together."

I don't know what led her to think so; but of this I am sure, that worlds would not tempt me to marry a man of his character; and he has never given me the least reason to suppose that he wished me to do so."

The good man was so much agitated, he hardly knew how to contain his feelings. He kissed Alice again and again, thanked her repeatedly for the relief she had afforded him, and then commenced a vigorous walk across the room, rubbing his hands and exclaiming: "What an old fool I've been making of myself; I might have known you wouldn't go and spoil all my nice plans. There, child, run away, quick; I may say something I ought not."

At dinner Mr. Stanley, noticing Alice's pale cheeks and want of appetite, recommended her to ride. As he left the room he turned back, and with unusual tenderness patted her cheek, saying: "Let me see some roses blooming here, at tea."

How little he thought that he and Alice Carey should never meet again!

Though scarcely able to endure the fatigue, Alice concluded to have Felix saddled, and to pay Mrs. Hayden a visit. She was sensible of a general lassitude creeping over her whole system, and it was with quite an effort that she equipped herself in her riding-dress, and started for the village. But in a few moments the clear air, and the exercise of riding, exhilarated her spirits, and when nearly half way to her destination she met Dr. Jenks, she began to look a little like herself.

"Good day, Miss Alice," he cried, stopping his horse, "I am glad to see you, though you look as if a dose of physic wouldn't do you any harm. I have found you another patient, a young girl, about your own age. She's been in my hands a few days; but I think in her case you can do better than I can."

After learning where she was to be found, Alice said. "I will try to call upon her to-morrow. I have not been quite well for a few days, and hardly think I should do her much good if I went to-day."

"No immediate hurry," replied the Doctor. "She's a genuine case, though; and such an one as will interest you quite as much as either of your protégés."

An hour later, the family at Lindenwood were thrown into the utmost consternation by seeing Felix, without his rider, come dashing at full speed up the avenue, — his saddle partly turned, and he trembling in every limb, as if from sudden fright. Uncle Stephen, who happened to be looking from the window, was almost beside himself, and greatly increased the confusion by his vain endeavors to learn something of the equestrian. Mr. Stanley could not readily be found, and his wife instantly despatched a boy, on horseback, to the village, to ascertain whether any accident had befallen Alice; and if so, to go at once for the Doctor. Emma started off in the same direction on foot, while the coachman was ordered to harness the horse into the carryall, and follow her immediately, to bring Alice home. Uncle Stephen walked hurriedly up and down the avenue; Mrs. Stanley in vain imploring him to be calm, and suggesting that it might not prove to be as bad as they feared. Gertrude and Edith clung together, in their affright, pale and trembling at their own thoughts.

At length, the carriage is seen returning at full speed. Their hearts beat wildly with hope. Alice is in it, and uninjured. But no! Emma is bitterly weeping. She cannot speak as they pass, but silently motions them

to return. They hastily follow the carriage to the house.

“Where is she?” asked Mrs. Stanley, tremulously. “Why did you not bring her home?”

With a fresh burst of tears, Emma pointed to a wagon just come in sight, and which was slowly entering the large gate at the foot of the avenue.

Mrs. Stanley stood almost paralyzed, and then caught hold of the door for support. She tried to speak, but her tongue refused to perform its office. With a loud cry of agony, Uncle Stephen rushed by them, and locked himself in his own room.

Yes, there upon a bed thrown upon the bottom of a wagon, from which the seat had been hastily taken out, lay the senseless form of poor Alice Carey. Her head was supported in the lap of a young woman, who was weeping, while men and boys walked solemnly at their side.

Before Mrs. Stanley could recall her scattered senses, Dr. Jenks drove hastily up, and finding nothing had been prepared, requested that a bed should be made ready as speedily as possible, that he might see to what extent his patient had been injured.

When the wagon stopped at the door, the Doctor, with the assistance of two men, conveyed the insensible girl to her room, and laid her gently upon the bed. A low moan escaped her lips; but she did not appear to be conscious. Mrs. Stanley bent over her poor child, and commenced a vigorous chafing of her hands, when the Doctor beckoned her from the room, motioning Emma to take her mother's place.

"Where is your husband?" he asked, forcing himself to be calm.

"We have not been able to find him. He went out to walk after dinner."

"Well, madam, it is my painful duty to inform you that this is a serious case. I fear some internal injury, and I wish to send to the village for another physician to assist me in the examination. I shall also need other help."

"I shall not leave my child," faltered Mrs. Stanley, trying to repress the tears which blinded her.

"Can you be calm? Everything depends upon that."

"I can," she replied, more firmly. "It is the suddenness of the blow which has stunned me."

"Well, I shall need bandages and plenty of warm water. I see her arm is broken. God grant there may be nothing worse. Don't make too much effort to restore her to consciousness, as she will be likely to suffer excruciating pain under the examination. I will send a man in my buggy for Dr. Mason. He is a better surgeon than I am, young as he is, and the sooner he is here the better."

It seemed, however, to the waiting group around the bed, a long, long time, before the young surgeon arrived, bringing with him a formidable box of instruments, which, from the exaggerated account he received, he thought might be necessary.

Dr. Jenks called him to the farther part of the room, and in a low voice said a few words, when they returned to the bed.

“Miss Emma,” said the doctor, “you had better leave the room; you can’t bear it.”

Emma shook her head, and tried to speak, but the words “try me” were the only ones which she could articulate.

“Well, then, hold her hand firmly; and Mrs. Stanley, if you must stay, — though I had rather have somebody else, — come around this side and unfasten her dress.”

Though excessively pale, she obeyed. The kind doctor gently raised her, and soon the fair neck and shoulder was exposed to view.

“This arm is broken in two places,” said Dr. Mason. “Have you the splinters?”

A shriek of distress from the poor girl, as they moved it, showed that she was not now insensible.

“Dear, darling Alice, be calm, *do be calm!*” whispered Emma, forcing back the unbidden tears which had been coursing down her cheeks. “It will soon be over.” But shriek after shriek filled the air, as they set the bone, until she again fainted from excess of agony.

“There, I’m glad she’s gone!” exclaimed Dr. Jenks, as he held the arm in place, while the young surgeon, with great skill, applied the bandages. When this was done, they proceeded, under the influence of a powerful anodyne, to a farther examination, which resulted more favorably than they had dared to hope. The poor sufferer lay in a heavy slumber, when a loud noise in the Hall arrested their attention. Above all sounds, the voice of Mrs. Carey was distinctly heard, calling out, in frenzied tones, “I *will* go to her! I *wont* be kept from my child! and you, Mr. Stanley, must follow me!”

“Don't let that crazy woman in here!” exclaimed the doctor.

“I hear my husband's voice, and he will prevent her,” said Mrs. Stanley. Suddenly there was a sound of great running, the door burst open, and the poor mother rushed in and threw herself on her knees by the side of the bed. Dr. Jenks approached gently to lead her out; but she stood up before him, and, pointing with her long, thin finger, to Alice, said solemnly, “God sent me here, and here I shall stay until I have done what he bids me.”

“How long will it take?” asked Dr. Mason, impatiently, as he kept his fingers on the pulse of his patient. He knew nothing of the relation existing between them, and wondered that the crazy woman should be allowed to remain in the room for a moment.

“Mr. Stanley, come near!” she cried, “for to you I must make my confession!” There was in her eye an expression of calmness, which, notwithstanding her strange manner, ayed them into silence, and she went on. “I am glad to see you weep, Mr. Stanley. You may well gaze at the poor child, and shed tears at her distress, for she is your own!”

With a sudden start he sprang to the bedside; but she waived him away, and continued, in a firm voice, though husky with emotion, “Hear, hear, all of you, while God gives me strength to speak. That child was given me to nurse. I kept her, and put my own daughter, Edith, in her place. I didn't at first intend to have it remain so, but I was pleased to see that my child was caressed, and by and bye it was too late for me to take her back. But I have known for a long time that this day would surely

come — that these words would be forced from my lips. I have heard it in the sighing breeze, in the gurgling of yonder brook, and in the howling of the angry wind. The robins in the branches, and even the frogs in the meadow, have never ceased to remind me that this day was hastening on. But of late, strange voices have whispered to me in the night-watches, ‘Guilty woman, your sin will soon be discovered.’ I have often tried to confess to you, but I was restrained. ‘Not yet, not yet,’ was ever the cry, and I could not resist the inward voice.”

When she ceased, all present stood speechless, until Dr. Jenks asked, “What proof have you of the truth of this story?” though her declaration had flashed instant conviction upon their minds.

“Proof!” she cried, with a flashing eye, “her father needs no proof! He knows, now, why the sight of that child always reminded him of the mother who bore her. He understands why that mother loved her so tenderly. Her heart was drawn out toward her own offspring. He knows why she and Louis loved each other so dearly. If you want more proof, ask Uncle Stephen,” glancing toward him. “He will tell you he always knew it. He has said a hundred times, ‘That child reminds me of my sister.’ But, if all that will not satisfy you, in what one thing is she like me? Look at her, beautiful even in her death-like slumber. Then her heart is pure, while Edith — Dr. Jenks,” she continued, after a moment, catching hold of his arm, “do you remember when this child was born?”

The doctor nodded assent, wondering what was to follow.

“Had she any mark, by which to distinguish her?”

“Yes,” he replied, either she or Emma had a large brown spot, like a bean, upon her back, just below the shoulder-blade.”

“I have often noticed it when I have dressed her,” gasped Mrs. Stanley, while her husband rushed from the room, and locked himself in his chamber.

All this passed much more quickly than it can be related, and now Mrs. Carey, no longer the mother of Alice, was easily persuaded to return home, while the physicians, after congratulating the parents upon the unexpected discovery, retired to consult and to appoint the time for a still more thorough investigation of her case on the morrow.

The lovely young girl still lay under the influence of the anodyne, which had been administered when she first began to recover her consciousness. Dr. Jenks ordered another powder when she awoke, and promised to call in again late in the evening, and make arrangements for the night. “I shall bring Nurse Green with me,” he added, as he was leaving the room; but Mrs. Stanley was firm in refusing to leave her child. With what a loving tone she now repeated the blessed words, “*my child.*”

When the good man went down stairs, Mr. Stanley came out of his study, and beckoned him within. “Will she live?” he asked, forcing himself to speak with some degree of calmness.

“Oh, yes, I hope so,” replied the doctor, cheerfully. “We have yet found no other injury except a broken arm, and, under the skilful treatment of Dr. Mason, that will be as strong as ever in a couple of months.”

“May God grant it,” said the father, impressively
“Have you heard how the accident happened?”

“Nothing beyond the story of the boy who came for me,—that the horse took fright and threw her. She was found in the street turning from the one where Mrs. Hayden lives, and probably had just left there. I must call and tell them how she is, or I shall have trouble. Indeed,” added the good man, smiling, as he turned to take his leave, “I shall be very popular for a few days, and shall be besieged with inquiries concerning the health of your daughter. She is a great favorite in the village.”

Mr. Stanley warmly pressed his hand, but did not reply. His heart was too full for utterance.

In the meantime how did Edith bear the sudden change which had come over her prospects? No one knew. She and Gertrude had been among the crowd assembled in the entry, and at the very first intimation of the fact from her mother, she flew to her own room, and locked her door, and when Gertrude knocked repeatedly, she received no answer. She instinctively knew it was true. Poor girl! it will be a hard lesson for her to learn. Let us leave her and turn to a room nearly opposite that in which the father and mother are hanging over their new-found child, and discover what are Uncle Stephen's thoughts with reference to this new relation.

When, in an agony of grief, he shut himself up in his bedroom, he feared the life of Alice was extinct; but, after remaining alone until he could endure the suspense no longer, he opened his door, and learned from one of

he servants that she still lived. He stood in the hall when Mrs. Carey, noticing his presence, referred to him as proof that he had long recognized the relation. Then, unable to bear the tumult of joy caused by so happy a discovery, he caught his hat and rushed out to find Clarence, that he might impart the blessed news to him. But he had hardly proceeded through the park, when he saw, in the distance, a horse dashing toward him, and in the rider of which he soon recognized his ward.

Restless and unable to fix his attention upon his business, after the exciting scenes of the morning, at an early hour Clarence went to the stable for his horse, that he might return to Lindenwood. He walked on with quick and elastic step, for, notwithstanding all which had occurred, his heart was lighter than for many weeks. He could now trace the cause of Alice's reserve in the cruel remarks to which she had been subjected, a specimen of which he had heard in the morning; and in her noble vindication of him, he loved to think he had discovered some sparks of affection, which it would be his delightful privilege to fan into a flame. He determined at once to see her guardian, and, by the avowal of his affection, preclude the necessity of the explanation which he foresaw would be so trying to her sensitive nature. His eye grew bright, and his whole countenance beamed with pleasant anticipations as he hurried on, until his attention was arrested by seeing groups of men, women, and boys standing together, and heard the words "dreadful! what a shocking accident!" Pausing for one moment to listen, the name "Miss Carey" caught his ear, when, with a countenance blanched with sudden fear, he

stepped quickly forward, and asked, "What has occurred?"

A boy replied, "Why, hav'n't you heard? Miss Alice Carey, the young lady who rides every day on horseback, and who is so good to the poor, has been thrown from her horse, and killed!"

"Killed?" repeated Clarence, reeling against the man who stood next him.

"No!" exclaimed a boy, pressing up through the crowd which had begun to gather, "I was there when they took her out of the wagon, and I heard her groan awfully. She isn't killed, but she's horridly hurt."

Though rendered almost blind by sudden faintness and dizziness, Clarence waited to hear no more. He sprang upon his horse, and, after urging him to his utmost speed, slackened not his pace until he met his guardian coming in search of him. The old gentleman was evidently contending with mixed emotions of sorrow and joy, and, as his ward sprang from the saddle to his side, caught his hand, and said, "Clarence, Alice Carey is no more; but I have found a niece I shall love even better than I did her."

"The shock has turned his brain," thought the young man. "Come, dear Uncle," he said, tenderly, "let me lead you to the house." "Alice! where is Alice?" he gasped out, as Emma ran out to meet him.

"Oh, Clarence! rejoice with us. Alice, dear, sweet Alice is ours now. She is my own dear sister."

Scarcely hearing or heeding this remark, he repeated, "Where is she? Will she live?"

"The doctors cannot tell until to-morrow, but they

hope now there is no more serious injury than her broken arm."

The young lawyer breathed more freely, and, tying his horse at the post, he accompanied Emma to the parlor, where he heard from her a full account of what had occurred.

Not once did he interrupt her, but his compressed lips from which every trace of color had vanished, and the eagerness with which he caught her words, proved to his companion his sympathy with the poor sufferer.

"Won't it be delightful to have such a sister?" asked Emma, anxious to turn from the gloomy side of the picture. "I never knew until now how much, how very much, I loved her."

"If she lives," he faltered, his voice tremulous with suppressed emotion. At that moment her father entered, and Uncle Stephen stepped eagerly forward, and caught him by the hand.

"Thank you," responded Mr. Stanley, "for your love to my beloved child. I cannot see how I could have been so blind. Every feature resembles my deceased Emma; but no more than her lovely character. You and her mother have better appreciated her worth. This will form a new tie between us. Clarence," called he, turning toward him, as he leaned against the mantel-piece, concealing his face with his hat, "I wish you would go over and see what has become of Mrs. Carey. Some one ought to stay with her and watch her closely. Stay," he added, as he noticed his pale, haggard expression, "you are not well." A sudden thought flashed through his mind. "Don't think I blame you for what

occurred last evening. That will all come out right, and my Alice is not one to lay up anything against her friends."

These words, though kindly spoken, afforded him but poor consolation. He bowed his thanks, however, and went out to Mrs. Carey's small cottage. But he only saw the woman who took care of her, who informed him that she came home from the hall trembling and excited, but in full possession of her reason. That she appeared very glad that she had relieved herself of the dreadful burden that had oppressed her for so many years; but that she dreaded to meet Edith, as she knew her child would bitterly reproach her. "I promised her," added the woman, "that if she would retire, no one should disturb her."

At the mention of Edith, Clarence started. He had been so wholly engrossed in his anxiety for Alice, that the change in the situation of her foster-sister had not once occurred to him. "How would her proud and haughty spirit bear so sudden a reverse of fortune?" It was a fruitful subject of thought, and one which occupied the people of the village for a long time. But at present his whole soul was racked with anxiety for the poor girl who still lay insensible. He had not yet asked himself what would be the effect upon his suit for her hand, of her being raised to the station of daughter to Mr. Stanley; he could only think of her as Emma had vividly represented her when suffering so keenly from the setting of her arm.

He walked slowly back and forth through the yard, until summoned by a servant to tea. Though the hearts

of all the group gathered around the board were centred upon one dear member, yet it was a silent meal. Indeed, the assembling there was little more than a form, and then there were three absent. The mother, with her child, and Edith, who still refused admittance to all

CHAPTER XXII

“Happy are those,
That knowing in their births they are subject to
Uncertain change, are still prepar’d and arm’d
For either fortune; a rare principle,
And with much labor learned in wisdom’s school.”

Massinger.

WHAT a change in a few short hours! They could hardly realize it; and when Mr. Stanley’s swelling heart found utterance in prayer for her who had brought back from the grave the image of her deceased mother — for her who had been so wonderfully preserved from death, the whole family wept aloud.

During the evening, to which Clarence had looked forward with such joyous anticipations, as he and his guardian were sitting silently in the parlor, Emma came to the door and beckoned him to join her. “Do you remember my own mother?” she inquired, softly.

“Perfectly.”

“Father thought so, and he wants you to come and look at our poor Alice. She is not yet conscious,” she added, as he instinctively started back.

Though his heart grew faint with an undefined feeling of terror, he silently followed her.

Her father was leaning over the pallid face of his child, and bathing her temples with aromatic vinegar. For years he had been unused to the sick room; but this was

an office he would resign to no other. He looked up, as the young man entered, and beckoned him to his side. There she lay, the object of his purest, deepest affections, pale and motionless as marble, save only now and then a slight contraction of the brow, as if she were suffering. He gazed and gazed, as if his whole soul were concentrated in that one absorbing, fixed look. Her curls, moistened by the vinegar, were pushed back, revealing fully the broad brow, which generally was partly concealed; the blue veins were distinctly marked under the transparent skin, while the dark, curling eyelashes, as they lay upon her cheek, were all that relieved the marble whiteness.

Mr. Stanley pointed to the small mouth, and whispered, "Blind, *blind*, indeed I've been! How like her mother!

If the young man heard, he made no reply, and Emma was obliged to touch his arm repeatedly before she could make him understand it was time for him to leave the room. What reflections upon the past, what resolutions for the future, were crowded into those brief moments, God only knew. But Clarence, in after years, acknowledged that life and death never before appeared to him in their true relation to each other; that while gazing upon her fair face, and remembering the early piety by which she had dedicated herself to the service of her Maker, the consistent, useful life she had led, and the certainty, in the event of her death, of her going to her Saviour, he realized that,

"It is not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

When Emma opened the door into the entry, she found Uncle Stephen there, waiting to ascertain whether there was any favorable change. Mrs. Stanley silently advanced, and led him to the bed.

But the sight he there beheld was more than he could endure. With only one glance at the long frame in which lay the broken arm, and at the pale face, which seemed like a visitor from the spirit-world, he covered his eyes and hurried from the room.

After the first shock, when he feared she had been killed by her fall, he had been so overjoyed at being able to explain to himself why his heart had been so forcibly drawn toward the lovely child; and to solve the question so many times repeated, "Why does she so often remind me of my sister," that he had thought less of the danger which still threatened her life. But now it was greatly magnified, and he could find no comfort except upon his knees. Oh, how many times, that night, he thanked God that this had not happened before she had assured him of her forgiveness! How clearly her sweet voice rang in his ear, "Don't you love your little girl?"

At nine o'clock the Doctor came again, and was pleased to see that there was then no appearance of fever, and ordered her lips to be wet with cordial every fifteen minutes. Unless the pain was very severe, the anodyne was to be discontinued. He prescribed the most perfect quiet, and left them with lightened hearts to prepare for the duties of the night.

What a comfort is a good physician! How earnestly do we listen for his footstep, and welcome his approach! How closely we watch his features to discern his

opinion of his patient, before he can have time to express it in words! How grateful do we feel for the hope with which he brightens the future, or for the sympathy which soothes our most fearful anticipations of sorrow!

After the good Doctor left, Mr. Stanley retired for a few moments to his study, to be alone with his God, and to pour out his soul in prayer for his child. He had just arisen, when he heard a low knock at his door. He started quickly, fearing it was a message for him to return to Alice, when Gertrude entered. In a voice almost inarticulate, she signified her desire to detain him. But when he tenderly led her to the sofa, and took a seat by her side, he waited in vain for her to speak, so violent were her sobs.

At length, making a great effort, she commanded her voice, and confessed to her father her cruelty to Alice, and the bitter remorse it now caused her: "No words can describe," she exclaimed, with great excitement, "what I have suffered since I saw her lying motionless in the wagon which brought her home."

Gertrude did not spare herself, but went on to speak of cruel taunts about her birth, of hints of her dependence, and all the long catalogue of her offences, just as conscience was holding them up to her view; but of which her father had been wholly ignorant. He was obliged to put a violent constraint upon his feelings to allow her to proceed.

"And Edith?" he asked when she stopped.

Gertrude acknowledged that Edith had joined her in this unkind treatment; but that she herself had been far more to blame. "And this is not all," she continued,

covering her face from her father's searching glance, "Clarence loves Alice; and I have tried to alienate his affections from her; I have" — but here she was entirely overcome, as her mind reverted to the scenes which had occurred that very morning, though it seemed as if the events of weeks had intervened.

Mr. Stanley perceived that the grief of his daughter was genuine, — her repentance sincere, and he forbore reproof. After a few moments of earnest conversation, he again knelt in prayer; and this time he was not alone; his subdued and tearful daughter knelt beside him, and never before had she so earnestly joined in petitions for pardon and peace. Before she left the room, she gave the best proof of the sincerity of her sorrow for what had passed, by requesting her father to communicate to Clarence as much of her confession as he thought best; and her father, though deeply afflicted at the disclosures she had made, held her to his heart in a more tender embrace than for many years.

For a short time after she left the study, he walked in a slow measured pace across the floor, pondering what had passed, especially what she had said of Clarence and his affection for Alice. He had never suspected this; and, even now, he shook his head as his thoughts recurred to many events which had taken place within a few weeks. He had long ago settled it in his own mind, that Gertrude and Clarence were attached, and the thought of their union had always been pleasant. His wife being fully aware of this, had never mentioned the change she had perceived in the affections of the young lawyer.

Then came the thought of Edith. He could not but acknowledge that the late discovery was a blessed one to him. The character of Edith, haughty and self-willed, he had never fully understood. No one of his children had ever caused him half the anxiety, while toward his beautiful, loving, pure-minded Alice his heart had always warmed in a most fatherly manner. How vividly he recalled the earnest, beseeching tones of his wife, — as she lay raised in bed, only a few hours before she breathed her last. There were Gertrude, Emma, and Edith, and there, too, sitting upon the lap of Nurse Carey, the little Alice. When the dying woman had spoken a few words to each of the former, she raised her eyes to him, and said: “My dear husband, I want you to promise me that this little one” — feebly taking the hand of the weeping child — “shall remain here, and be educated with ours, to be treated as if she were our own.” How well he now remembered the overpowering emotion of the Nurse, as he solemnly promised compliance with her wishes; an emotion which, at the time, all had attributed to sorrow at the loss of her kind mistress, who had been to her and hers so true a friend. He now perceived in her wish, the overruling hand of a kind Providence, that his child might be placed in circumstances fitting her for the denouement which had taken place.

Still, while his heart was overflowing with tenderness toward his long lost child, and yearning over her in her weakness, with irrepressible love, he also felt a strong affection toward the mature and beautiful girl, who had for so many years called him father. Not one thought of the great sin of the mother hardened his heart toward

the child. No, he was impelled by a knowledge of her character to strong emotions of pity at the sufferings he knew she would undergo, before she could bring her proud spirit to bow submissively to the condition she had so much despised.

Educated, as she had been, in refined society, accustomed to consult only her own pleasure, while she domineered over every member of the household, he was well aware that, when he offered her a home, there would be a dreadful struggle in her mind, before she could bring herself to assume the place of a dependant on his bounty. He longed to see her, and try to calm the deep waves of trouble which threatened to overwhelm her; but so far, she had absolutely refused to admit any one to her apartment, and had maintained a profound silence, when her mother went to her, and begged her to take some food.

Alice remained so quiet for several hours that her father and mother, who occupied arm-chairs by the side of her bed, were able to get some sleep. But toward morning, when Clarence, hoping from the profound stillness in the room, that the patient was at least not suffering, had just retired to his bed and fallen into a heavy sleep, was awakened by a dreadful shriek, followed by a quick running to and fro through the hall. He sprang up, threw on his dressing-gown, and returned to the place he had occupied most of the night, near the door of his own room. In one moment Emma came running by, and seeing him dressed, said, quickly, "Oh, Clarence, do run and call James, and send him for the Doctor! Alice is a great deal worse."

He went in a moment, and running to the stable, took

out his own horse, sprang into the saddle, and gave himself no time to think, until he was returning with the good Doctor by his side. For once the old buggy rattled along as fast as he could wish, and before the anxious parents could have supposed it possible, Dr. Jenks entered the room.

At one glance, he saw the danger. Alice had just come out of a convulsion fit, in which she had disarranged the bandages and splinters holding the bone in place; and now, though conscious, lay pale and trembling with the pain. The physician had no sooner approached the bed than, without speaking, he returned to the entry and said, in a low voice, to Clarence, "We must have Dr. Mason here, without any delay. Stay," he added, as the young man had already begun to descend the stairs, "take my buggy, and don't fear for the old horse. I want him quickly."

For many miles around, Dr. Jenks was famous for his skill. He was prompt, energetic, and always cheerful. It was a very unusual thing for him to weep over his patients; but when he approached the bed, and saw by her faint smile that Alice recognized and welcomed him, he turned quickly away, while a sound very much like a suppressed sob, came from the window near which he stood. But that was over in a minute, and he made inquiries how she had passed the night.

"We must prevent the return of the convulsions," he said, in a low tone, "they're ugly things where a bone is out of place." He did not think it necessary at that time to distress the father's heart by saying that he feared, also, they were the result of some greater injury.

He therefore administered a soothing powder, tenderly unloosed the bandages, hoping by that time Dr. Mason would arrive. Nor was he disappointed, for hearing a quick step up the stairs, the young surgeon hastily entered the room.

“There, dear,” said the old Doctor, soothingly, “let your father hold your arm. It will hurt badly for a minute; but ’twill soon be over. Here, Mrs. Stanley, this side, if you please. Now, Dr. Mason, we’re all ready.”

The bone slipped back again with a grating sound, and the poor girl quickly gasped for breath.

Though the physicians agreed that it must have been more painful than the first setting, as it had begun to swell badly; yet she bore it without a groan. Emma sprang for the cordial, and moistened her lips.

“There now,” said the good old man, “that was handsomely done; but, child, don’t ever try to restrain yourself so again; let the screams come, they’re nature, and wont hurt any body; not half as much as it will you to hold the teeth so tightly as you did.”

By this time the surgeon had nicely supported the arm in a frame, and the gentle sufferer rejoiced their hearts by whispering that she was greatly relieved. Quite a circle had gathered around her bed, and Clarenee, almost unconsciously, had joined them. Alice was now perfectly conscious. She looked, feebly, from one to another; at length, her eye met his, and that one glance conveyed to her a world of bliss. It was too much of happiness for her feeble frame. She closed her eyes and for a moment appeared to have fainted.

Dr. Jenks, who was closely watching her, noticed the effect of the glance without understanding the cause. "Bear away there, young man," he said, in a low voice "the sight of your haggard, cadaverous face is enough to frighten well persons, — let alone the sick."

All turned to Clarence, whose appearance did indeed justify the doctor's description. His eyes were sunken, and there was a dreadful pallor about his mouth. He left the room; and the physician followed him, saying, "Here, young man, let's try your pulse."

"No," said Clarence, withdrawing his arm; "it's only the loss of sleep. I have had none for forty-eight hours."

"Why, then, in the name of common sense, don't you go to bed? It's lucky the loss of a few hours' sleep don't affect me so."

The whirling, dizzy feeling in his head warned Clarence that he had better take this advice; and, throwing himself upon his couch, he slept until near noon, when Uncle Stephen gayly informed him, that, under the influence of morphine, a thorough examination had taken place, and the physicians were agreed in the opinion that she had sustained no internal injury. The good old man, to whom tears were the most natural expression both of his joy and sorrow, sobbed as he concluded: "It's 'most too good news for an old sinner like me." While his ward was dressing, he stepped to and fro around the room, passing him his cravat and slippers, or stooping to pick up the brush which had fallen to the floor. If his heart had not been occupied, Clarence could hardly have suppressed a smile at this unusual attention. But Uncle

Stephen was happy, and needed to do something out of the common course to express his joy.

When the lawyer finished his toilet, and went below, he found all was indeed changed; though the family and servants spoke in subdued tones, yet the deep sadness was gone. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley almost smiled as they met him, while Emma appeared as if she could hardly contain her joy. She gave her hand twice to Clarence without being aware of it, as she whispered, "I'm so happy that it's over, and we know the worst, dear, *dear* Alice!"

While they were talking, Gertrude came to the door, and then silently retreated upon perceiving who were present.

"Oh!" exclaimed Emma, "you can't tell how sorry sister is. She has confessed everything to father; and he says, though it was a great shock to him, to know that she had indulged such feelings, yet he hopes much from this affliction. She told him how she had deceived you," she added, lowering her voice. "She took all the blame, and said she had influenced Edith. Poor Edith!" she continued, changing her tone, "manma fears she'll starve herself to death, and papa will insist upon going in to talk with her."

How Dr. Jenks contrived to satisfy his other patients, I cannot tell; but, for a few days, his visits at Lindenwood were neither few nor short; and his cheerful voice and ready joke operated like a charm upon all.

Alice loved him better than ever and she frankly told him so; upon which occasion the good man helped himself to a kiss upon her pale cheek, and told over, to the

amusement of the whole company, the story of her refusing him a kiss when he asked for one, and then coming to him of her own accord, when she found he did not mean to insist. "Oh!" said he, "if I'd had the experience when I was young that I have now, there would have been some cracking."

The only bad result of his frequent visits was a feeling of jealousy which was growing up in Uncle Stephen's heart toward the physician, though, if any one had accused him of it, he would have scorned the idea that Alice would love the jolly old man as well as she did him.

But the young girl esteemed her physician for something more than his cheerful, happy temperament, or even for his skill. A more enduring tie united them. He had long recognized in the young disciple a desire to follow the example of the same Master whom he was trying to serve. Never, in the course of his long practice, had he turned a deaf ear to the call of the poor. He recognized, in all the suffering children of distress and poverty, a claim to his time and attention, as creatures endowed with souls to be fitted for happiness; and he literally obeyed the inspired precept, "Do good unto all as ye have opportunity, especially unto such as are of the household of faith."

And his young patient was comforted by the words of peace he breathed in her ear as he tenderly bent over her. "There, dear," he said at one time, when she was suffering severely, "think of what your heavenly Father says, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose soul is stayed on thee. Lift up your heart to him, child.'"

CHAPTER XXIII

“The heart is, like the sky, a part of heaven,
But changes, night and day, too, like the sky;
Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
And darkness and destruction, as on high;
But when it hath been scorch'd, and pierc'd, and riven,
Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye
Pours forth at last the heart's blood turned to tears.”

Byron.

THE numerous calls from the village to make inquiries for Miss Alice Stanley proved the truth of the doctor's statement in regard to the estimation in which she was held. Not only carriage after carriage, containing friends anxious to ascertain exactly her situation, drove up the avenue to the Hall, but twice a day, morning and evening, Dexter Hayden presented himself at the door, and in a respectful manner, said, “Will you please to tell me particularly how Miss Alice is?” and when the reply, “She still continues comfortable,” had been given him, the fervent “Thank you!” showed that his heart had been in the question.

Mr. Gates, too, often left his welding and hammering at an early hour, and, having donned his Sunday suit, (for he now attended church on the Sabbath,) proceeded to Lindenwood, and begged to hear from Miss Alice, saying, “My wife or I should take it as a great favor if we could be allowed to be of some service to her.”

On the third day after the sad accident, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were surprised, as they went up from dinner, to see Nurse Carey sitting by the side of their patient as composedly as if she had always retained that place. There was a quiet smile around her mouth, and a look of calm content in her eye which Marion had never before seen. Unobserved by Alice, she cast an imploring glance upon the father, who saw the wisdom of allowing her to remain.

The young girl was yet unacquainted with the change which had come over her prospects. The names "Father" and "Mother" had become so familiar to her that she did not notice how spontaneously the response, "My child," flowed from that father's lips. She did, indeed, think he exhibited toward her a father's tenderness; and the artless, earnest tone in which she uttered her thanks rendered it at times almost impossible for him to refrain from telling her she was his own.

The appearance of her mother she would naturally expect, and, indeed, her skill at nursing rendered her a real treasure. With the divulging of the secret which had preyed upon her conscience for so many years, she had thrown away all the reserve and gloom which, even during her seasons of returning reason, had shrouded her like a thick veil; and now, being assured by Mr. Stanley of his entire forgiveness, she acknowledged that if she could conquer the fear of her daughter, whom she had not seen since their relation had been made known to her, she should be the happiest person living.

In free conversation with Mrs. Stanley, she confessed the reason for her strange conduct toward Alice, which

had heretofore appeared so unaccountable. Knowing herself to be unfit to influence a pure, artless girl like the one whom she claimed for her child, she had endeavored, especially since the interest manifested in her by that lady, to wean Alice's affections from herself, that she might learn to live wholly at the Hall, and thus be prepared for the time when the present discovery should take place.

But it is high time that we turn from this pleasanter scene to a room at the other corner of the house, — far, far pleasanter and brighter, even amidst constant suffering, than that one within whose walls was raging a mighty war. I have heretofore said that Edith refused to admit any one to her apartment. Whether it were the voice of him whom she had so long known as father, or the lowest servant in the establishment, for all had attempted it, the success was the same. On the second day a small portion of the food which had been left at her door had disappeared; and during the second night Mrs. Stanley from her window had seen a tall form pass and re-pass, with hasty and uncertain steps, up and down the avenue before the house. But on the morning of the third day no one had seen Edith face to face. What course she intended or wished to pursue no one could even imagine. Mr. Stanley determined to wait no longer. Retiring to his study, he wrote her a long, kind letter, such as a Christian father would write to an afflicted child. In it he expressed a fond affection for her, and entreated her to return to the family, who all longed for an opportunity to prove to her that she was welcome to the place she had held. He told her that he had fully

my welfare. Till that time, I only ask that I may have the use of the room I now occupy, *undisturbed*.

“As for the woman who claims to have given me birth, her conduct has been such that *I* cannot forgive her, if you do; and, as I will never consent to take her name, and the one to which I have been accustomed has been rudely taken from me, I am at present nameless, except
EDITH.”

Mr. Stanley had impatiently awaited the answer to his kind epistle; and, when his wife, who had taken it from the servant, hastened to put it into his hand, he opened it eagerly, hoping, though she had not complied with his request to come to him, yet that she had responded to his sentiments with childlike affection. But, when he had read and re-read the cold, bitter reply, he sighed as he placed it, without a word, in the hand of his wife.

Marion's eyes filled with tears as she perused its contents. “Poor, *poor* Edith!” she exclaimed. “She is her own greatest enemy. How differently our dear Alice would have replied!”

“Edith is differently constituted,” said her husband, in an apologizing tone. “I have no doubt she is driven almost to madness by her conflict between pride and conscience, while Alice is not only by nature gentle and yielding, but has a never-failing principle of right within her own breast, by which, however trying and difficult, she endeavors to regulate her conduct.”

Long and earnestly did they discuss the subject, and fervently did they implore wisdom for themselves, and

for the poor, wayward girl who was thus throwing away her hopes and happiness. They prayed that God would humble her proud, rebellious spirit, and enable her to submit to the dispensations of his will.

“Poor, *poor* Edith!” Mrs. Stanley might well exclaim. Yet, when she repeated the words, she had but a faint conception of the horrible thoughts of God, of the murmuring at his will, of the hatred she indulged against the whole family, and especially against the one whom she had so often taunted with her low birth, all of which made the meat and drink of the almost insane Edith.

When she first saw the senseless form of Alice borne to her chamber, her natural sympathies were warmly enlisted. She shuddered at the thought that Alice might die,—die with her words of taunting unforgiven,—and she clung to Gertrude in her affright; but the moment her mother’s confession met her ear, it struck conviction of its truthfulness to her heart. She waited for no proof; she needed none. She had often asked herself the question, “Why am I so unlike my sisters,—in everything unlike them?” She rushed to her own apartment, which of late she had occupied alone, and shut herself in.

For several hours she was stunned, or rather paralyzed, by the shock. When the horrible shrieks of Alice rang through the house, filling every other heart with a shuddering compassion for the poor sufferer, she only laughed a bitter laugh, as she thought how cheaply Alice had purchased her future prospects, and how willingly she would suffer anything which could be inflicted to be restored to the position she had held only a few hours

before. Though of all the family, to Edith had always been ascribed more of pride of rank and station than any other member; yet she thought she had never rightly prized them until now, when they were forever snatched from her grasp. She knew, she felt sure, that her father and mother, nay, that every one in the family, would rejoice at the change. How she hated them, as she thought of it. She was well aware that she had occasioned her parents great anxiety; that, though younger than her sisters, she had exerted an unfavorable influence upon them, and that over the servants she had tyrannized. How different with Alice? Always beloved, now how would she be caressed. Then came Uncle Stephen, with his overweening fondness for his favorite. She felt, yes, it was so, she hated him worse than all. No, there was one, and that one the mother who bore her, whom she never would see, never forgive. Call *her* MOTHER, the insane hag! Her blood chilled as she reverted to the prophetic words so lately heard from her lips, "Beware, the hour of retribution is at hand!" Call *her mother!* No! Sooner would she allow her tongue to be cut from her mouth.

Not one tear moistened her blood-shot eyes; not yet came one thought to soften her obdurate, stubborn heart. All was wild chaos and confusion. When she heard the step of her mother come out of the sick room, and her voice softly pleading, "Edith, my dear child, admit your mother," she only laughed her to scorn. "No," was her proud thought, "she shall never see me suffer. Low as I have fallen, I will never stoop to that;" and she shut her heart firmly to every tender emotion. Wholly

engrossed as she was in her own condition, she yet seemed almost supernaturally alive to every sound. Not a step or whisper in the hall through that long, long night, escaped her, a night followed by days of suffering, to which, in after years, she looked back with the wonder that God did not wholly forsake her, and leave her to do that which more than once suggested itself to her mind, *take her own life.*

When the gray morning dawned, the day which brought such cheering words of hope to the tender parents with regard to their sweet child, it brought no blessings to her heart. All, *all* was dark; all was rebellious. "What have I done?" she exclaimed, "to bring such a fate upon myself! Cruel, unjust fate, I will never submit to it!" She walked, and walked, and wrung her hands, until, overcome with the thoughts which forced themselves into her mind, she threw herself upon the bed, crying, "Oh, why was I born?"

But such a state of mind could not last forever. So far she had justified herself, while all others had been guilty of the greatest injustice to her. When conscience whispered, its gentle voice had been instantly hushed; now it thundered that it would be heard, and Edith, no longer proudly erect, with haughty mien and flashing eye, bows her head lower and lower upon her breast, as it holds the mirror of truth before her, and convinces her of her sin. The view is too appalling, and she cries aloud, "I will not hear! I will not see!" but it will no longer restrain its warning voice.

"With whom, vain girl!" it cries, "are you contending?"

“ With the one who calls me her child — with this family — with my destiny.”

“ What is destiny ? ”

“ That which is to be.”

“ But have those you name power over your destiny ? ”

“ No, I defy them.”

“ Who, then, does control it ? ”

“ God.”

“ It is, then, your Maker with whom you are contending. Horrible impiety ! I wonder he does not consume you with the breath of his mouth.”

“ But it is hard, it is cruel, that all my high hopes, all my ardent expectations of happiness, should in one brief moment be dashed to the ground.”

“ Dare you accuse God of injustice ? Look again. You were born of ignoble parents. Your mother longed to place you in a situation far above her own, where her pride could be gratified by seeing one who was bone of her bone, caressed and cherished as their own by the scions of a noble house. To do this she defrauded them of what they prized more than gold or landed estates, and reduced their cherished one to her own low condition. For wise purposes God allowed this to be. You were placed in circumstances of ease and comfort. She whose right they were, was a dependant upon their bounty. You were cherished, educated, and, but for your imperious temper, might have been dearly loved. How did you receive these privileges ? As your right not only, but as giving you power to taunt and triumph over those who enjoyed them not, while she whose position in life you had usurped, received your taunts in the spirit of meekness, and earnestly prayed for her persecutor.”

“ No more, no more ! I cannot bear it ! ”

“ Then how have you obeyed the divine command, ‘ Honor thy father and thy mother ’ ? You have openly disregarded it. You have set your will in defiance of those placed over you ; have opposed their indulgence with ingratitude, their kindness with hatred, and now you complain that they treat you with gross injustice.”

“ Perhaps they have not been as much to blame as I at first imagined ; but certainly it was a cruel kindness to allow me to cherish hopes and expectations of future happiness, and then dash them to the ground.”

“ Rebellious girl, forbear ! How dare you utter such words against your Maker, who may at any moment call you to your last account ? It is only by his infinite forbearance you have lived and breathed. Has not the potter power over the clay to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor ? ”

“ Oh ! ” cried the poor girl, in an agony of remorse, “ I see it all ! Yes, I see my sins ; they rise like a mountain before me ; ” and for the first time tears gushed forth to her relief. For hours she wept, while the remembrance of the indulgence of her parents, the slighted affection of her sisters, whom she had so often wounded by unkindness ; her scornful treatment of her foster-sister, and last, but not least, the course she had pursued with Mr. Huntington, whom she had never ceased to love, caused her to sink lower and lower in her own estimation. Had the kind letter of Mr. Stanley reached her then, the answer would have been different. She was softened and subdued, and now thoroughly exhausted, she threw herself upon her bed, and slept until day.

After partaking very sparingly from the tempting repast left at the door, Edith stood gazing abstractedly from the window, which commanded a view of the side entrance. She sighed deeply as she saw one of the servants at work in the garden, and others passing and re-passing from the kitchen to a wood-shed in the rear. "I have no right here; these things are nothing to me!" she exclaimed, while the unbidden tears trickled down her cheeks, from which the brilliant color had entirely disappeared.

At that moment she saw a figure leave the cottage at the gate, and approach the Hall. At the sight of her, Edith drew up her form to its full height, her nostrils dilated, and, with an exclamation of bitter reproach, she turned hastily away. "Fool, why could she not let it remain so! It would have made no essential difference with Alice, while with me — —" Just at this time it was when she received the letter from Mr. Stanley, offering her the place of an adopted child. Her first thought was to accept it, and be grateful for his kindness. But the mention of the fact that he had forgiven her mother, turned her gratitude to bitterness, and under the influence of this feeling she had written her reply. Yet it was no sooner beyond her reach than she would have given anything to recall it. She again perused the letter, and while he was grieving over her cold note, she was in an agony of remorse, caused by his fatherly one.

Thus day after day passed on with quick alternations in her heart of stubbornness and compliance. Every step which drew near her door caused her heart to beat more quickly; and, as they passed without speaking, she

cried out, "they have forgotten me! they love me not!" and her tears burst forth afresh. But when Mrs. Stanley begged for admittance, with a sudden feeling of pride, for which she could not herself account, she coldly refused.

It was now nearly a week since the accident happened which had caused such unforeseen results. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley became seriously alarmed, lest this continued confinement might affect the reason of the poor girl. They had long ago consulted their kind physician in reference to the course they should pursue, and he was fully of the opinion that any attempt to use force would only aggravate the case. But they could not be persuaded to delay much longer some more decided measures. Once, only, had they heard her voice, and then it was so hoarse and unnatural that it could hardly be recognized. This was on the occasion of Mrs. Stanley calling for admittance in earnest tones of entreaty. She felt that if she could only talk with Edith face to face, that she could prevail upon her to throw away all her pride, and all her reserve, and to return to her place as a daughter in the family; but, after waiting so long for a reply that she was on the point of turning away, a sound in the closed room recalled her, "If you wish to render me still more wretched than I am, it is in your power to do so by trying to intrude upon my grief."

The words were scarcely uttered before Edith would have given worlds to recall them. She sat down on the bed, and buried her face in the pillow, while she sobbed and sobbed until she could do so no longer. She became really alarmed about herself, and fearful of losing

her reason,— perhaps her life,— and conscience had already taught her that she was not prepared to die. “I must get away from this place!” she exclaimed, “and the sooner the better!” The thought of applying to her old teacher, at T——, for a situation as under-teacher, flashed through her mind. She started to her feet. “I will do it. Yes, that is my best plan. Why have I not thought of it before?”

Want of energy and decision was not one of Edith’s faults, and in an hour her whole plan of operations was arranged. A few clothes, packed in a small carpet-bag, and, with the exception of her riding dress and bonnet, she was ready for a start whenever a favorable time should arrive. The latter articles were in Gertrude’s room, and she only waited until the family were at tea, before she glided across the entry, and, unperceived by any one, conveyed them to her room. Now that she had formed a plan, she was more composed than she had been for a week. The night was calm and clear. The moon would rise by eleven, and before the morning dawned she intended to be far on her way.

That night, just as Mrs. Stanley was falling asleep, she was aroused by hearing a muffled sound of a horse passing down the front avenue. Her first thought was that Dr. Jenks had been going past the house, and seeing lights, had called to inquire for his patient; but a second thought convinced her that he would not come at so late an hour, after leaving her comfortable in the afternoon. She sprang up and looked from the window; but, though she could now distinctly hear the sound of a horse going at full speed, yet the foliage of the trees was too thick

for her to perceive either the animal or his rider. Thinking it not best to awaken her husband, she returned to her bed, and soon fell asleep.

The mystery was solved in the morning, for, as Mr. Stanley was going into the breakfast-room, the coachman entered, with a perturbed manner, and informed him that upon going to the stable he found Felix standing outside the door, neighing for admittance. "Miss Alice's saddle was on him," continued the man, "and the little whip was carefully tied by the tassel to the pommel."

Mrs. Stanley then related what she had heard in the night, and the name "Edith," from Gertrude, suggested who the rider must have been. Emma flew to her room, and instantly returned with an open note, which she had found in the vacant chamber. It was without direction, but she placed it in her father's hands. It was simply announcing her determination to leave Lindenwood, and hereafter to provide for herself; and closed with saying that when she reached her destination she would let them know where she was.

With the simple words "Deluded girl!" he read it aloud to the assembled family, who were all much affected at her sudden departure.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Oh, what passions then,
What melting sentiments of kindly care,
On the new parents seize.” — *Thomson.*

A FORTNIGHT had now elapsed since Alice Carey had become Alice Stanley, and Dr. Jenks assured them there was no reason for delaying longer to inform her of the fact, especially as she often expressed wonder that Edith had not been in to see her. Gertrude had sought an opportunity, when alone with her sister, to beg her forgiveness for all the unkindness she had shown, to which Alice promptly replied, “ All is forgotten, dear Gertrude, save the unwearied tenderness you have exhibited since I was sick.” From that time the elder sister constituted herself head nurse, and never was Alice more pleased than with the affectionate care with which her beloved sister now administered to her wants.

“ You will spoil me with kindness, dear Gertrude,” she said, one day, as the latter, after having moistened her hair, was rolling the long ringlets around her fingers, “ I wonder how long it will be before I can make my own toilet ? ”

“ As far as I am concerned,” replied her sister, “ I hope not for a long time, for I was never more happy than at present.”

The young patient made no reply, though her heart was swelling with emotion. She lay with her eyes fixed

upon the beautiful countenance so near her own. There was a soft and pleasant light in the eye, and dimples playing about the mouth, while the scornful expression which had almost become habitual had wholly vanished. "You are very happy," she said, at length.

"And you, Miss Curious, have been speculating upon the cause, I suppose, all the time you have been gazing so earnestly into my face. What discoveries have you made? See, I have nearly finished the curls on this side; you must be quick."

The heart of Alice beat wildly. She longed to ask one question, but, as it was upon a subject never mentioned by Gertrude, she feared to offend. The young lady certainly had greatly changed. From being petulant and averse to any kind of labor, she was evidently striving to become amiable and energetic. Often at night, while she lay quietly sleeping upon a couch drawn to the bedside of her sister, Alice, rendered wakeful by her position, had wondered what could be the cause. She hesitated a moment, until, encouraged by a smile, she said, "Dear Gertrude, have you learned to love the Saviour?"

The question was wholly unexpected; and, with a burst of feeling, Gertrude dropped the brush, and hid her face in the pillow. Her sobs were so violent that the invalid became alarmed, and, putting her hand upon her sister's, continued, with the utmost tenderness, "Forgive me; I did not mean to offend."

In reply, Gertrude warmly pressed the little hand, and soon was sufficiently composed to say, "You have not offended me; but indeed, dear sister, I have tried

to imitate your lovely example. I need you to teach me.”

Alice was not the only one to notice the change in the young lady. Since the first sight of her sister on the day of the dreadful accident, she had seen herself in a new light. The proud, unyielding disposition manifested by Edith, exhibiting so strong a contrast to the meek piety of Alice, made her shudder at the remembrance of the anger and jealousy she had indulged, and she had become earnest in her desire to reform. She had lived too long in a Christian family not to be aware that she needed something beyond her own strength to enable her to carry out her resolutions of amendment; and she had begun to pray for help to subdue her irritability and indolence, and for assistance to cultivate the graces of meekness and courtesy. The question of Alice opened her heart, and, after she became more composed, was followed by a delightful conversation, the influence of which upon their mutual affection was never forgotten by either.

On the afternoon of the day in question, the kind physician had promised her parents to come up and communicate to Alice the surprising discovery that she was not only the adopted, but the real, daughter of Mr. Stanley — an event to which the whole household were looking forward with great interest. Uncle Stephen had been playfully forbidden by Gertrude to enter the sick room through the morning, lest the mysterious air which he in vain tried to conceal should arrest the attention of the invalid. It was for this occasion that Gertrude had been making so elaborate a display of ringlets,

and now her mother and Emma were called to assist in arraying her in the snow-white wrapper which had been prepared for her. A narrow frill was basted into the neck, and her elder sister took out her own brooch, and fastened the dress in front.

“Now, if that old frame were out of the way,” exclaimed Emma, “all would do well. Every thing else is ready.”

“Are you expecting company?” asked Alice, gayly.

Emma, fearing she had betrayed herself, was hastening to turn the subject, when the voice of her father, talking with a man in the lower hall, arrested her attention.

“I’m sartain it’s the place,” said the stranger, in a loud voice, ‘cause it says, plain enough, ‘Care of Hugh Stanley, Esq., Lindenwood, Queenstown, for Miss Alice.’ There! you can read it for yourself.”

“Yes,” responded Mr. Stanley, musingly; “but I can’t imagine what it is, or who it came from.”

“It came direct from New York,” continued the man, “and, if you’ll say where you want it carried, I’ll take it there while my men are here. It’s considerable large, though ’taint so dreadful heavy.”

Gertrude and Emma, who, during the above conversation, had been standing at the head of the stairs, now ran down, and Uncle Stephen followed them.

Emma borrowed her father’s knife, and began to cut the cords which sewed the matting, wondering what the awkwardly shaped thing could be. She had no sooner pulled it away far enough to discover that, whatever it was, the article was covered with a beautiful shade of

blue velvet, than she earnestly begged to have it carried to Alice's room, that she might have the pleasure of seeing her curious present.

"Let alone the women for finding out secrets," said the man, looking admiringly at the animated countenance of Emma. "They beat us men-folks out and out."

As Mr. Stanley willingly consented, the men lifted the piece of furniture, and soon deposited it safely outside the door of Alice's room. The excitement had brought a flush to the cheeks of the invalid; and, as the honest Yankee caught a glimpse of her bright countenance shaded by the chestnut curls, he started back, and wiped his eyes.

"I tell you what," said he, bluntly, "if you keep angels like that, no wonder she has things come to her;" and, turning quickly, he followed his men, saying he was paid by the gentleman who delivered the article to his care.

They all then went to work with right good will to cut open the matting, and in a short time disclosed to view a large chair for an invalid, which could be extended at pleasure into a couch, the part serving for a cricket being lowered or raised at pleasure. In addition, a slight mahogany frame had been added for a broken arm, showing that this part, at least, had been ordered expressly for her benefit.

No one was more delighted than Uncle Stephen, who walked around and around it, tipping up the back to an erect posture, then lowering it to an almost horizontal position. "I saw one," he said, "nearly resembling, it in India. It belonged to a British officer."

Mr. Stanley smiled as he remarked, "Then it is to you Alice is indebted for her expensive gift; but I will leave her to express her thanks, which I see she is longing to do."

"Me! thanks to *me!*" exclaimed Uncle Stephen. "I assure you I know nothing at all about it. I had no idea one could be procured in this country;" and he stepped briskly about the room, as if he were delighted that this time they were in fault.

"Who can it be?" asked Alice, thoughtfully. "I don't know anybody else who would be so extravagant, just for me;" but, catching a glance of intelligence passing between Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, she checked herself. A sudden suspicion of who might be the donor caused her to grow very warm about the heart.

"Whoever sent it here," replied Gertrude, "I propose that Alice take immediate possession."

"Oh, may I?" cried the young girl, joyfully; "that would be delightful, for I am so tired of this one position!"

"I don't know that we ought to remove you without the consent of your doctor," replied her father; but the entreaties of mother and sisters prevailed, and the patient was, without delay, lifted from the bed, her father carefully steadying her broken arm, and placing it in the new frame.

"Admirably contrived! and how very convenient!" were echoed and reëchoed, as Alice, though a little tremulous from the exertion, lay back smiling in her new chair.

"Oh, I shall so love this seat!" she said, enthusias-

tically, "and I'm very grateful to whoever planned it for me."

A shout of mirth, from Emma, caused the whole party to turn quickly; and there, at the door, making his way over the matting, which had been thrown into the entry, stood Clarence, looking on with a most complacent smile. He bit his lip, to keep from laughing, when he saw he had arrested their attention; but came forward, as they eagerly called him to see Alice sitting up. He duly admired the chair, as Uncle Stephen pointed out its conveniences; but seemed most intent upon the downcast eyes of the occupant.

After her first glance at him, the patient was satisfied that it was to his kindness she was indebted for this pleasure; but confused, and trembling from the conviction, she could not utter a word.

"Who could have sent it?" inquired Emma, looking archly at Clarence,—"Alice is so anxious to know, that she may express her thanks."

"It is, indeed, very mysterious," replied the attorney, averting his eyes, and appearing to be wholly occupied with an iron screw, which confined the frame, for the arm, to the main body of the chair.

"Oh, Clarence!" whispered the laughing girl, "if you ever expect to keep your secrets, you must cover your mouth, or keep down the corners. They are looking very suspicious."

Now Clarence's mouth had, from a child, been a serious annoyance to him; he being fully aware of his infirmity; and now he shook his head at the mischievous girl as he went on with the examination of the screw.

“Is anything the matter there?” asked Uncle Stephen, impatiently walking around, to see what was occupying the attention of his ward.

“No, sir,” was the reply; “I wanted to see if it was strong.” But as he spoke, he drew out from the side a thin piece of mahogany, which was to be used as a table; and now every one declared it was perfect.

In the meantime, Gertrude was bravely struggling with herself to keep down the rising emotions of envy and jealousy, caused by the belief that Clarence had thus proved his deep affection for her sister. Her former anger was for one moment aroused, but her prayers had not been in vain; and soon the spirit of her Saviour descended upon her, calming her agitated breast to peace; and when the family, fearing lest the invalid should become too weary, turned, with many congratulations, to leave the room, none were more sincerely uttered than Gertrude’s.

Leaving Emma with her sister, she retired for one moment to her own chamber, where she uttered a devout thanksgiving to Him, who had helped her to conquer herself. Then, with a few tears of regret, as she thought of the noble heart she had lost, she bathed her eyes, and returned cheerfully to her sister’s room.

Brave girl, God will reward thee!

About four o’clock the Doctor’s old horse came driving up to the door, and soon his cheerful voice was heard on the stairs. He had never appeared in a more jovial mood.

“Whew! whew! what has happened? Great liberty has been taken with my patient.” But after he had

carefully examined the bandages, to see that no harm had been done, and felt her pulse, which had been calmed by a refreshing nap in her new chair, the sympathizing friend was loud in his praises of the contrivance.

“Well, pet,” said he, tapping her cheek, “to whom am I indebted for this favor to my patient? I’ll make my best bow to him.”

A tell-tale blush overspread her face, as she faltered, “I don’t know, sir.” But Alice was truthful, and could not even thus indirectly say that which was false. She raised her eyes, met those of Clarence fixed calmly upon her, and with the words, “I have not been told,” burst into tears.

“Hey-day!” exclaimed the Doctor, “growing nervous!” and he shook his head with a disappointed air, as he again placed his fingers on her wrist, and found there had been a sudden quickening of the pulse; “I must give you a dose of your favorite syrup.” But she soon succeeded in calming herself, though she took good care to avoid glancing in the direction of Clarence.

Mr. Stanley called the Doctor for a walk in the garden, and half an hour later, when they returned, she had so fully recovered her spirits, that he determined upon revealing to her the secret which was becoming so burdensome to the family: “Sit down here,” he called out “and be quiet; I want to tell you a story about one of my patients;” and the good man made a great effort to appear wholly unmoved. Mr. Stanley quietly drew near, and seated himself by his child, while the others disposed themselves about the room; Uncle Stephen cautiously

placing himself behind her chair, where he could use his handkerchief freely and unobserved.

Dr. Jenks was not a man to stop for a preface, and he commenced: "Once, upon a time, there were two little girls, whose names were ——, well, no matter what their names were; but they were foster-sisters, just as you, Alice, and Edith are. They lived together in a beautiful home, and the parents loved the little fatherless child just as well as the other, for aught I ever saw. For some reasons which were satisfactory to his own mind, the gentleman who was the father of one of them, determined that they should be educated together; and so it went on, the little things growing up—though never were two children more unlike in words or actions. The mother died, but there came a new mother, who did her duty faithfully to both of them; but while she did this, she took the little dependant to her heart with a warmth of affection which grew stronger and stronger every year. There were a good many others, too, who loved her; they couldn't help it. I loved her myself,"—and the good old man made a great effort to suppress a sob, which was welling up from his sympathizing heart.

"Well," he continued, "I can't say so much for the other one; I never knew so much of her; but to make a long story short,—when the children had come on pretty well in their teens, it so happened that one of them, the little one, was thrown from a horse, and a pretty serious matter it proved to be, for then it came out, that the children had been changed when they were babies, and the mother of the haughty girl, who had

always supposed herself to be a child of the family, let it all out. She had been rather crazy for some years, but in this case she proved herself rational, and so you see — ”

At the mention of the insane mother, Alice started forward, and, with suspended breath, listened for what was to follow; when, noticing her excitement, the Doctor paused — she sank back, and gasped, “ What ! — ”

He was rather startled, and placed his fingers on her wrist, saying: “ I’m sorry, dear, you don’t like my story.”

The poor girl cast a quick, beseeching glance around the room, and perceiving the eager look of interest with which every one was regarding her, whispered with her white lips, “ What were their names ? ”

“ Can’t guess, hey ? Well, then, if I must tell you, — one was Edith, and the ” —

But she waited for no more. With a quick motion she clasped her father’s extended hand, and pressed it to her lips, and in a tone which went to every heart, exclaimed: “ Oh, father ! *my own father !* ”

Mother and sisters sprang up — wept and rejoiced over her. Nor were Uncle Stephen or Clarence at all behind the others in their expression of joy ; though the former manifested it in his own peculiar way, and sobbed to his heart’s content ; while the good Doctor, in his delight, gave each of the family a hearty shake of the hand.

Somehow, in the confusion, Alice found her hand made prisoner, and, on looking around, she saw it was by her Uncle’s ward, who seemed to be trying to get an opportunity to speak to her.

But Dr. Jenks thought his patient had had quite enough of excitement for one day, and hurried the family out of the room, — though Alice begged them to stay. When they were gone, however, she felt that it was desirable that she should be quiet for a time, — such a torrent of emotions were crowding through her mind. The great happiness in store for her, and the sorrow she felt for poor Edith, about whom, as yet, she had heard nothing, but for whom she feared everything. Oh what joy, in the thought that she had a father! one, to whom she could look for guidance and protection! Then, a feeling of regret that Louis had not lived, to know what would have given him so much pleasure. These feelings were quickly followed by wonder at the motives of Mrs. Carey (no longer her mother), to such a crime; and why, after perpetrating it, and keeping it a secret so many years, she had now divulged it. But beyond all these pleasurable and painful emotions, nay, that which modified all others, was the delightful conviction that she had won the love of him, whom from childhood she had regarded as the model of a Christian gentleman. Every day brought fresh conviction of the depth and fervency of his affection, and though he had never uttered it in words, yet, she read it in every action, and she was satisfied. The dizziness in her head, which had never left her since the sad night when, for the first time in her life, she had fainted, warned her of the necessity of composing herself, and making a great effort to turn her thoughts from every exciting subject, she tried Uncle Stephen's remedy, and repeated hymn after hymn, that she had learned in childhood.

For an hour she lay so quietly that Gertrude, who alone remained with her, thought she was sleeping; but at length she opened her eyes, and when she perceived who was with her, exclaimed, with a bright smile: "Oh, my sister! I would willingly suffer all I have lost in these long years, for the joy of the past hour. I can see that, for me, there was a wise Providence in placing me just where I was, that I might be kept from temptations to pride and arrogance; but *you* can never realize the delight which thrills through my whole being as I repeat to myself, again and again, the endearing names, *father, mother, sisters, and brother.*"

"Brother!" repeated Gertrude, earnestly, while a sudden ray of hope flashed from her eye, as she thought her sister referred to Clarence.

Alice instinctively understood her, and faltered,—
"Yes, he is still my brother, though his body has for many years been resting in the grave. Dear, *dear* Louis, how delighted you would have been!"

On the following Sabbath, the family assembled for prayer in the room of the invalid; and to her it proved a delightful season.

The sad fate of Edith had affected her deeply, though the tidings of the poor girl's departure had been communicated to her by her father, in the most cautious manner. With Mrs. Carey, too, Alice had wept, while she granted her full forgiveness for the past.

CHAPTER XXV.

“A pure heart,
That burns to ashes, yet conceals its pain,
For fear it mar its hopeless source of love,
Is not to be despised, or lightly held.”—*Baker*

THE weather was now delightful; and Alice, who had been in the habit of daily out-door exercise, panted for the fresh air. She began to long for her rides, and was earnest to resume her visits to her protégés. Long before this, she had learned from Dr. Jenks, that the young girl he mentioned to her, as a suitable object for her charity, had been removed to his own house, and Emma had visited her there.

One morning, the weary girl sat listening to the song of her Canary, when she suddenly started forward, exclaiming, “Oh, I feel as if I should fly! I must do something,—I’m so tired of sitting here.”

Emma, who was seated near the window with her sewing, said, archly, “I’ll see if Clarence is in. I notice that his presence has a very soothing effect upon your nerves; or will you have another of your fragrant assa-fœtida pills?”

The face of Alice expressed, for a moment, the most perfect disgust at the last-named remedy. To the former, she would deign no reply.

“I won’t have my patient annoyed,” remarked Gertrude, pleasantly.

A sudden thought seemed to dart through Emma's fertile brain. She sprang up, and, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, whispered something in her ear. Mrs. Stanley smilingly nodded, and the laughing girl ran from the room.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Alice, in distress, "she wouldn't," — she faltered, — "she wouldn't do what she said!"

"No, my dear, she is the last one to compromise your delicacy. She has forgotten the remark before now."

The ladies returned to their sewing, and Alice read aloud to them.

It was rather more than an hour after Emma had so unceremoniously taken leave, when they heard a carriage drive into the yard. Suppressed voices were soon heard in the hall. Alice leaned forward, as far as her arm would allow, to listen, when the runaway, with a bright face, ushered Mrs. Hayden, Minnie, and Nurse Green, into the room.

"That was a happy thought of yours," remarked Gertrude, after they were all seated. "Alice looks ten per cent. better, already."

And, in truth, the visitors appeared to enjoy it as much as she did. Mrs. Hayden had suffered from anxiety for her kind benefactress, and was relieved by seeing how fast she had gained, while the garrulous nurse was so full of her good wishes and congratulations, that all were cheered by them.

"I heard the whole," she resumed, "from that ere young Mr. Sydney; and a likelier man I'd never ask to see, even to match you, Miss Alice."

The young girl blushed painfully, as she interrupted her, "You are mistaken, Nurse; there is nothing of that kind between us."

But, with a knowing wink at Mrs. Stanley, she went on, "You can't blind me; I'm used to such things, going round, as I do, in families; and young men, and girls, too, very often makes me a confidant like, and asks my advice, seeing I've had a good deal of experience. Now, it's my opinion, that much as Mr. Sydney thinks of Minnie, there, he wouldn't be coming day after day to the house to see her, if 'twant for the pleasure of hearing me talk about you."

"Oh," said Alice, "he never told me he'd been. I hope you wont say anything."

"Never fear me," replied the old lady; "I sha'n't say any hurt of you; you may depend on that."

"But, indeed, Nurse, I had rather you wouldn't even mention my name;" and Alice looked really annoyed.

"Bless your heart, dear! only think what a comfort you'd deprive me of, as well as the young man. Why, you're the very light of his eyes. I have laughed many a time to see him stand whirling his hat, after he'd said he must go, for sartain, while I'd tell all you did and said when you were here."

Alice laughed, in spite of herself, at the comic, knowing winks, of the good nurse; but immediately sought to direct the attention to Minnie. After the child's first delight at seeing her friend, Emma had taken her for a call upon Uncle Stephen, and just now returned with him into the room.

His presence would have been sufficient to enforce

silence, as far as Nurse Green was concerned. She made him a most formal courtesy, in reply to the introduction, and, looking over her glasses, her eyes followed him about the room with a curious mixture of fear and veneration.

He sat down by Mrs. Hayden, and talked very kindly with her about her son, when Emma told him they had left word with a neighbor that he was to come to dinner at the hall.

On the whole, it was a most delightful day to Alice, as well as to her visitors, though she trembled not a little, when, in the afternoon, Clarence joined them, and Nurse Green showed herself eager to convince the company on what good terms she was with the young attorney. When he brought in a beautiful bouquet from the garden, and sent it to Alice by Minnie, Nurse's eyes said as plainly as words could speak, "I told you so; let me alone for guessing such things out." And Clarence certainly didn't make much secret of his attachment.

When Emma had gone to accompany them home, only one thing had occurred which gave Alice uneasiness, and that was a tear which had dropped from Gertrude's eyes upon her hand. It was when Clarence was present, just after he had sent her the flowers, and was standing in a most hard-hearted manner, feasting his eyes upon the rosy hue which mantled her cheeks. Gertrude had suddenly approached, as if to put back a curl which hung over and shaded her face; but, as Alice feared, in reality to hide her own emotion, by turning her back to those present.

That pearly drop haunted the poor girl, and it needed

all the cheering influence of a letter Emma brought from the office, from Edith, to dissipate the sadness it caused her. The letter from Edith was a great comfort to her kind friends, who had been impatiently awaiting some intelligence from her. She was at T——, with her old teacher, and had already taken charge of the youngest class of girls. The letter was very brief, but contained none of that bitterness which had so much pained her in her former one.

The next day Mr. Stanley sent her a large trunk containing her clothes, together with a generous sum of money for her present need. He also wrote to Mrs. M., the principal, to whose especial care and attention he committed her.

It was now five weeks since Alice had broken her arm, and she was able to be down stairs. The most trying part of her confinement was now to come, and that was in the daily exercise she was required to give the contracted muscles. She was nervous, too, and easily moved to tears, and looked forward with dread, from one day to another, of the excruciating pain, which any one who has broken a limb can well comprehend. She was not the only one who suffered, for there was not a member of the household, but would willingly have endured it for her. But Dr. Jenks was inexorable, and told her she would thank him for it bye and bye, and so would they all, though they now made such wry faces at him.

It was to the influence of this suffering that her friends ascribed the unusual depression of spirits which had come over their beloved Alice; but they were mistaken. She had an inward struggle, of which they knew nothing

But the truth was this, her affection for Clarence had quickened her perceptions with regard to the feelings which Gertrude entertained for him. During her sickness she had had frequent opportunities of watching the conflict the brave girl was carrying on with herself, and her own experience taught her how severe it must be. At the same time, her love and respect for her sister had greatly increased. Through the day she firmly put away all forebodings of coming ill, avoiding the subjects constantly recurring to her mind as a duty she owed herself, in respect to the recovery of her health. But her nights had again become wakeful, while doubts whether she had a right to be happy in the love of Clarence at the expense of her sister's sufferings, and fears of alienation from the affections of that sister, by turns occupied her mind. Her intercourse with the young man, from his first coming among them, was carefully reviewed, and she was obliged to acknowledge that he had given Gertrude reason to suppose he loved her. Certainly his conduct and attentions had been such as to call out her affection for him. Not knowing all that had passed between them, or the disdainful manner in which Gertrude had formerly at times treated him, and by which she had forfeited his respect, Alice began to doubt whether his course had been perfectly honorable, and whether she should be justified in accepting his suit. She could not be unconscious that he loved her, and that ever since she left her room, he had sought an opportunity to tell her so; but, while she was so undecided, she avoided being alone with him. Sometimes she thought she would unburden her heart to her mother; but then she remembered that

she had no right to divulge that with regard to her sister which she was making such an effort to keep locked in her own breast.

So it went on, day after day, Alice growing more and more excitable and nervous. Gertrude was her unwearied nurse and comforter. Poor Gertrude! when Alice appeared happy in the affections of Clarence, how many times in a day had she been obliged to retire to her closet, and, with strong crying and tears, beseech her heavenly Father for comfort and support in this her hour of trial; but now in her sorrow, though little understanding the cause, nothing could exceed the tenderness she manifested toward her gentle patient; and Alice clung to her as if her only comfort were in her presence.

One night Gertrude, who now occupied the same bed with Alice, was awakened by hearing her sob aloud.

She kept quiet a moment, hoping it was only her imagination, when the poor girl whispered, "Oh, what can I, what must I, do?" and she sobbed louder than before.

With her arms encircling her sister, Gertrude begged her to confide her sorrows to her ear; and Alice, entirely overcome by her own grief, told her all her heart. It was fortunate that she could not see the tears which fell thickly from Gertrude's eyes, and that the heroic girl so disinterestedly stifled her sobs, lest they should add to her distress. But in that midnight hour the hearts of these sisters were laid bare to one another; and such a relief did it prove to one, at least, that she fell into a more tranquil and refreshing sleep than she had enjoyed for a long time.

When the morning dawned, Gertrude silently arose from her bed, and, after making a hasty toilet, retired to her small closet for prayer and praise.

Yes, for thanksgiving; for, though ashy pale, yet there was a holy light beaming from her eye, and her countenance bore the impress of high and noble purposes. During that long, never-to-be-forgotten night, she had carefully examined her own heart, and questioned her own strength to carry out the purposes she formed while listening to the artless tale of her sister's sufferings. Severe had been the struggle; but so much the greater was the victory. Divine grace had developed new principles within her, which she herself had been unconscious of possessing; and through the discipline which her heavenly Father in wisdom had sent, her Christian character had matured in an uncommon degree.

Softly leaving her chamber, to avoid awaking the sleeper, Gertrude sought the parlor, intending to detain Clarence when he came down for his morning walk. But, to her surprise, the parlor was occupied by Uncle Stephen, who certainly seemed to have got out of bed wrong, so vigorously did he kick about the crickets, as he promenaded the spacious room. Gertrude stood quietly at the door for a moment, wondering what could have happened to disturb his feelings to such a degree, when he grumbled, "It's always so. Nothing ever goes right in this house. The whole family are bent on crossing my wishes."

Gertrude could hardly suppress a smile as she listened, which, however, she was careful to conceal from him, as a dangerous exhibition of levity under existing circum-

stances. At length she said, "What is the trouble now, Uncle Stephen?"

"Trouble enough," he burst out, almost angrily, "when the ones I've loved more than all others, and wanted to make happy, go to cutting up such Didos, and won't take a word of advice from one who's forgotten more than they'll ever know."

"But who has refused your advice?"

"Every body that I've offered it to. I don't go round imposing my advice upon every one; but, when I do condescend to offer it, I expect to have it taken;" and a determined push of Alice's great chair, which had been brought to the parlor, showed that he meant what he said.

Gertrude, seeing it was in vain to ask for an explanation, was turning to leave the room, when the excited man, unwilling to lose the only one upon whom he could vent his anger, said, "Did you know Clarence was going to leave Lindenwood in a few hours?"

"No," exclaimed Gertrude, with a sudden blanching of her face and lips, which was not unobserved by the other.

"Well, you know it now. He is on his knees at his trunks, packing as if his life depended on his speed."

"What is he going to leave for?" faltered the poor girl.

"For stuff and nonsense, I say. Because he can't endure his unhappiness any longer, he says. So there you have it, and you may make the most of it, you can. I won't be a fool, and keep his secret, if he is such a fool as to have one;" and Uncle Stephen sat down with

great vehemence, as if he were meditating a hearty fit of crying.

But Gertrude's resolution was taken in a moment "Uncle Stephen," said she, in a firm, full voice, in which every trace of irresolution had gone, "Clarence mustn't go. He must be stopped."

"How are you going to do it, though?" he asked, eagerly, gazing earnestly at the young girl. "I've tried all my power over him."

"Well," she replied, after thinking a moment, "if you will go up and ask Clarence to come to me, I think I can convince him that it would be contrary to his own interest and pleasure to leave; and that you will find it hard to induce him to do so, after what I shall tell him, I have no doubt," she added, with a sad smile.

Uncle Stephen sprang from his chair, looked her full in the face for one instant, then, without speaking, rapidly ascended the stairs; and before the poor girl could at all collect her thoughts, and arrange what she intended to say, Clarence stood before her.

"Uncle Stephen says you wish to see me at once upon important business," said he, respectfully taking her hand, struck with the expression of intense suffering upon her countenance.

She gently withdrew her hand, and pointed to the sofa, where he seated himself near her.

An hour later, Alice, pale and languid, but with a lighter heart than for many weeks, descended the stairs. She had in vain waited for her unwearied attendant to assist her in dressing, which she was as yet unable to do alone, and at last had called upon Emma. Wondering

what could have induced Gertrude to leave her bed at so early an hour, she walked slowly through the hall, and opened the parlor door. The sight within took away her power of motion. Clarence and Gertrude had started to go to breakfast, and were standing near the entrance. At the moment she saw them, he had raised the hand of his companion to his lips, and said, in an impassioned voice, "Dearest Gertrude, you have rendered me the happiest of mortals."

With a faint sickness at her heart, Alice turned slowly away, and tried to retrace her steps to her chamber, but was obliged to lean against the wall for support. Clarence started forward to save her from falling; but she waved him off, until Gertrude whispered something in her ear, and assisted her to the sofa. When she looked around, her sister had slipped from the room. In a low voice, Gertrude begged her mother, who was standing at the urn, to delay breakfast for a few moments, then ran to her room, where her overwrought feelings found relief in a burst of tears. "It is done," she said, aloud; "humiliating as it was, it is done; and he does not despise me. He said I had ensured his eternal respect as well as gratitude. Now I must keep my heart with double diligence."

When, in half an hour, she descended to breakfast, in answer to the long-delayed summons, the whole family were surprised to see Uncle Stephen approach Gertrude, and give her a warm kiss as a token of his unqualified approbation of her conduct; and their astonishment was not decreased to see that she put her arms about the old man's neck, and as cordially returned his embrace.

When Clarence, in answer to Gertrude's summons, went below, the impetuous man paced back and forth through his suite of rooms, waiting for him to return to his packing, until he concluded to wait no longer. He therefore descended to the parlor, where he learned from Clarence that Gertrude had explained everything to his satisfaction, and had taken from him all desire to leave Lindenwood.

Though contrary to the good order of the family, Mrs. Stanley made no objection to Clarence's proposal to take the small waiter containing Alice's breakfast from the servant, and carry it to her himself, as she still lay upon the sofa in the parlor.

"You would do well to add a slice of toast and a cup of coffee for yourself, Clarence," said Emma, laughing mischievously, "since you have put a spoonful of sugar in your egg cup, and salt in your coffee. I don't wonder it doesn't relish as well as usual."

The successful suitor was too happy to take offence, and all joined in a laugh at his expense, during which he retreated quickly from the room. No one seemed in better spirits than Uncle Stephen, who, in a whisper, begged Gertrude to forgive him for treating her so rudely when she met him in the parlor, then added that he had fallen in love with her himself.

No one could better appreciate the noble conduct of Gertrude than the good old man; and, when he had heard from his ward all that she had done, he took no pains to conceal the affection and respect her conduct had excited.

Mr. Stanley was not very much surprised, when, early

in the forenoon, Clarence knocked at his study door, and formally besought the hand of his daughter. He, however, gave his cordial consent, if he could win the love of the young girl.

“I shall do my best to follow up the advantage I have gained in her affections,” replied Clarence, bowing over Mr. Stanley’s hand, to conceal the flush of pleasure which lighted up his features; “and I hope you and her mother will not refuse my wishes for a speedy union.”

“I can assure you,” replied Mr. Stanley, “it will cost me something of a struggle to give up so soon the dear child so lately restored to me; but, as you have done far more toward forming her character than I have, I suppose I must in this instance yield my wishes to yours. But there will be time enough hereafter to settle all those matters.”

It is wonderful what a powerful restorative is a heart at rest. Alice gained daily, and Dr. Jenks was loud in his praises of her fortitude, when he performed the painful operation of moving her arm. He even declared that Clarence, who sat by her side, would do well to take a lesson from her, as his groans were far louder than hers.

Clarence frankly replied that, if the operation were upon his own arm, they might listen in vain for groaning; but, when it was one he loved dearer than himself who was the sufferer, he might well be excused.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed the merry doctor; “that’s the way the wind blows,” tapping the cheek of Alice, whose color rivalled in hue the richest rose. “Well, I can’t say but I’ve had my suspicions. Tears all gone

now? Hey, Alice? Well," he continued, "I've had my turn, and young folks must have theirs. Wife and I are spectators to a pretty serious love scene at home, and I half blame myself for it too."

"Do tell us about it!" interrupted Emma.

"Well," he added, "it is no secret, I suppose. Maurice has fallen in love with the young girl I carried home for wife to nurse. You saw her, Emma. She didn't need medicine; she only wanted nursing; and how could I be expected to know that Maurice would take such a liking to her? However, he's really in love this time, and no shamming either; and in this case he's acted well about it. I saw something had come over the boy; for, instead of being out lounging round in search of mischief, as he's been too apt to do of late years, he'd sit quietly in the house, and hold yarn for Amy to wind, or read aloud to her and his mother. I guess wife hadn't heard so much reading for many a day. Then he was always ready to do a chore for his mother, till she got alarmed about him, and told me privately, with tears in her eyes, that she was afraid he wouldn't live long, he'd grown to be so dutiful,—she'd read of such cases,—or else he'd become a Christian. The latter would indeed rejoice our hearts. All this while, he'd been so respectful in his manner of treating Amy, that I never thought he was taking that way to make love to her; and one day I talked with him, and asked him if he didn't feel well, and the poor fellow confessed the whole. He'd loved Amy ever since she came to the house; but he never thought of asking her to marry him; he said he knew he wasn't worthy the

love of a pure, virtuous girl. And the long and short of it is," continued he, wiping his eyes, "that I hadn't the heart to refuse my consent, for I thought 'twas a good sign, his choosing such a one; and so I told him there wa'nt a girl, high nor low, I'd rather he'd marry, only he'd got to earn a good character first, for it never should be said of me that I'd encourage my son to ruin the happiness of a girl I'd taken upon me to protect. There!" said he, "I forgot you were not as much interested in my story as I am."

But his hearers would not consent to be deprived of the end of the story. "I want to hear how it came out," exclaimed Emma, with an arch smile.

"I must say," continued he, "that so far she's had great influence over Maurice, and I hope much from it, though 'twas the farthest thing from my mind when I carried the poor friendless thing home. But she's a good Christian girl; and her being Scotch is no objection to me, while to wife it makes all the difference in the world, as she's descended from the Scotch, and she takes to the young stranger wonderfully on that account. I've suspected for a day or two that he's told her something of his feelings; there seems to be a good understanding between them; and, if he has, he's told her all. Maurice an't a boy, wild as he has been, to conceal his pranks from a girl he intends to make his wife. By the way, Alice, he is very much ashamed of the familiar manner in which he treated you the afternoon he met you in the street."

The confusion of the poor girl, as she thought of all the suffering he had caused her, was misunderstood by

her friend, and he rose with much emotion, as he said, "Tell me, child, did he offer you any insult? I understood him he was only foolishly complimenting you, and that he persisted in it even when he knew it was annoying. I thought I could depend upon his word," and the father's voice assumed a tone of deep sadness, as he feared his son had deceived him.

Alice eagerly assured him that Maurice had represented the meeting correctly, and that no one rejoiced in his good conduct more than she did. "He was so kind to my dear little brother," she added, "that I shall always feel an interest for him."

Clarence cast down his eyes as she frankly expressed the cause of her interest, and was glad Gertrude was not in the room to be humiliated by the avowal, now that she so sincerely repented her intention to misrepresent it.

The shade passed from the brow of the good father, and saying, "My patients will think something has carried me off, and they'll all send for Dr. Mason, if I don't hurry," he took a hasty leave.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Ah me !

The world is full of meetings such as this —
A thrill, a voiceless challenge and reply —
And sudden partings after ! ” — *Willis.*

It is quite time to introduce the reader to Amy Campbell, who had now become so interesting a member of Dr. Jenks's family. The good doctor was one day summoned, in great haste, to a patient, and was riding in full speed, when a woman came to the door of a small house, and beckoned him to stop. Learning there was nothing which required immediate attention, he promised to call upon his return. This he did, and found a young girl lying upon the bed. When he entered, she was asleep, and, though pale and emaciated, much impressed him with her appearance. Suddenly she started, and in impassioned tones poured forth a long string of “ lingo,” as the doctor called it, during which he stood by, fearing she'd get her tongue so tightly twisted 'twould never be unloosed.

The good woman who had taken compassion upon her, said she talked a great deal in her sleep, and always in her native tongue, which was Scotch. She soon awoke, was introduced to the doctor, and gave him her simple history. She was born and brought up in the north of Scotland. Her father died six months before,

when her uncle came forward and took possession of the estate, having never been pleased with his brother's marriage; so that she and her mother were left destitute, and concluded to seek their fortune in America. With the small avails resulting from the sale of such of their furniture as their Uncle left them, they intended to hire a few rooms, where they could be together, and support themselves by fine needle-work and embroidery, which, heretofore, they had only performed as an amusement. On the passage to America her mother died of ship-fever, and was buried in the sea but too days before they landed in New York. Amy herself was sick of the same disease, and, when the ship arrived in port, was obliged to be carried to a boarding-house, where she staid until the landlady informed her that her money was all spent, and she must leave. Indeed, the poor girl was glad to do so, for she had not received the kindest treatment. One of her fellow-boarders, however, taking compassion upon the friendless child, advised her to leave the city, and go out in the country in search of a place. She had even interested herself to make up a purse for Amy, and placed her in the cars for A——. But, wholly unacquainted with the country and its customs, she found herself late one evening wandering along the high road to Queenstown, the small bundle on her arm containing all her store of worldly treasure. Sick and faint she ventured to knock at the door of one or two houses, and timidly ask leave to stay all night, which request was decidedly refused, until, utterly discouraged, the desolate orphan seated herself upon the step of Widow Morse's door, and began to cry. The kind-hearted woman soon dis

covered her, brought her into the house, put her to bed, and took care of her. After waiting a few days, and finding that Amy did not recover as fast as she wished, she determined to call in her own physician. After a few visits the doctor became so much interested in her, that he proposed to his wife to take her home, thinking it would be a kindness to both her and the child, as Mrs. Jenks was always very lonely when Maurice was at sea. They supposed he would have gone before this time ; but the vessel in which he last sailed as second mate was under repairs, and he had been delayed week after week.

When Alice was able to ride, one of her earliest visits was to Amy Campbell. Nor when she had seen her was she at all surprised that Dr. Jenks, and his wife, as well as their son, had become so warmly attached to her. If one word were used to express the impression she conveyed to a stranger, it would be purity. Her calm, serene eyes, and pure, white brow, from which her hair was simply parted, and gathered into a braid around her classic head, all betokened a soul at peace. She could not be called handsome, though those who loved her best thought her so. Her skin was very fair, as is generally the case with hair which approaches to red ; her nose was, perhaps, a little too aspiring, but her mouth, though rather wide, was beautifully formed, and displayed a row of teeth of pearly whiteness, which many a dentist might envy for a model. When she spoke, there was just enough of the rich brogue to make her conversation irresistibly charming, while about her whole appearance there was a modesty and dignity which proved that she had been accustomed to good society. Indeed, the few

articles of clothing which she had saved from the wreck of her fortune, showed that she had not always been a dependant. Maurice regarded her with a feeling amounting to veneration, and was conscious of an increase of self-respect, that he had been able to win the love of such a being.

On first meeting Alice he was much embarrassed, as he thought of their last interview; but, by referring to his affection for Louis, and her own gratitude for his father's services during her late sickness, she soon put him entirely at his ease. After some general conversation, they arose to leave, Maurice having promised Emma to bring Amy to Lindenwood before he sailed. They took their departure, having been much pleased with their call.

In the meantime Uncle Stephen had received a letter from Mr. Huntington, in which he informed him, that having heard of Edith's "misfortune," he had written her, and renewed his proposals of marriage. She, however, though confessing for him a strong affection, firmly declined accepting them.

Mr. Stanley's family kept up a brisk correspondence with Edith; or rather they wrote frequently; she, occasionally. When informed by her mother of the betrothal of Alice and Clarence, she wrote a severe critique upon his proceedings. I will quote from her letter:

"In what you state concerning Clarence and Alice, I cannot say it is wholly unexpected. But as long as she was Alice Carey, he could not be expected to *marry* her, however much he might love her. I have thought of his conduct as compared with that of his friend, who, when he heard that, from being, as he supposed, the daughter

of Mr. Stanley, of Lindenwood, I was reduced to the situation of child to an insane dependant, lost no time in urging upon me that affection which I had heretofore so proudly refused. I do not hesitate to say, that such is my respect and admiration of him for the course he pursued, that I should have accepted his proposals, and endeavored to render myself worthy of a place in his noble heart, had it not been for my solemn determination to subject no man I love to the disgrace which has fallen upon me."

I cannot give a better idea of the perfect trust Alice reposed in her lover, and the mutual confidence existing between them, than to state that when she had read the letter of Edith, she put it into his hand, with a smile, saying, "Poor girl! how little she understands our affection for each other."

Whatever Clarence thought of the insinuations it contained, he took no pains to vindicate himself; but Uncle Stephen, whose agitation at Edith's confession of affection for Mr. Huntington, he had been entirely unable to account for, told Alice his ward had asked and obtained his consent long before her relation to the family was known.

"Before that," continued Uncle Stephen, waxing very wrothy, "I had concluded, if he didn't marry you, that I should do it myself."

This determination created such a roar of laughter that his good humor was entirely restored. Alice put her arms around his neck, saying, "Dear Uncle Stephen, I'm so glad you didn't ask me, for I shouldn't have dared to say no. The chairs would all have been kicked to

pieces, and I can't say what else would have happened to the furniture, and she gave an arch look at Clarence.

"Go along, Puss!" exclaimed the old man, trying to disengage her arms, "you're growing impudent."

But Alice wouldn't go; the idea was too amusing, and she laughed and laughed until he was absolutely obliged, he said, to take her in his lap to keep her quiet.

It was now the first of October, and Alice was to be married at Christmas, her father having given his consent, on the condition that she should remain at home for a few years. Indeed, it would have been quite a breaking up of the family to have Alice leave, for with her would go also Clarence and Uncle Stephen. Gertrude had been earnestly invited to accompany a sick friend to the south, for the winter, and she had at length consented to do so. Alice was very unwilling to part with her sister; but Gertrude whispered, "It is better that I should be away," and Alice urged her no more.

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley were intending to journey, and, as they wished to take Emma with them, they hurried their preparations, that they might return before it would be time for him to accompany Gertrude to New York, to meet her friend.

The few weeks the sisters passed together, were rendered delightful by the sincere affection now existing between them. Every evening Clarence read aloud, and both he and Alice avoided, when in her presence, any reference to the deep love which filled their hearts, lest they should pain the one to whom they were so much indebted.

When about a hundred miles from home, Emma left

her parents, to see a school-mate, who had long urged her friend to visit her. She was to travel across the country for about fifteen miles in a stage-coach, when her friend would meet her with a carriage, and take her home. Emma had never before journeyed in this way, and for a short time she was much amused by watching the company into which she was thrown. This consisted of an old lady, with a considerable amount of small baggage, which reminded Emma of the anecdote she had heard of Hannah Adams, with her "little box, great box, bandbox, and bundle." Certainly the old lady's baggage equalled that of the well-known lady in number, if not in dimensions. She had an umbrella, which was carefully cased in green silk, the bag made wide enough to hold also a parasol. Then she had a large carpet-bag, which required constant care to keep it upright; as the good lady took pains to inform her fellow-travellers it contained "three bottles of currant wine I'm carrying to my darter." In addition to these articles, she had twisted carefully on her arm the strings of two smaller bags, saying, with an expressive nod to Emma, as she jerked them, "So as not to lose them, you know." But her greatest care seemed to be a cap-box, which, having nothing to hold by, was continually slipping from her lap, until her young companion, taking pity upon her distress, kindly offered to relieve her of this part of her burden. The old lady was so much pleased with this attention, that she confidentially informed her that it contained, in addition "to the caps I generally wear on great occasions, a bran new one which I bought just before I left home, as my darter is exposed to a sight o' company."

Sitting opposite Emma were two girls near her own age, dressed in the height of fashion, who at first regarded the elderly lady with illy-concealed contempt; but at length, wearied with the monotony of the ride, they turned toward her, after a few moments of whispering during which Emma plainly distinguished the word "fun."

Occupying the same seat with our young traveller, but separated from her by a boy apparently of a dozen summers, was a gentleman, of whom, as she sat by his side, she had as yet seen nothing, except the color of his pantaloons, which, from a casual glance, she perceived were of the finest broadcloth. The back seat was occupied by a child, and two coarse looking men.

The girls soon made their purpose apparent to all but the object of their especial attention. Totally unsuspecting of their cruel design, and supposing from their dress that they were *ladies*, the aged woman greatly facilitated their wishes, and threw herself completely into their power. They soon drew from her her name, which was Fowler; where she lived, that she had been a widow eight years, that she was left with two children, Ralph and Julia, and enough property to carry her in comfort to the end of her life. Under the pretence of great interest in her welfare, they continued to ask her many insulting questions, until Emma, whose countenance had expressed her strong indignation, could bear it no longer, and was just about to speak, when the bag containing the wine fell to the floor. The old lady caught it up in terror, fearing the bottles were broken. One of the young girls, trying to conceal her mirth, proposed that she

should treat the company, saying, "I am very fond of currant wine, and I dare say your darter would never miss it."

"Yes," called out one of the men from the back seat, "I second that motion."

The good woman glanced from one to another, as if bewildered, to find herself made an object of ridicule, while Emma, with an indignant glance at the offenders, said in a kind, but firm voice, "Madam, would it not be well for you to change places with me. I think I can ensure you my seat free from insult." Emma afterwards remembered that the gentleman in the corner rose up as if about to speak, but, upon hearing her, instantly resumed his seat.

It was really pitiable to witness the disappointment of the honest old lady, when she found the girls had been questioning her for their own amusement.

When Emma had accomplished her purpose, and they were seated so that they could converse conveniently, Mrs. Fowler said to her companion, "It's really affecting to see two girls as nicely dressed as they are, know nothing more of good manners. For my part I'm astonished that their folks didn't teach them better, or else keep them shut up at home, where they could do no harm." As she thought of her free communications to them, especially the account of her husband's sickness and death, about which they had pretended such sympathy, the kind lady could not help weeping.

Her companion at first tried to divert her attention to the beautiful view from the coach window, but, finding she had really taken the matter to heart, she said, "Dear

madam, believe me, their conduct cannot injure you. It is really beneath your notice." Then, having prevailed upon her to allow the bag containing the wine to be placed between herself and the boy, where it could stand firmly, she gradually drew her into a conversation upon general topics, which, after a time, proved of interest to all present. If the intention of the rude girls to exhibit her for the sake of ridiculing her peculiarities had been apparent, the desire of Emma to represent her in the most favorable light, was not less so. By bringing forward themes which were familiar, Emma soon discovered a fund of good sense in her aged companion, softened by many years of experience, which were a real treat to her. She found, too, that Mrs. Fowler was a humble, trusting child of God, and this was a new tie between them.

When they drew near the place where the young lady was to meet her friend, it was with real regret that she thought of the parting, and she frankly expressed her feeling, which was warmly reciprocated by her companion, who, with old-fashioned hospitality, urged her to come to P—— and make her a long visit.

When Emma reached her destination, in turning to look for her bag which she had placed at her feet, she caught a glimpse of the gentleman who had occupied the corner seat, but whose presence even she had forgotten, so absorbed had she been by her interest in her fellow traveller. In that one glance she perceived that he had a fine, intellectual cast of countenance, with a piercing black eye, above which rose a perfectly magnificent

forehead. He had changed his seat, that he might the more readily listen to their animated conversation.

The moment the coach stopped, he sprang from it, and politely assisted her to descend the steps, saying, as she waited for her trunk, "It would greatly add to the obligation I am under, if you would give me a name by which my mother and myself can recur to a ride so fruitful of interest to both of us."

Though much embarrassed by the respectful admiration expressed by the gentleman, Emma could not refuse so reasonable a request, and, hastily passing him her card, and bowing a final adieu to the old lady, who was leaning from the coach window, she hastened to meet her friend, who had been eagerly calling her from a carriage standing near.

The sight of a beautiful phaeton, with a noble span of prancing horses, rather induced the supposition in her younger companions that they had been mistaken in the station they had, in fancy, allotted her in the social scale. From her simple, though elegant travelling dress, so different from their rich, changeable silks, and her modest, unassuming deportment, they had set her down as a teacher, or certainly one in moderate circumstances, especially as she had taken such pains to interest herself in the welfare of a garrulous old lady. They were quite as much surprised as she had been, at the discovery of the relation existing between her and the distinguished looking gentleman who was seated in the opposite corner, and their cheeks burned with shame as they remembered what fun they had made of her little Ralph, — asking whether he went barefoot — they had heard that was con-

sidered more healthy. They would willingly have given up one night at the theatre, could they but glance at the name upon the small card, which the gentleman had placed so carefully in his pocket-book, when the phaeton containing the giver was no longer in sight. But they were obliged to cover their confusion as well as they could by a show of indifference, until the coach again stopped at an elegant mansion, and a really beautiful lady came smilingly to the door, with a lovely child in her arms, to welcome her mother and brother.

It was evidently with some difficulty that the old lady refrained from some parting remark to the girls who had so rudely insulted her; but contenting herself with a look of triumph as she saw them glance with astonishment at her destination, she carefully gathered up her various articles of baggage, and left them to their reflections, Mr. Fowler bowing with great dignity as the coach drove away.

CHAPTER XXVII.

“On you, most loved, with anxious fear I wait,
And from your judgment must expect my fate.”

Addison.

AFTER a delightful week with her friend, Emma took the returning coach for home, and it must be confessed, as she passed slowly over the dusty road, her thoughts often recurred to the travelling companions, from whom she had so recently parted, with interest. The intellectual countenance of Mr. Ralph Fowler (she well remembered the name), was firmly daguerretyped upon her memory, while recollections of the quaint expressions of the warm-hearted old lady, often brought a smile to her lips. But she had never been able to account satisfactorily to herself for the fact that he had not come forward to the relief of his mother, as he would naturally be expected to do.

But all her queries, and all her remembrances, were for the time forgotten, when she reached home, and found Gertrude on the point of starting for New York with her father, who had arrived with her mother a few days earlier. Then came preparations for the wedding of Alice, which occupied all her time, and all her thoughts; for, though the young bride was very simple in her tastes, yet Uncle Stephen determined that the bridal trosseau should be worthy of her; and he had put into Mrs. Stanley's hands a generous sum for the purpose. With the con-

sent and approbation of her mother, he also determined to refurnish for his child, as he now called Alice, two of the suite of rooms he and Clarence had occupied. These consisted of a spacious apartment, over the large parlor, which they had used as a private sitting-room. Out of this were two bed-rooms which opened into a side-hall, or into the front hall through the large room. He also wished to throw out a bow-window corresponding to the one in the room below, which had always been such a favorite resort with Alice, and which would not only add to the beauty of the house, but would give a fine view of the town from the window.

There was a vast deal of mystery in all this to Alice, who had been required to promise that she would not venture within the limits of Uncle Stephen's premises. When asked her preference with regard to furniture, she laughingly replied that, as he was to live with them, she had but one wish to express concerning it, which was that it might be strong. But seeing that he looked grave and mortified, she instantly begged him to forgive her, saying: "I do believe so much kindness, and so much happiness are not good for me. I am really growing to be wanting, in respect, to my dearest Uncle."

"My child," replied the old gentleman, softly, "You shall never have occasion to complain of me in that way again;" and he kept his word.

In the midst of the bustle of preparation, Alice found time every few days for a ride on Felix to the village, though it required much pleading on her part before either Clarence or her parents would consent that she should resume her favorite exercise, which had proved so

nearly fatal. But she longed to visit her protégés, who had considerably increased in number, and at length she gained their reluctant consent. Mrs. Hayden's cough caused her much anxiety, and when she consulted the Doctor about her, he only shook his head. Minnie was growing every day more interesting, and the accounts from Dexter's teacher as to his progress were very flattering. Now, however, the Preceptor who had kept the Academy for many years, and who had taken such a pleasure in aiding his young pupil, was making arrangements to pass the winter in Charleston, S. C., on account of a bronchial difficulty; and Alice feared his successor would not feel a corresponding interest in him. She had procured a number of elementary books for Minnie, and at every successive visit the child was anxious to exhibit her progress. Dexter also took unwearied pains with her pronunciation, which was uncommonly distinct for so young a child.

As Maurice had now sailed for the East Indies, Alice must also call occasionally to cheer Amy in his absence; and this, in addition to three families in which she distributed the bounty of Uncle Stephen, fully occupied her time. One evening, however, near the middle of November, she consented to accompany the family from Lindenwood to an opening lecture before the Lyceum, which course had commenced under the most flattering auspices. Her father, mother, Emma and Clarence were of the party, and though they arrived early, the spacious new hall was filled to overflowing. It was with some difficulty that they obtained seats more than two-thirds back from the rostrum. When the lecturer arose, Emma,

who was seated next her sister, gave a sudden start, while a bright flush of pleasure spread all over her countenance. She recognized Mr. Ralph Fowler, her travelling companion, and when he, with a quick glance around the large audience, let his keen eye rest for one brief moment upon her, Alice was entirely at a loss to conceive the cause of her sister's sudden confusion. On her return home, Emma had, indeed, recounted her adventure with the old lady, but a secret interest, unacknowledged even to herself, had prevented any reference to the son.

But soon the speaker was lost in his subject, and proved himself to be gifted with no common mind or ordinary acquirements. At the close of the lecture, and when all were loud in their praises of the performance, Mr. Fowler was eagerly sought by the principal gentlemen of the town, that they might express to him their high gratification in his manner of treating his subject. He listened politely, but all the time had his eye upon a group who had been detained in their passage out.

Emma turned for one parting glance; their eyes met, and he instantly excused himself from the gentlemen near him, as he wished to speak with an acquaintance who was leaving the hall.

The young girl received him cordially, though with considerable confusion; introduced him to her family, and then inquired for his mother.

"Ah!" said he, "I had like to have forgotten a message she sent you," and leaning forward he spoke a few words in a low tone. The teacher of the Academy then approached and informed Mr. Stanley, with whom he

was well acquainted, that he hoped to be so happy as to secure Mr. Fowler's services in the school during his absence.

After a polite invitation to the lecturer to call upon them, Mr. Stanley and his family took their departure, eager to ascertain from Emma the commencement of her acquaintance with the distinguished stranger.

So cordially did Mr. Fowler answer his invitation to Lindenwood that the next day, and the next, and every day, for a week, he might be found sitting in the large parlor, entirely unmindful of the vigorous hammering that was going on over his head. Emma often complained, with a heightened color, that it was very inconvenient to have so constant a visitor, when there was so much to be done; but if he were a few moments later than usual, her frequent journeys to the bow window, from whence she could see some distance up the street, or the sudden beating of her heart when she heard his well-known step in the hall, convinced her friends that she was willing to be subjected to the inconvenience, for the sake of the pleasure she received in his society.

Nor was she alone in this feeling, for he had rendered himself a favorite with every member of the family. His large fund of information, as well as his extensive knowledge of human nature, convinced Mr. Stanley that he would not always be teacher in a private academy; but, when he hinted his surprise that Mr. Fowler should content himself with such a situation, the abrupt termination of the subject showed plainly that it was one upon which he did not wish to speak.

If his sole business in Queenstown had been to pros-

ecute his acquaintance at Lindenwood, he could not have been more constant in his visits. When, at the close of the first week, the time for his labors in the academy arrived, he suddenly discovered that premature engagements would not allow him to assume that responsibility, and gave place to another, whom he recommended as well qualified for the office. And when, a few days later, he sought an interview with Mr. Stanley, and asked permission to address his daughter Emma, the proposition was not wholly unexpected; but he replied that their acquaintance had been short, and, as yet, they knew little of each other.

Mr. Fowler professed himself to be perfectly satisfied, but said that, of course, he could not expect Mr. Stanley to be so, and gave him references to a dozen literary gentlemen, to whom he could refer. On receiving the most satisfactory information from two of these gentlemen, the father no longer hesitated to give his consent to the ardent lover; and when, at the wedding of Alice, Emma stood up with Mr. Fowler, it was as his betrothed.

The event of the marriage of Mr. Clarence Sydney with the daughter of Squire Stanley was one of no little interest in the village of Queenstown; and when, in compliance with the cards of invitation, a large company assembled at Lindenwood, the brilliant illumination, the beauty of the bride, the pride of the groom as he entered with his fair lady leaning upon his arm, the profusion of orange-flowers, the richness of the cake, the fondness of her father and mother, the pleased emotion of Uncle Stephen, were the universal themes of conversation.

Mrs. Sydney had only the day before her marriage been introduced to her bridal apartments, and she found it difficult to realize the change wrought in so short a time. It was truly a fairy scene as Alice first viewed it, with its decorations so brilliantly brought to view by the lights from the large chandelier, with its diamond-shaped pendants.

Within the arch formed by the bow-window, from which hung rich damask curtains, giving a roseate hue to all around, stood a small, carved chair before a table of exquisite workmanship. This table contained the most elaborate materials for sewing, writing, and drawing; and in a partly open drawer was a letter written to herself, addressed "To my little almoner."

Alice well knew by whom that letter was written.

On many accounts, Mr. Stanley was disappointed that Edith had not accepted the earnest invitation to be present at the wedding of Alice. He had hoped much from her visit at such a time to break down her pride and unwillingness to accept a home from those who were so eager to offer her one. There was another reason why he had anxiously expected her. This was the fact that her mother, who had left her home, for the first time for many years, soon after Alice had been made acquainted with her deception, had lately returned in an enfeebled state of health; and he was extremely anxious that a reconciliation should take place between them. But Edith only wrote in reply that the school was still in session, and her time was not now her own.

A few weeks after the wedding, Alice Sydney had joined her mother and sister in the parlor, when the

servant who had been sent to the office for letters returned with a goodly budget of news. Emma blushing held out her hand for her share, when her father, who that moment entered, passed her a thick envelope containing, as Alice playfully remarked, a brotherly note to each of the family, and also a copy of the *Last New York Journal of Commerce*, directed by the same hand. This she hastily tore open, and, seeing nothing of special interest to her, gave it to her father to read, while she retired to her own room for the uninterrupted enjoyment of her precious epistle. She had not more than half perused its closely written pages before Alice ran to call her, exclaiming, "Emma, father wants you to come down."

Thrusting her letter into her pocket, Emma obeyed, and found the whole family very merry over a small paragraph in the *Journal*, which, though marked with a pencil, she had overlooked. It was as follows: "We understand that the next lecture before the Historical Society will be delivered on Thursday evening, by Prof. Ralph Fowler, who has, within a year, been appointed to the Professorship of Languages in — College, and is one of the most popular lecturers of the day. A rich literary feast may be expected."

"Really," said Mr. Stanley, smiling, as he witnessed the bright glow which overspread Emma's face, "my daughters are getting up in the world. Here, without knowing it, we have been entertaining the distinguished Prof. Fowler, who is one of the best linguists in the country. I had it at my tongue's end, two or three times, to ask if he were a relative. Prof. B. and Dr. S

must have thought me either an ignoramus, or very much behind the times, to inquire the character of such a man ;” and a slight shade of annoyance mingled with his laugh, as he went to his study to bring forth the letters from those gentlemen for a second reading.

In the mean time, it would be difficult to describe the fond pride which this announcement caused in the heart of the gentle, loving girl, as, at the same time, she remembered “ He is mine ; yes, he is all my own. Notwithstanding his elevated position, he sought me in preference to all others ;” and she hastened to her room with quickened pulse, to finish reading her letter. Near the close, or rather crossing the writing near the top, and filling up every inch of the blank space, were a few lines explanatory of the information contained in the Journal. It ran thus : “ And now, dearest, will you forgive me for my little deception, or rather that I did not tell you the whole truth. Had your father asked me how I expected to support my wife, I should have told him ; or, if you had seemed curious to know where you were to live, or with whom associate, most certainly I should have informed you. But your entire trust in me was so charming, and your respected father’s confidence so flattering, that, while I knew I was not deceiving him or you, I was pleased with the thought that time would discover to you my situation and prospects, though it never can, my true-hearted Emma, the depth and fervency of my affection.

“ But I would say that, in my opinion, unlimited confidence is the only safeguard between husband and wife. Let this, then, be our last and only secret ; henceforth

my heart, with all its thoughts and wishes, its joys and sorrows, shall be laid open to you; and I trust by the constancy of my love to prove myself not unworthy the same confidence on your part. I suppose, long ere this, you have 'guessed,' and rightly too, that my only inducement in going to lecture in Queenstown was to prosecute my acquaintance with you; my only business there, after farther knowledge of your character, to obtain the promise of your hand. And now, my own dear Emma, inclosed you will find a note to your father, begging him to place no impediment in the way of our immediate union. Do not hesitate to grant my request. There is no reasonable ground of delay. There is a fine house connected with my professorship, all ready and waiting for its mistress. My mother (only second to one I could name in her admiration of you) and sister are longing to bid you welcome by the dear names of daughter and sister. Let me, then, rejoice their hearts by telling them that in the course of a month (I take great credit to myself for allowing so much time to be necessary for bridal preparations) they must be ready to accompany me to Lindenwood."

Oh, those were blissful tears which dropped so thickly upon the closely written page, and they welled up from a heart full of gratitude to her heavenly Father for giving her so dear a friend, and appointing her lot in so pleasant a place!

After sitting in a dreamy attitude for nearly an hour, vainly trying to fix her thoughts upon any one subject in the letter, and as often finding them settling back to the one blessed conviction of *his* love, she took the note

in her hand directed to her father. It was unsealed, but she had not a thought of perusing it. What would her father say to be so suddenly called to give her up? "A month!" she thought; "oh, I can't, I *can't!*" and, in the tumult of feeling caused by this thought, she lost all courage to present the note to her father, and stole gently down the stairs to find an opportunity to leave it on his study-table. She was fortunate in finding his door open; and, placing the letter in a conspicuous position, she hastily withdrew.

When, that night, her father was engaged in family prayer, Emma well knew that he had read the earnest request of her lover, and that he dreaded the coming separation. His emotion choked him as he referred to the breaking up of the home ties which bound them together, and he prayed that, though parents and children might be separated for a time in this world, they might so live as to be united eternally in the world of spirits.

Already much softened by the thought, Emma sobbed aloud; and when, after prayer, her father requested her to accompany him to his study, she was for a few moments wholly overcome by his unusual tenderness. He waited for her to become more composed, when he gently took her hand, as he said, "I suppose you know the subject of this letter."

She bowed her assent.

"What shall I tell him?"

After a vain attempt to speak, Emma shook her head.

"May I decide for you?"

"I will gladly leave it to you."

“ Well, then, I shall tell him I cannot give up my child so suddenly. I must have time to accustom myself to the thought. Not that that will render it any the less painful; but, on many accounts, it would be better to have more time. I have always disapproved of hasty marriages. It is now the middle of winter— Gertrude will be home in April. Shall I say the first day of May?”

Emma cast down her eyes as she whispered, “ If you think best.”

“ I suppose,” continued Mr. Stanley, pleasantly, “ I shall be considered very hard-hearted to refuse so earnest an appeal; but I shall invite him to pass his long vacation with us, and we will try to help him bear the disappointment as well as we can.”

“ Thank you, dear father,” replied Emma, as he tenderly kissed her, and allowed her to withdraw, when she retired to her mother’s room, and, with many blushes, told her what had passed.

As Alice returned one afternoon from a sleigh-ride with her husband, she found Uncle Stephen in his room, and in tears. Without waiting to take off her bonnet, she went instantly to him, and sat on a low stool at his feet.

“ Wont you let me share your grief?” she asked, looking up lovingly in his face.

“ They are not tears of sorrow, my child,” he answered, putting a letter into her hand.

It was from Alfred Huntington, and informed his kind benefactor that, after many struggles and conflicts with himself, he had determined to go out to India, directly after his graduation from the theological school, which

would be in less than a year, and devote his life to the service of his Saviour, in laboring for the conversion of the heathen. "My object in writing you at this time, is to ask your advice whether I shall offer myself to the Board of Missions, or join my father in the mission supported by you. Of course it would be my desire to do the latter; but I know nothing of the expense necessary, and am unwilling to tax your generosity farther. There is one subject, too, which troubles me, if I take the first course, and apply to the Board. That is with reference to my going alone, which, I have been informed, they object to, or that they much prefer their missionaries shall be married men. There is only one woman I have ever loved, and as I cannot marry her, I must go alone. This is another reason why it would be desirable that I should go into my father's family."

Alice read the letter with great interest, and put it back into his hand without speaking.

"It's what I've been praying for ever since he was a boy," sobbed Uncle Stephen, wholly overcome, "and to see how God answers all my poor prayers, makes me feel more insignificant than ever. About poor Edith," he continued, when he was more composed, "I'm afraid the boy will have to give her up, though sometimes I think God has mercies in store for her, and has ordered all this to humble her proud heart."

Dear Uncle Stephen! How often he repeated, for the next few days, that he had nothing more to ask for, and the influence of that communication seemed to open his heart to the wants of the needy more than ever. Though by his connection with the family a very handsome sum

was added to its yearly income, certainly quite as much as his nephew would accept; yet his own expenses were not a tithe to the interest from his large fortune. He often said to Alice, who was his only confidant, "Draw freely, child; the more is taken out, the fuller the bank is." And so, indeed, it seemed to be. No one could do him a greater favor than to place in his way a deserving object of charity. He had been in the habit for years, beside the entire support of his own mission among the Hindoos, of sending large sums to the benevolent societies of the day; but his own chosen way was to seek out destitute objects, and administer to their relief. If they were worthy, that was sufficient; if unworthy, he would plead "So much the more reason they should be helped to do well." No suffering child of Adam was ever refused sympathy by him. But if he found that he had been imposed upon, or that any person whom he had befriended made his money subservient to their own vices, he was terribly wrathful, and could not be appeased until a more worthy object was placed in his way.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Who born so poor,
Of intellect so mean, as not to know
What seemed the best ; and knowing, not to do ?
As not to know what God and conscience bade,
And what they bade not able to obey ? ” — *Pollock.*

DURING the week following the events related in the last chapter, the family at Lindenwood were startled at midnight by a loud knocking at the outer door. Mr. Stanley soon answered the summons, and found a countryman standing upon the steps, with a cart-whip in his hand, the butt end of which had so quickly aroused the sleeping household.

“ Is Mr. Stanley at home ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, I am he.”

“ Well, there’s a young gal at our house that’s as crazy as a loon. We couldn’t find out all day yesterday who she was, nor where she came from ; but my woman, by dint o’ coaxing and threatening, persuaded her to go to bed ; and then she looked in her pockets and found all her things were marked ‘ Edith Stanley.’ In her pocket-book, which I have brought along,” passing it to Mr. Stanley, “ I found her direction, and the doctor I called to her last night, thinking she’d run away in a crazy fit sent me for you.”

Mrs. Stanley and Emma had arisen from bed, hastily

thrown on their wrappers, and were standing at the head of the stairs. Mr. Stanley was just going to speak, when his wife interrupted him, "Let us go at once."

"Yes," he replied, promptly; "but I must inquire where it is."

"How soon can you be ready?" asked the man.

"In half an hour."

"Well, then, I'll wait and go with you. You mightn't find the place in the dark."

Without waiting for further questions, Mr. Stanley, after inviting the countryman into the house, proceeded at once to call the coachman, while his wife, and Emma, who begged to accompany her mother, hastily prepared for their midnight excursion. In little more than half an hour they were on their way, the man who had come for them riding by the side of the carriage, Mrs. Stanley having left with Alice the charge of preparing Nurse Carey for the intelligence, as they intended, if possible, to bring Edith back with them on the following day. The distance to Planesville was but ten miles; but they were obliged to travel so slowly in the dark, and the latter part of the way, for nearly two miles, over a new and by-road, that it was four o'clock before they heard the guide who was just in advance of them, say, "This is the house. You go right in and I'll put up your horses. Wife'll be expectin' of you."

Longing, yet dreading to know the situation of the poor girl, Mr. Stanley hastily assisted his wife and daughter from the carriage; but just as Emma reached the ground a dreadful shriek of distress from the small house before them, caused their hearts to sink with sudden ter-

ror. Mrs. Stanley darted forward. There was a bright light in the lower room, and they could see at a glance what was going on within. The figure of some person lay extended upon the bed, and a man was standing before her, his form concealing her face, trying to hold down her arms. A young woman, holding an infant, her countenance expressive of the utmost alarm, stood back from them. Upon the approach of Mrs. Stanley, who entered first and announced herself, the poor woman burst into tears.

The physician soon recounted the state in which he had found his patient, and the measures he had adopted. He said she was suffering from a sudden and violent fit of insanity, produced, perhaps, in part by the high fever under which she was laboring. He then asked if there was anything which could have tended to such a state.

Mr. Stanley drew him into the neat kitchen, and gave him a brief account of her history, and also communicated the fact of her mother having been partially insane for many years, owing to her remorse of conscience, but that, since the confession of her guilt, she had appeared perfectly rational.

Doctor Putnam listened with interest, and then said, "It may be the agitation of mind which has occasioned this; but I feared congestion of the brain."

The question of her being carried to Lindenwood was then discussed, the doctor inferring from her violence that it would not be safe, but that she ought to be carried to an asylum for the insane. To this proposition, however, Mr. Stanley would not for one moment hearken, at least not until they had tried other means for her

restoration; and, as there were no accommodations where they were, it was determined to return home with her as soon as it was light.

In the meantime, Mrs. Stanley, having laid aside her bonnet, had calmly approached the sufferer, and, taking a cloth wet with cool water, bathed her burning brow. The poor girl was still unconscious, or rather wandering; but the soft voice and gentle hand of her mother seemed to soothe her, for she became more quiet, and soon fell asleep, for the first time through the night. Beckoning the woman into the small entry, Emma asked, in a whisper, how she came there, and received the following account.

“Yesterday morning,” said the woman, “though it seems like a week, I had just dressed my baby, and was getting her to sleep, so that I could do up my morning chores, when I heard a low knock at the door. I called out, softly, ‘Come in,’ for baby was just dropping off, and she,” pointing toward the room, “came right in. She seemed to have an idea that somebody was after her; and, when Joshua, that’s my husband, who went after you, happened to go by the window, she gave a dreadful scream, and hid behind the door. I was scared enough; but I didn’t dare to let her know it, for fear she’d hurt the baby, and so I told her she was safe, and asked who she was afraid of. She grew calmer after a while, and asked me for something to eat. I got her a bowl of milk and some bread; but she never tasted the bread. The bowl she raised to her mouth, and, when she put it down, she’d drained every drop. Twas the fever burning then, the doctor says. After

that, she begun to tell that she was trying to find somebody I couldn't rightly make out who he was, or where he lived, but his first name was Alfred; and she's kept screaming 'Alfred!' 'most all night. Whoever he is, the poor thing loves him; and she's asked him a hundred times to forgive her, and said, 'I love you now, and always loved you, and that's the reason I wont ruin you.'

"After a while, she let it out that she had walked all night, and asked if she might lie down on my bed. I put on clean sheets, with my baby sleeping on my arm, for I was afraid to lay it down a minute, the poor creature's eyes glared so wild. As soon as she fell asleep, I went out to the barn, and called in Joshua, and told him I was afraid to stay with her. If he is my man, I must say he's the most willingest fellow to do anything I ever saw. He come right in, and, excepting a little while when he went out to feed the cattle and milk, he didn't leave the house until he started for you, and then the doctor was here. When she woke up, it was nearly noon, and then she was raving like a mad creature; and Joshua had as much as he could do to hold her hands, and keep her from injuring herself. I was just getting ready to go after the doctor, and carry my baby with me, though its more'n a mile, when one of our neighbors rode along in his cart. He was going right by the doctor's, and he said he'd stop there. I wouldn't have staid alone with her for nothing. The doctor had gone off three mile from home, and never got here till dusk, and all that time she'd talked just as fast as she could talk. She'd call out, 'Father! mother!' and then burst

out a crying, saying she hadn't got any father or mother, or any body else to love her. It made my blood run cold to hear her then, for she'd kind of curse herself and her mother, when she'd just said she hadn't got one, and she almost cursed her Maker. But in a few minutes that would all be over, and she'd be keeping a school. When Dr. Putnam come, he said we must get her into bed. She'd got on her clothes just as she come in, only her bonnet; and so Joshua took the baby into the kitchen, while the doctor helped me put my best night-gown on her, not a very nice one, but 'twas clean; and a hard task we had of it to get her to bed. When I took her clothes to hang them up, I happened to think perhaps she'd got something in her pocket that would tell who she was; and so she had. Dr. Putnam said he'd stay here while Joshua went for you."

"And have you held your babe all night?" asked Emma, looking at the pale countenance of the kind woman.

"Oh, yes, miss! There wa'n't any place handy for me to lie down, and then I couldn't be spared."

All this time Emma and her companion had sat together on the low steps leading to the attic; but at a slight noise in the room, they both started up and entered. Edith muttered incoherently, and the Doctor shook his head as he placed his fingers gently on her pulse. "If she is to be carried away from here, it must be done at once," he said.

But for an hour she was so violent that they found it would be impossible to carry her in the small carriage in which they had come. Mr. Stanley therefore concluded

to go without delay to Lindenwood with Emma, and return with the large carriage, and a driver, so that he could be entirely at liberty to attend to her. When he mentioned his plan to the Doctor, he suggested an improvement, which was, that Joshua Goodwin should drive his daughter to Queenstown, while he remained with his wife, as he should be obliged to leave and visit his other patients.

This was decided upon, and by noon Joshua came back with the double carriage into which Emma had put a bed and pillows. The Doctor, who had returned, gave her a powerful anodyne, and then assisted Mr. Stanley to place her in the carriage.

Having most liberally rewarded their good host and hostess for the disinterested kindness they had shown to the poor lunatic, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, with their unconscious charge, drove slowly away from the door; but finding she soon fell asleep, Mr. Stanley called to the coachman and told him, when they were off the by-road, to drive with full speed, and in this way they reached home in the middle of the afternoon.

Doctor Jenks, whom Alice had summoned, was at hand, to assist in carrying Edith to her room, from which it seemed to him very doubtful whether she would live to come out. For three days she lay in a stupor, never but once having any return of her violence, and that was the night after her arrival. Mrs. Stanley, Emma, and Alice were unwearied in their attentions to the unconscious sufferer, who, pallid and ghastly, looked very different from the blooming, brilliant Edith of former days. As she lay there, so nearly resembling death, her kind

friends offered incessant prayer that she might be restored to her reason, if it was God's will she should never recover. On the fourth day she seemed to arouse from her long sleep, and was able to take a few teaspoonfuls of gruel. Her attendants could not be quite sure whether she knew them. When she awoke from sleep, she talked very fast and incoherently for a few moments, but gradually grew more quiet, and lay, for an hour at a time, with her eyes closed, only opening them when she was addressed by name.

One day she was much more delirious than usual. She had had no rest through the night, and the soothing powders failed to produce their usual effect. She kept calling upon Alfred in the most piteous manner, exclaiming: "If you do leave me, I shall be all alone. No one but you left; Oh, Alfred!"

"Alfred will never, *never* leave you," said a hoarse voice close by her side, and to the astonishment of all present, Alfred Huntington stood before them. He had come unexpectedly to the Hall to pass a few days, but had not heard of Edith's sickness, until he entered the house.

Mrs. Stanley feared the effect of the excitement if she should recognize her lover, for such his manner still proved him to be. But though for an instant the young girl seemed to hold her breath, as if listening eagerly, she soon resumed her rapid talk.

Alfred advanced to the bed, and, in a low whisper, repeated the assurance of his love, and that he would never leave her. He held her hand in his, while he eagerly gazed at her, to see if she recognized him; but

though he was rewarded by no answering glance, yet his very presence seemed to soothe her. Gently as a mother deals with a fretful babe, did the young man smooth her ruffled brow, all the while whispering words of endearment, until she fell into a quiet sleep.

When good Dr. Jenks noiselessly entered the room, he found his patient had passed into other hands. Alfred still sat with one hand upon her forehead, the other tightly grasped in hers, while the tears were flowing unheeded down his manly cheeks. Alice pointed to the bed, at the same time motioning him to be quiet. After this, nothing could exceed the tenderness of the new nurse. From his hand, Edith never refused to take medicine, however nauseous it might be; his loving voice seemed to dispel her gloom, his hand to allay her distress, and though she never addressed him or appeared really conscious of his presence; yet if he were absent from the room, she was restless and uneasy. The idea that he was necessary to her comfort caused a thrill of rapture in the heart of the young man, and his prayers became more earnest in her behalf.

Dr. Jenks began to be seriously alarmed that she did not rally, and told Mrs. Stanley unless there was soon a change for the better, she must die. Indeed, he feared she were already sinking. This announcement caused her friends deep sorrow; all but Alfred felt that she would soon leave them; but as their hopes sank, his revived. He now became the comforter. With an eye undimmed by a tear, with a countenance pale but calm, he told them God had a great work for Edith to do, that this was his chosen way to fit her for it, that he was a

God who loved to be inquired of by his children, and he begged them not to cease their supplications in her behalf.

Edith had now lain for hours unconscious of all around her. Save the constant wetting of her lips with brandy and water, no nourishment had been taken. The family gathered around her bed, and knelt for prayer; but in vain did Mr. Stanley try to raise his voice. The idea of Edith passing, as he thought, from time to eternity, wholly overcame him.

After a moment's delay, the voice of Alfred was heard. He seemed already assured of a blessing. He entered at once into the holy of holies, and carried his hearers with him into the immediate presence of God. His soul was filled with assurance of God's readiness to save her for whom Christ had shed his precious blood, and in her behalf he consecrated her future life to the service of her Saviour.

The tardy moments roll away, as all stand gazing upon one who lies as if already in the embrace of death. Weeping and sobbing are heard on every side; but Alfred is closely watching the feeble breath; a short gasp does not escape his attention. He again wets her lips, then places his fingers upon her wrist. He notices a slight change. With a motion to the group to suppress their sobs, he leans forward to listen to her breathing. He looks anxiously up, as he hears a carriage, hoping it is the Doctor.

He is not disappointed; the kind physician softly enters. "Is she gone?" he whispers.

As Mrs. Stanley shakes her head, he passes silently to

the side of her bed; he places his hand on her brow starts back and gazes around, wipes his glasses, and replaces them. His countenance changes as he marks her pulse; a smile, yes, a smile lights up his features. Alfred understands it, and unable longer to contain the feelings of hope and joy which fill his soul, abruptly retires. He seeks his chamber to pour out his heart in praise to God, tears of gratitude stream down his cheeks, and he renews his self-consecration to his Saviour. He returns to the sick-room, where he finds Dr. Jenks has forced through the closed teeth a most powerful astringent. His manner has already conveyed hope. All are silent. He has motioned them to be seated back from the bed, and sits down himself to await the result.

Alfred approaches, softly places a chair by her side, and tries to quell the tumult of joy which is swelling his heart almost to bursting. He gently lifts the pale, emaciated hand from the counterpane, and presses it to his lips. Oh, how gladly would he impart some of his own warm life-blood to quicken her pulsations! A gentle perspiration has covered her brow, and the Doctor calling Mrs. Stanley from the room, tells her the crisis has past, and he now hopes his patient will recover.

“Oh!” said Marion, bursting into tears, “it is in answer to Alfred’s fervent prayer.”

And who shall say that it was not so, that He, with whom are the issues of life and death, did not grant her restoration in answer to his importunate supplications? For more than an hour Edith lay in a sweet, refreshing slumber. All had left the room, with the exception of Mrs. Stanley and Alfred. Days of anxiety, and nights

of watching seemed powerless to fatigue him. He now sat looking for the first return to consciousness, in the hope that she would recognize him. Marion was kneeling by her side, her face concealed in the bed-clothes. At length the sufferer feebly moves, and heaves a deep sigh. Alfred applies the sponge to her lips, and she slowly uncloses her eyes, which rest upon Mrs. Stanley. It is as they hoped, she recognizes her, and whispers, "Mother."

Choking back her tears, the thankful friend kisses the pale brow, and tries to articulate, "My own dear daughter."

Again the feeble lips move tremulously, — she bends forward to catch the words, "Forgive poor Edith."

Marion repeatedly assures her that all, all is forgiven; all forgotten, save the blessed thought that she is restored to them.

A faint smile flickers for one moment around her mouth, and she again falls asleep. With eager impatience Alfred watches her. He longs once more to hear her voice, and to have her speak his name. Nor does he wait in vain. She again opens her eyes, and fixes them full upon him. For one instant she gazes, as if fearing she is still dreaming, then softly whispers, "It is my Alfred."

"Yes, my darling Edith," he cries, unable longer to contain himself, "God has given you back to me from the dead. You are mine now, all mine, love."

A beautiful smile of trust lit up the pale countenance of the invalid, and from this time she slowly gained strength. There was no more coldness, no reserve, her proud heart was humbled, and the penitent sat meekly

at the feet of her Saviour. As she had opportunity, she asked pardon of Mr. Stanley, for all the trouble she had caused him from a child, and begged his consent still to call him father.

Toward Alice and Uncle Stephen she confessed herself to have indulged wicked thoughts and unkind feelings, which she earnestly implored them to forgive.

The good old man, who could hardly realize so great a change in her character, was wholly overcome, and retired to his room to weep aloud.

But the greatest mark of a thorough change was in the anxiety she expressed for her own mother, who was failing rapidly. The family had deemed it advisable not to tell Mrs. Carey how very sick her child had been ; but now Edith begged to be allowed to see her, at least once, before she died ; and one day, after consulting the Doctor, Mrs. Carey was brought to the Hall, when Alfred gently took her in his arms, and laid her on the bed by her sick child. All present were struck with the likeness between them, as they lay in a close embrace. Nurse Carey had perfectly recovered her reason. Her eye, which, from its wildness, had given an unearthly look to her whole countenance, was now tearful, but calm, and Edith, with her rich tresses confined under a cap, her bright color gone, her eye and lip no longer scornful, both in feature and expression resembled those of her mother. All retired during that first interview between them as mother and child, and which would probably be their last.

It was not until the sound of violent weeping in the room warned her that too much excitement might be fa-

tal to them both, that, Mrs. Stanley hastily entered Edith's solemn words arrested her attention, "Dear mother, look at me; think of what I was, the very chief of sinners. Even you, sinful as you have been, can never imagine half my guilt. But God has had mercy upon me; Jesus has power to wash out guilt, even such as mine, and will save you. Oh, don't delay! Say to him, 'Dear Lord, here I am, a poor sinner; but I trust in thy power to save.' For my sake, dear mother, do not delay. Oh, if you could only know the sweet peace which filled my soul when I threw away all my rebellious pride, and opened my heart to his love! The fountain is inexhaustible. God is ready and willing to save you, too. Dear mother, father is in heaven, and, vile and sinful as I have been, I hope to enter there. Will you refuse to meet us in that world?" Here the poor girl's feelings entirely exhausted her, and, with her mother's hand pressed tightly in hers, she sank back upon the pillows.

The poor mother wept and sobbed without restraint, and Mrs. Stanley, without having been seen by them, stepped back and called Alfred to remove her to the nursery. Mrs. Carey was never carried home, but died the next day, with a trembling hope that God had forgiven her sins. Her last words were to Alfred, who had spent hours at her bedside, "Tell my child I feel myself to be a great sinner; but I trust my Saviour has forgiven me."

The death of Mrs. Carey affected Alice deeply, as well as all the household, who, now that she was gone, remembered only her untiring devotion to them in sickness, her love for her late mistress, and her strong affection for

Louis. Alfred was called upon by Edith to repeat again and again all that she had said, and the tears which they together dropped to her memory, were a new tie between them.

When Edith was able to sit up in the large easy-chair which Alice had sent from her own room for the invalid, no one would have recognized in the meek and humble Christian, whose eye beamed so tenderly upon her mother and sisters, the once proud and lofty spirit, who expected all to bow before her. To her family she had never looked so lovely in the proudest days of her brilliant beauty. Love toward her Saviour shone in her countenance, and animated all her actions. Even the servants felt and acknowledged the change. To every one she had confessed her pride and rebellion, and to every one she had recommended her Saviour, who would surely forgive them, if sins like hers could be pardoned.

Alfred's term had now commenced, and he announced his intention of leaving the next day. Choosing an opportunity when Edith was alone, he sat down near her. No formal engagement existed between them. Since the first impassioned words when she recovered her consciousness, he had never told his love. But he was aware she knew his heart, and that, after his Maker, she occupied the first place in his affections. He held her unresisting hand in his, as he said, "Edith, it is hard for me to leave you. I shall look back to the past vacation as the happiest period of my life."

"Yes," said Edith, tremulously, "we shall never forget it."

"God has been very gracious to us," continued the

young man, trying to repress his emotion, "and we will not hesitate to devote our lives to his service."

"No," was the firm, but whispered response.

"It will be a hard lot for you, my love, to leave your home and friends, for a life among the heathen." He stopped, and leaned eagerly forward to catch the words which were trembling upon her lips.

With one long, earnest gaze into his eye, Edith said, gently, "Where thou goest I will go and there will I be buried." Even she, with her warm, impulsive nature, was not prepared for the burst of feeling displayed, as she repeated the sacred words. He covered his face, and sobbed convulsively.

"Alfred, my dearest friend," she said, rising and standing by his side; "do not weep, or let me weep with you. Henceforth your griefs and joys are mine."

"They are blissful tears, dearest," he replied, straining her to his breast, "and such as angels might envy. Oh, my Edith! my heart swells with love to God as I remember how graciously he has answered my prayers in your behalf. How short-sighted we mortals are. When I heard of the change which had come over your prospects, I mourned, and wept bitter tears. I little knew this was his chosen way to fit you for the great work before you. Dear Edith, let us never forget his goodness, let us never cease to trust him."

The next morning, before he left, Alfred informed his kind benefactor that one objection to his offering himself to the Board of Missions was obviated, for he did not intend to go to India without a wife.

Uncle Stephen rejoiced with him in his happiness, but

said that was an additional reason why he should join the mission under his care. "I am growing old, my boy," said he, wiping the ever ready tear from his eye, "and it gives me great joy to send your father, who has labored so faithfully for years, a young coadjutor, to share his labors and cares. Edith will be a good daughter to them."

He then communicated to Alfred the fact that in his will he had made provision for the mission, and that he wished them to enlarge operations, especially in the school for native teachers. "Tell Edith," he continued, "that there is a fund from which you can draw to provide her a suitable outfit, and may God's blessing go with you to the end of life." The good old man turned hastily away, and locked himself up in his own room.

It occasioned no surprise to the family group assembled in Edith's chamber for morning prayer, when Mr. Huntington announced his and Edith's intention of going to spend their lives in India, though there were many tears shed at the thought of the long separation.

Edith alone was calm. With a holy light in her eye, and an elevation of soul expressed in every feature of her pale countenance, she pointed upward as she said, "We shall meet there."

* * * * *

Spring had come again with its swelling buds, its tiny violets, peeping up from their winter bed, its balmy air, and refreshing showers; but its delightful breezes brought no strength to Mrs. Hayden, who was rapidly approaching the end of life.

For a few weeks Alice had spent a part of every day

in company with her sick friend. Dear little Minnie, in happy unconsciousness that her beloved mother was fast passing away from her sight, seemed never so gay. She found bright dandelions, and pleased herself vastly with twining them in her mother's hair. "Mamma look pretty! Mamma *do* look pretty!" she exclaimed, dancing up and down in her joy.

Though Mrs. Hayden perfectly realized her situation, yet to her there was nothing of gloom in the idea of death. It only seemed to her the "road which man must pass to God."

With Dexter she talked earnestly with regard to his future course, and that of his sister. She told them if Nurse Green was obliged to leave, God would provide them a home. His promise to be a father to the fatherless would never fail. She also spoke long and tenderly of his father, and left many messages for him.

Though well aware that she could not long survive, yet Alice was much shocked, early one bright morning about the middle of April, to receive the intelligence that the sufferer had gone to her rest. But upon Dexter it came like a thunderbolt, and struck him to the earth. He had listened calmly when his mother talked with him, controlling his feelings that he might not excite her; but his heart whispered, "she will not yet leave you," and he listened to the voice, and hoped against hope.

Alice and her husband consulted earnestly what should be done with the children, and hoped to take Minnie for their own; but when she mentioned to Dexter her mother's wish to have them leave the cottage, for the present,

and come to Lindenwood, he was so distressed that she urged it no farther, but contented herself with providing for them, while her husband made arrangements for the funeral.

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Hark! to the hurried question of Despair :

‘Where is my wife?’ an echo answers, ‘where!’”

Byron.

NEAR the close of a calm, pleasant afternoon in spring, when all nature was bursting into life and loveliness, a man jumped from the cars at a station about three miles below Queenstown. He was rather above the usual size, of athletic frame, and an open, good-humored cast of countenance. He walked quickly along the side of the road leading directly to the next town, and there was a lightness and elasticity in his step, a freedom in his air and manner, which showed plainly that he was glad to escape the confinement of a long day's ride in the cars for the free air and the exercise of his limbs; and also that he looked forward with pleasure to the end of the journey. But, if observed more critically, as one would hardly be able to do while he walked at so rapid a pace, an occasional contraction of the brow could be discovered, and a close shutting of the lips, which indicated some solicitude or anxiety, mingled with his earnest anticipations of pleasure.

This feeling, however, he tried to shake off, and began whistling a merry tune; but as that did not seem quite in accordance with his feelings, he commenced talking to himself. “Let me see,” he soliloquized, looking at the

sun to ascertain the length of time before dark, "it will take me about half an hour to get there at the rate I'm going now;" and he slackened his pace, though reluctantly. "I should rather wait until there would be no danger of being recognized. I want to go right home and see my family. I wonder if wife expects me," and, unconsciously, he again quickened his steps. "I suppose Dexter has grown a good deal in a year, and so, too, has Minnie." The man smiled, as the vision of a pair of laughing blue eyes, peeping out from a shower of sunny curls danced before him.

"She'll be shy at first, and no wonder," he added, rather sadly; "but I'll soon make friends with her. She's too young to take my — well, any trouble long to heart. But wife, oh, dear! I do wish I could get such fancies out of my head. I suppose it's just because she took on so dreadfully when I was carried off; and I never can get that last look of hers out of my mind. It seemed to say, 'Oh, Timothy! I've borne and borne with your abuse, and loved you through it all; but now you've killed me.' Pshaw! I never can think of it without crying;" and he dashed away a tear, and almost started into a run to rid himself of the unpleasant remembrance. "'Taint likely but what she's got over it long ago, and when I've seen her and convinced her that I mean to make a man yet, and that she shall be as well off as ever she was, and that Dexter shall have an education, I'll venture this new suit of clothes against those parti-colored things I've had to wear a year, that she'll be as bright as a button. She was always a forgiving creature. Sometimes, I've thought if she'd been huffy or cross, I shouldn't have

dared to carry on so. But 't isn't no use to think of that now. Let bygones be bygones. I'll show Queenstown people that I mean to make somebody yet, notwithstanding —. Let's see now. 'Twas in September I had that letter from wife. I've always wondered how she happened to write just that one, no more, no less, and I've always thought 'twas such a queer one too. Not a syllable of grumbling or complaint in it, nor saying that I'd brought disgrace on the family; no, nothing of that sort. I suppose she thought I'd had leisure enough when I was locked up in my cell nights to think o' that. Ha'n't I, though?" he exclaimed, impatiently shaking his shoulders, as if he'd have no more such thoughts. "It always seemed as if she thought she was making a will. Well, I suppose 'twa'n't very amusing or cheering work for one brought up as she'd been to sit down and write to a husband who was in the state prison; and, if any body had hinted such an idea to me the day I was married, I'd ha — well, I can't say what I wouldn't have done. Heigh ho! 'tis strange how one thing led on to another."

Then again referring to the letter, "She told all about Dexter, and what a noble boy he was, and how every day, and every hour in the day, his looks reminded her of me, and how well he got on in his schooling. He'll make a man yet, that boy will. Then Minnie too! Oh, how she did set Minnie out, with her funny ways! She always was a cunning little thing; and then she prays for her papa, and asks God to bring dear papa back. 'Tis astonishing how much comfort some people do take in praying. Now, though I know it's all humbug, ye' I

shall let wife go on just as she's a mind to. If she wants to think there's a God, and to teach the children to pray, and to go to meeting, I shall let her. There's no harm in it, if it gives them pleasure. I shouldn't wonder if I myself went to meeting sometimes with them. It's kind o' respectable to see a family going along together, wife and I, and Dexter leading Minnie; but I know better than to believe such things."

His soliloquy was brought to a sudden termination by seeing that he had reached the outskirts of the town, and the sun was still half an hour high. He stopped short, and hesitated. There was an almost irresistible impulse to proceed to the end of his journey, opposed by a reluctance to go through the streets until it were too late for him to be recognized by any of his old acquaintances; but his anxiety to be at home prevailed, and he accelerated his speed to make up for his momentary delay. His face was somewhat flushed from his exercise; and now his breast began to heave with emotion, as he thought, "In a few moments more, I shall have my dear wife and children in my arms. I was a fool ever to doubt she'd forgive me. I *know* she will when she sees me;" and he folded his arms upon his bosom, as if they already encircled the loved ones. He hurries on; every object now is familiar. There is Moses Pond, going for his father's cows. The boy's merry whistle rather jars upon his excited feelings, and he turns to the other side of the road, where Widow Morse is picking up chips by the wood-pile to get her tea. The old lady looks up as he passes, gazes at him through the wide frill of her cap, then starts to her feet,

letting fall her apronful of splinters, and almost screams out, "Goodness me! as true as I'm alive, there's Timothy Hayden come home from prison. Oh, dear! *oh, dear!*" and, forgetting her errand to the wood-pile, she hurries into the house to communicate the intelligence.

"That's a pretty way to welcome a feller, I must say;" and Mr. Hayden, much annoyed at the curiosity with which he saw he should be regarded, still hastened his steps. He is now but about three quarters of a mile from home. The road is straight for nearly the whole distance. On the right, he perceives Lindenwood Hall, then, farther on, the spires of the churches. He tries to distinguish the low-roofed house where he is going; but no, he cannot see it yet; the higher buildings conceal it. But, at the distance of a few hundred rods, he espies a carriage standing before a gate, with a number of persons about it.

"There's a funeral, I guess," he said, carelessly, fixing his eyes upon the spot. "Yes, that's the hearse, and two carriages behind it. I wonder who's dead. I reckon it's nobody that I know." He could now see over the stone wall into the graveyard, and unconsciously walked a little slower to witness what was going on.

Just as he was opposite, the sexton with three other men were lowering the coffin into the dampgrave. There was an air of deep solemnity about the whole company (for many had joined the procession on foot) which filled his mind with awe. He felt he was in the presence of death; and, without knowing it, the traveller approached, and leaned upon the top of the stone wall. A young lady was standing near the open grave, supported by a

tall, fine-looking man. She was weeping bitterly; but, as she took her handkerchief from her face for one last look into the final resting-place of the departed, he noticed that she was a stranger to him, but surpassingly beautiful. Back of them, or rather at the side, stood quite a family of mourners, though none of them were dressed in black.

An old gentleman with glasses was leaning for support upon the arm of a man, perhaps his son. His face was turned in the opposite direction. Just at that moment, when the traveller had taken a step forward to proceed on his way, the tall gentleman who was with the lady lifted a child in his arms, and held her over, so that she could look into the grave. She gazed an instant, and then turned her face away, and clung weeping to his neck.

What can it be which has so suddenly palsied the limbs of the traveller, which were but a moment before so full of life and activity? What makes the blood so quickly recede from his heart, blanching his face with sudden terror? He staggers and reels against the cold stones for support. His whole sense seems to be concentrated in his desire to see. The lifeless body is left with its kindred dust; the procession begins to move away; the sexton stands with his shovel in his hand, only waiting for them to pass before he begins his solemn work of giving earth to earth, and dust to dust. He sees it all at a glance. Now they approach the gate. Entirely forgetful of his wish to be unnoticed, he presses on. He must see for himself. He tries to recall his

scattered senses, and to clear his eyes from the blue which has gathered over them.

First in the procession walks a boy, tall and manly leading the child whose countenance so alarmed him. The boy's face is entirely hidden, and he tries to think him too large to be the one he had for an instant feared but he is in deep affliction, and proves himself so utterly incapable of taking care of the child that the lady behind takes her from him, while her companion tenderly grasps him by the hand.

"It cannot be," exclaimed the man, in a husky voice, for the first time drawing a long breath. "How frightened I was! No, that would be too cruel. I'll hurry on." But still he lingered. He would like to see who was going to get into the carriage. Ah! now he's entirely relieved. He recognizes Squire Stanley and the old India uncle who lives with him. He wonders which of the family it is, and why none but the children are dressed in mourning, though they all look sad enough. They are coming through the gate. He stands back to let them pass. Suddenly the little girl springs from her companion, and clings to the boy. "Oh, brother Dexter!" she cries, "don't, *don't* leave poor sick mamma here!"

The boy strains her to his breast, and sobs aloud; the gentleman gently separates them, and lifts them into the carriage; the young lady steps in, and he follows. Mr. Stanley and his family occupy the other carriage. The coachmen shut the doors, and drive away; the hearse, with its bony horse, is still tied to the gate, waiting for the sexton; the procession moves out and passes on

out still the man stands as if turned to stone. An arrow has pierced his heart, and sent by whom? Ah! in that moment of indescribable agony, when sorrow and remorse quickly succeed each other, and struggle for mastery in his breast, he doubts no longer. He *lenc:vs* there is a God in heaven.

The sound of the earth rattling upon the coffin can be distinctly heard; he grasps the post by the side of the gate, and gazes with terror at the man who is so indifferently covering from his sight the wife of his bosom. The moments pass on, the grave is filled, the green sods replaced, and, with a few blows of the shovel to press them firmly to the earth, the sexton gathers up the ropes, and, with a look behind to see that nothing is left, walks away.

The poor, broken-hearted man, whose high hopes are so suddenly crushed, creeps back a few paces, and sits down close to the wall. The sexton, without noticing the intruder, carefully closes the gate, puts the ropes in a box in front of the hearse, takes the shovel between his knees, gathers up his reins, and rattles away at a rapid pace.

Lower and lower sinks the head of the bowed man, deeper and deeper are his heavy sighs; his bosom heaves convulsively, his eyeballs glare and burn; but no refreshing tears come to moisten them, no soothing reflection tends to calm his woe. No, all is black, impenetrable darkness. When the sound of the hearse wheels has entirely ceased, when it has gone altogether from sight, the poor man, whose step so lately was vigorous with life, crawls as if the weight of years had suddenly fallen upon him, on toward the gate. With trembling hands

he lifts the latch, mechanically closes it after him, and he is alone with the dead. With unsteady steps he wends his way on, on until he reaches the mound where lie buried all his hopes of happiness. Yes, he forgets—ever, the existence of his high-spirited boy, and his winning little Minnie. He only knows that his own dear wife lies buried deep, deep in the ground, where he never more shall see her, never more hear her voice say, “I forgive you.” She from whom for a long, weary year, he has been separated, but with whose love all his future had been inseparably blended.

And now it's all over, and, with a low, despairing cry, “*Oh God, it's too late!*” he throws himself upon her grave.

After a few moments, with a loud shout he starts to his feet. He will not give her up. It may be that she still lives. An indescribable yearning for one more look at her fair countenance, an irrepressible longing to hold her in one more embrace, even in death, almost maddens him. With his hands he begins to tear away the heartless clods which hide her from his view; but, with a sudden thought of her as he saw her with that last beseeching, imploring look, “I've loved you; but you've killed me,” he fell senseless to the ground.

The next morning, when Moses Pond went with his cows to pasture, he was startled to see the figure of a man, whose hat had rolled to a short distance, lying extended upon the grave. He knew very well who was buried there, and with a light bound he jumped over the wall, without waiting to go around by the gate, and cautiously approached the spot. As he drew nearer, he sud

denly started, leaped the wall again, and fled for home. He had recognized the husband of the deceased, and supposed him dead. In a very short time he conducted his father and neighbors to the place, and hailing a market-man going to the village, they prevailed upon him to assist in getting the insensible man into his long wagon, and to carry him to his desolate dwelling. *Home* it was not, for she who had made it such was in her grave.

CHAPTER XXX.

“Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

David.

UPON leaving the cemetery the night previous, Minnie sobbed so violently, and plead so touchingly, to be carried back “to stay with dear mamma,” that Alice Sydney wished to take the children to Lindenwood for the night; but Dexter respectfully but firmly declined. The poor boy had wept until the fountain of his grief was exhausted, and his head ached so violently that he felt wholly unequal to the effort which would be necessary if he accepted her kind invitation. He desired to be alone, and think of his mother’s last words. He had been left sole protector of his sister, and he wished to form some plans for her and himself. The good nurse, who had been so unwearied in her care of his sick mother, would now, he supposed, be obliged to leave, and there was no time for him to lose in useless repining. During the long year which had passed since the dreadful blow had fallen upon them, from which his mother had never recovered, not one word of intelligence had been received from his father. In the free conversations he had held with his mother near the close of her life, she had expressed doubt whether he still lived; and, even if he did, whether he would return to his family. She thought he might be prevented, by shame, from coming back to his native village. What, then, could he do with the sweet child?

All seemed dark and drear before him. But soon his hopes revived. His confidence returned. "Mother often repeated to us God's promise to be a father to the fatherless, and I will trust him."

A multitude of such thoughts passed through his mind, as they drove toward the house which had been their home, and where the kind nurse awaited them. Alice had been talking in a cheerful voice to Minnie, and had succeeded in diverting her grief.

Happy childhood! The waves of sorrow break and dash over thee, but the receding billow flows gently back to the sea, and thou art soon shouting as entirely forgetful of thy grief, as the next wave which comes leaping, foaming, sparkling and breaking upon the shore!

Dexter gazed upon his little sister as Mr. Sydney lifted her from the carriage, and asked himself, "Can I ever again be happy? Can I ever forget?" Though but twelve years of age, yet in maturity of character he was much older. For a long time he had been the confidant and comforter of his mother. He often wondered at the conduct of his companions, who were irritated and annoyed at what appeared to him the veriest trifles; but was forced to the conclusion that they had never known real trouble.

On entering the room, rendered desolate by the removal of the sacred remains of his beloved mother, Dexter was so much overcome with grief, that he was obliged to follow the oft-repeated advice of Nurse Green, and betake himself to bed. She soon carried him a cup of warm tea, and, fatigued by over-watching and excitement, he fell into the sound sleep of childhood, little

dreaming who was sleeping an unconscious vigil at his mother's grave. Minnie snugly nestled herself to his side, and thus the sweet children lay.

The next morning Dexter was suddenly awakened by the heavy, rattling sound of a wagon, which stopped directly in front of the cottage. He started quickly out of bed, for a moment forgetting his dreadful loss, and surprised that he had so overslept. But soon the dread reality burst upon him, and, putting his hand to his head, he was just about to resume his place by the side of his sister, that he might weep with her, when a loud knock was heard at the door.

Nurse had risen an hour earlier, and was now in the small shed, preparing their morning repast. She hastened to see who this unseasonable visitor could be. It was Farmer Pond, flurried and anxious, and behind him a long cart, the high sides of which prevented her from seeing what it contained.

"Good morning, Nurse Green," said Mr. Pond.

"Good morning," was the reply. "Anybody sick at your house?"

"Why no, not exactly; but I've got somebody in this 'ere wagon needs attention. I found him lying on the newly-made grave of his wife. How the poor fellow came there I can't imagine. I didn't know he was out of prison; but he seems now entirely unconscious. He hasn't moved a hair since we put him into the wagon."

The good woman stood so amazed at the announcement, that she had not yet spoken; but when he added, "We better get him into bed as soon as we can, and have the doctor to him," she was all ready to do her part.

The market-man descended from his box, and, with the help of the farmer, they gently lifted poor Hayden from the wagon, and laid him into bed, when Mr. Pond started off in haste for the doctor.

The intelligence, which quickly spread through the village, was conveyed to Lindenwood by the boy who carried the morning papers. Clarence offered to accompany his wife at once to the cottage, and to offer any assistance which might be necessary. When they arrived, they witnessed an affecting scene. Dr. Jenks, who had promptly answered the summons, was taking blood from the arm of his unconscious patient, while Dexter knelt on the bed, applying the strongest stimulants. Minnie was seated in her little chair, looking from one to another in speechless wonder. Nurse Green held the bowl in one hand to receive the blood, while with the other she held the bandages for the doctor to swathe the arm. The sister of Mrs. Hayden, who was there with her babe in her arms, stood back from the bed, and gazed with a tearful interest at the group. She had cherished very hard feelings toward her brother-in-law for bringing such trouble upon his family, and breaking the loving heart of his wife; but her resentment had all passed away since she had seen him lying there in the image of death, and had heard the affecting circumstance of his being found extended upon the grave of his deceased wife.

When Minnie saw her kind friend enter the room, she sprang forward to meet her; and, without speaking, pointed her little finger toward the bed. Alice sa'

quietly down, and took the child upon her lap, while Clarence stood beside her.

A low groan came from the bedside, followed by a quick gasp from the sufferer.

"There," said the Doctor, "he's come to. Give me the bandages, nurse, I don't want to debilitate him. He was pretty near gone."

Clarence advanced, and taking the cold hand, vigorously chafed it, and in the course of half an hour, with the help of camphor and water, which they succeeded in forcing down his throat, the man revived to a full sense of his situation, and of his dreadful loss. He took no notice of his children, though Alice had persuaded Minnie to put her hand on papa's head. With a shudder he motioned her away, as if the sight were too intimately connected with the memory of her mother for his present endurance. His grief was too deep for tears, and his expression of unuttered agony appealed to every heart. The presence of strangers seemed to annoy him. Clarence and Alice, therefore, reluctantly departed, after making arrangements with Nurse Green to do every thing for the comfort of the invalid.

Recommending a bowl of warm gruel for the poor man, the Doctor also hurried away to make a tardy call upon his other patients. Nurse Green went quietly to her work in the shed, hoping Mr. Hayden would fall asleep. But he was no sooner alone than he arose feebly, and sat upon the side of his bed, his eyes cast down to the floor; then he slowly raised them, and took a full survey of everything which the room contained. After two or three efforts, he succeeded in walking across

the room to a rocking-chair, in which he sat, when Minnie, directed by her brother, who from the inner room had anxiously watched his father's motions, advanced shyly toward him, turning her head a little on one side, and glancing up through her curls in a most winning manner. She could not understand the shade of anguish which passed over his face, and was about to dart back to her brother, when the poor desolate father beckoned her toward him.

"Dear papa, *dear papa*," she repeated softly, putting her little hand in his.

The father's heart was touched, and he caught the child to his breast with a violence which frightened her. Dexter came forward and soothed her, saying: "Minnie loves poor papa, Minnie's glad papa's come home;" and the loving spirit of the child was moved by the loud sobs which were bursting from his agonized heart. She took her tiny apron, and wiped away the tears which were flowing like a river down his pale cheek.

Blessed tears, what a relief to his pent up grief! Even Dexter, who had been frightened at his silent woe, understood this. Minnie's apron was soon saturated, and Dexter passed him a large handkerchief from the drawer. And now father and son wept together, as the latter related the circumstances of his mother's sickness and death, her last words of blessing upon them, and love for him. "Until the day she died," he repeated, "she never ceased to speak of you, and to impress it upon our minds to be obedient to all your wishes, because she knew if you ever returned, you would need the soothing influence of sympathy and affection."

Though every word was a dagger to the heart of the bereaved husband, yet he bid his son go on: "Tell me all," he sobbed out, "every word; don't spare me;" and Dexter did tell him all her patience through her long sickness; her desire to live for the sake of her children but her entire submission to her heavenly Father's will " 'He will provide,' was her daily remark as she drew nearer her end." He narrated, also, something of the kindness of friends who had been raised up for them, the unfailing goodness of young Mrs. Sydney, and what a comfort she had been to them in their poverty and grief "As mother received from you neither letter nor message, she feared your close confinement had killed you, but beside these parting words, she wrote you a long letter which she put into my hands in case you should return. 'Tell him,' she said, when she gave it to me, 'that I love him as well as ever, and that God has comforted my dying bed with the blessed assurance that I shall meet him in Heaven.'"

"Give it to me," gasped the poor man, putting out his hand. But Dexter replied: "Dear father, it would be better to delay it until another time. I have still much to tell you, and Nurse Green has brought your gruel. Neither you nor I have had any breakfast."

Minnie slipped from her father's lap and climbed into the chair. It was really affecting to see how humbly Mr. Hayden deferred his own wishes to those of his son. In that hour of sorrow, Dexter established an influence over his father which was never lost. To please Minnie he took a seat at the table, though she little knew what a pang it cost him; but his life was now to be made up

of sorrow. The child reverently folded her small hands and shut her eyes, then quickly opened them to see if he were pleased at her good conduct. To her astonishment the big tears were rolling down his cheeks. Her sympathies were instantly excited: "Papa, pray; make you feel better; when Minnie cry, mamma say, 'Minnie pray,' make me well."

But the father only shook his head, and looked imploringly at his son.

Dexter waited no longer. In a solemn voice he implored a blessing upon the meat, in a few touching words thanking God that, though their beloved mother was taken away, he had restored to them their dear father, from whom they had so long been separated. Oh, that simple, earnest prayer! How long it lived in the father's memory! It was the word spoken in season, which pierced even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit; and became, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, mighty to the salvation of his soul. God had heard the fervent, importunate prayers of his wife, and He was waiting to be gracious.

Mr. Hayden made a great effort to calm his feelings. He raised the bowl to his lips and tried to swallow; but his emotions choked him, and he abruptly left the table, and retired to the inner room.

Dexter was much perplexed to know whether he ought to follow him, but a look from Nurse Green decided him to remain where he was. Directly after breakfast the children had been wont to kneel by the bedside of their mother; but now that she was gone, what were they to do? It was her dying request to Dexter, that he should

continue these family devotions with his sister. He therefore seated Minnie by his side, and taking the Bible and Prayer-book, in a broken voice, commenced reading. When he concluded, violent sobs from the inner room arrested his attention. The door had been opened, and the poor penitent was upon his knees, while the fervent cry of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," was upon his lips. Such a cry never goes forth in vain!

Two days later, Mr. Hayden having received from his son the letter of his dying wife, retired to his chamber, where, with trembling hands he broke the seal, opened and read, as follows:—

"My very dear husband,—

"Though I know not whether you are in the land of the living, yet I feel constrained to write you this farewell, so that, if you should ever return to your family, you may know how fully and freely I have forgiven all the past, and with what an assurance of hope I look forward to spending an eternity with you in Heaven. Yes, God has heard my prayers in your behalf, and has granted me an answer of peace. All my nights of wrestling for you are over; all my inward groaning, lest the separation which has been so afflictive, should be eternal. I am soon going home, and there, in God's own good time, I hope to meet you.

"Later. Every day I grow weaker, and I rejoice that my sojourn is almost ended. I shall soon be with my Saviour, where I shall be free from sin and sorrow. My heavenly Father has taken from death its only remaining terror, the thought of leaving my children. But why

should I fear? He is a covenant keeping God, and will provide for them. He has raised them up friends, and I can cheerfully leave them in his paternal care.

Sabbath morning. The film of death has already begun to gather over my eyes. My pen trembles in my hand, but a few lines will assure you that the Saviour is my support. His presence will lighten the dark valley. His right arm will uphold me amidst the swellings of Jordan. I shall soon be safe in my heavenly home. Bear in mind that your Maria loved you to the end, and that my last earthly thought will be a prayer for blessings on your head.

“Let every ——— ———.”

The last sentence was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing, and was never finished.

In the meantime the family at Lindenwood (for all of them had become interested in Alice's protégés), were planning what was best to be done for the reformed man. The wish of the young wife, Mrs. Sydney, to take charge of Minnie, seemed no longer feasible, since it would be cruel to separate the children from their afflicted father. Uncle Stephen renewed his proposal to his young almoner to draw upon him to any extent she might deem necessary to set up the man in some permanent business. It was easily ascertained, through Mr. Gates, that he had formerly been a master-mason, and at the time he was married, considered one of the best workmen in the town. The man who had taken his place, was induced, by the representation of Clarence, to offer him work, upon the condition, if his reformation were permanent, of shortly

taking him into partnership; an arrangement equally beneficial to both.

His kind friends did not wish to hurry him. They preferred to give him time to recruit his strength, and to improve by the affliction which had visited him. But when Clarence, at the request of his wife, called to inform him of the arrangements which had been made, he found he had removed a burden which weighed heavily upon Mr. Hayden's mind. The poor man, with his humiliating views of himself, felt that he could never venture to solicit employment from those acquainted with his former character, and had even meditated a removal to a town where he was not known. This he knew would be a sad trial for Dexter, as he would be obliged to leave the Academy where he was so successfully prosecuting his studies. He acknowledged the kindness, with a fervor which showed the relief it had afforded him, especially when Mrs. Green was requested to remain for the present, and take care of the family.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“Not for this span of life alone,
Which as a blast doth fly,
And, like the transient flower of grass,
Just blossom, droop, and die;
But for a being without end,
This vow of love we take.
Grant us, O God! one home at last,
For our Redeemer's sake.” — *Mrs. Sigourney.*

It was now the third week in April. Mr. Stanley had gone to New York to meet Gertrude, and preparations were going on briskly for Emma's wedding. Every mail brought a long epistle from Prof. Fowler, consulting his betrothed with reference to arrangements about the house, and on other subjects. During the winter and spring, she had also received many kind letters and messages from the quaint old lady, her *ci-devant* travelling companion, and also from her daughter Julia. I will quote from one of the former:

“Although I have not for many years been used to writing letters, except to my children, yet my son assures me that you will not take it amiss if I tell you how pleased I was when he informed me you had consented to be his wife. I can't quite understand how it all came about so soon; and, when I asked my son, he only smiled, and said he hardly knew himself. Now, though

he is one of the best of children, yet I must say he is clear Fowler in regard to talking. His father was just so before him, while the Perkinses (my ancestors) were famous for being social and free. I often tell my darter Julia (the one, you know, I was carrying the currant wine to) that I don't feel altogether at ease with her brother, especially since he's got to be a professor; and I hope you'll accept this as the best apology I can offer for not introducing you to him the day we rode together. I was astonished, I must confess, when he told me he had never even mentioned the subject to you; and, to tell the truth, that is why I was more willing to write to a stranger, that you might not think I was ignorant of what belonged to good manners.

"Hoping that you will take what I have written in good part, I will close by saying that, as soon as I heard my son was going to be married, I hired a woman, Phebe Dayson by name, into the house, to make him up a set of linen and a set of cotton shirts, together with all other necessary articles for his wardrobe.

In great haste, your very true friend,

HANNAH P. FOWLER.

"P. S. In reading my letter over this morning, I see I have forgotten to tell you that you'll be right welcome to the family, and to none of them more so than to me as I tell my son I am the best acquainted with you of any of them. I also forgot to tell you that I have commenced on a dozen pairs of lambswool stockings for my son.

Yours,

H. P. FOWLER."

The wedding was to take place on the morning of the first day of May, when the bridal party would attend the newly married pair about one hundred miles on their way toward the Falls of Niagara. On their return, a party of friends were invited to meet them at the Hall, when they immediately proceeded to B——.

The arrival of Gertrude in fine spirits, and looking more beautiful than ever, caused quite a jubilee in the family. The meeting between Gertrude and Edith was truly affecting, such a change had taken place in each of them since they last met. It was not, however, until on retiring to rest, they knelt side by side, and offered their earnest prayers for protection, pardon, and peace, that either realized the beauty which religion had imparted to the character of the other.

The day following Gertrude's return, when the whole family were assembled in the parlor, a servant entered with a card, which she presented to Gertrude, who, with a very rosy hue upon her bright countenance, passed it to her father. Mr. Stanley smiled as he ordered the servant to show the gentleman into the room.

Alice glanced at her husband, but he was evidently at a loss to conceive the cause of the mysterious smiles of her parents or the blushes of her sister. They had not long to wait, however, for Mr. Stanley stepped toward the door, and cordially welcomed Mr. Henderson, from Baltimore. Gertrude also advanced a few steps, and, if her words did not express as much as her father's, the gentleman appeared fully satisfied with his reception. Mr. Stanley then turned to introduce his wife, when, to the astonishment of all present, with a sudden start he

sprang forward, and grasped both her hands, while "Charles!" "Marion!" and "Can it be possible?" were all that for a time could be heard, as the two earnestly gazed at each other. But soon, remembering that her friend had not yet been introduced to all the family, Mrs. Stanley led him first to Uncle Stephen, and then to each of the others, saying, "This is my dear friend, of whom you have so often heard me speak,—the Charles, Alice, about whom I have related so many pleasing reminiscences."

All formality was now ended by this recognition; and Mr. Henderson, or Charley, as his early friend Marion called him, was received at once as a member of the family.

She drew him shortly into the large window, where he was very earnest in telling her some piece of good news, to which she listened with pleased attention, until he said, "How very singular, Marion, that, instead of a name by which I once aspired to call you, my highest ambition now is to dignify you with the title of mamma!"

The merry peal of laughter which burst from both of them called forth an answering echo in the room; and Gertrude, obeying a summons from her mother, advanced to inquire the cause.

Mr. Henderson arose and gave her a seat, while he drew a chair near, as he said, "Now, Gertrude, I may as well confess that I have not told you all my wild pranks. I suppose Marion would be hinting that you were not my first love; so I'll tell you all. When I was a boy of fourteen, I lived in C——, and was the nearest neighbor of Marion Thurston. I had no sisters, and she had no

brothers ; so it was natural that she should call upon me for any of the kind offices, such as are usually rendered by brothers, and it was nothing more than natural that I should love to render them." A merry glance at Gertrude's downcast eyes and heightened color warned the young man he was treading on dangerous ground, and he leaned forward and whispered a few impassioned words in her ear.

"Go on," was her only reply.

"Well, Marion was at that time, in my eyes at least, a very pretty, modest little girl, very unlike the other misses of my acquaintance. When my father died," he added, with a saddened voice, "(my mother died when I was an infant,) there was no one who could soothe me like Marion ; and I was rendered happier than I ever expected to be again by an arrangement her father made to take me into his family, that I might pursue my studies under his care. My little companion did everything to make me forget my sorrow, and Mr. Thurston acted toward me the part of a tender father. One day Marion and I were sitting together in a small vine-covered arbor at the foot of the garden, when I told her that I loved her better than a sister, and asked her, when we grew up, to be my wife."

Poor Gertrude ! she could not help it. She drew away the small hand he had made prisoner. It was hard to think he had loved another.

Mr. Henderson, with rather a grave expression, hurried to the conclusion of his story. "But Marion told me we were too young to think upon such subjects ; that she loved me very dearly as a sister ; but that I should

soon go away to become a merchant, and then I should be glad that we had not been so foolish as to engage ourselves to each other, for I might see some one I should like much better. Marion always was wise beyond her years; and in this case she certainly manifested great wisdom. That scene in the arbor was twenty years ago; and from that time until I saw you, dearest," he said, respectfully taking her hand, and lowering his voice, "I have never seen a lady of whom I should wish to ask such a question."

He spoke so sadly, as if he feared he had offended her, and yet so earnestly, that Gertrude rewarded his frankness with a bright glance of affection.

"There!" said he, starting up, "I feel happier than ever. I have confessed all my sins in that line, and received absolution. I'll look out and behave well for the future."

"I wouldn't like to be responsible for you," said Marion, laughing; "you are just the same Charley as of old. But, if Gertrude is willing to try, I can be surety for you that you will keep nothing concealed from her. You never could keep a secret, Charley."

Mr. Stanley now approached, and said, "I think it is high time for me to come forward, and hear what is so secret."

"It was so joyful and unexpected a meeting with my old friend," answered Mr. Henderson, "that I begin to think I've acted very foolishly in carrying her back to old times, about which she seems to have forgotten."

During the few days which intervened before the wedding, Charley, as the whole family soon learned to

call him, made himself so useful, that Emma said she did not see how they had ever done without him.

Mr. Stanley had communicated to the family the fact of his conditional engagement to Gertrude, while they were at the South, but to which she could not fully consent without the knowledge and approbation of her parents. Now, however, the engagement was ratified by their approval.

Mr. Henderson had spent the past winter in Aiken, a celebrated resort for invalids, having gone there to accompany a son of his partner, where he met Gertrude, who, with her friend, was boarding at the same hotel. Their acquaintance soon ripened into friendship, and friendship into love; and, when she left for the north, he accompanied the party with which she travelled as far as New York, and there obtained permission from her father to follow them to Lindenwood.

The day before Emma was to leave, Doctor Jenks called to bid her farewell. He seemed in fine spirits, and told her he was looking forward to a wedding in the fall, when Maurice returned. Seeing her look of astonishment, he continued, "I have received a letter from Capt Bruce, in which he tells me that the conduct of my son has been so exemplary, that he has promoted him to be first mate. And in a letter Maurice wrote to Amy, he claims her promise that when he is thus advanced, she will become Mrs. Jenks, junior. Poor Amy little thought he would claim her so soon; but I tell her a promise is a promise, and it wout do for her to be setting him an example of violating his word. 'Twould be hard for wife and I to give her up, she worked so naturally right into

the place of a daughter. Wife was saying yesterday she never had had her caps done up so neatly, and she thinks it is all because Amy is Scotch."

In the evening, when Professor Fowler arrived with his sister, Mrs. Julia Norton, Mr. Henderson looked upon him with envy, as being on the eve of his marriage. He even went to Mr. Stanley to beg that his nuptials might be celebrated at the same time. Mr. Stanley shook his head, but sent him to his daughter, who decidedly refused to be spirited off in such a hurry, and told him he deserved to wait a year for thinking of such a thing.

"If you'll forgive me this once," — he began with mock gravity; but Gertrude interrupted him, though she could not refrain from laughing. "Stop, *stop!*" said she, "I'm tired out of your confessions and promises. You've done nothing for the last week but to offend, and make resolutions of amendment. When will you ever seriously set about improving?"

"Just as soon, dear Gertrude," he answered, his countenance becoming serious, "as you will take me under your training. But really, love, tell me if I have pained you by my levity? I have so very light a heart, I may have erred."

Gertrude was obliged to turn away to conceal a tear which was glistening in her eye. The frankness and good temper of her friend was a cordial to her heart, for she knew him to be possessed of a deep, warm under-current of principle and affection. Perceiving that he spoke seriously, she said, in a low voice, which she vainly endeavored to render calm, "I think, then, I must commence my discipline very soon, or you will be beyond my influence."

May-day dawned clear and bright. The inmates of Lindenwood Hall rose early, to be in preparation for the good clergyman, who was to arrive at nine. Emma expressed much disappointment that Mrs. Fowler had been detained at home by a sudden attack of sickness; but a large basket carefully packed in straw came from her, directed to Emma. On opening it the preceding evening, the young bride found an old-fashioned silver tea set, of quaint device, which she said she had always reserved for her son, and which she requested Emma to use on ordinary occasions. The reason of the latter request was evident, when Prof. Fowler conveyed to her room a magnificent service of plate, more modern in style, though no more really valuable. "Please accept this from your new sister Julia," whispered Mrs. Norton.

At nine the bridal party entered the parlor, equipped for their journey. The family, with Rev. Mr. Badger, Dr. Jenks, and a few intimate friends, awaited them. Without taking their seats, they stood before the clergyman, when Professor Fowler took from his finger the mystic ring, which was so soon to unite them for life.

Just as the ceremony was about to commence, the bridegroom, noticing that the young girl leaning on his arm trembled excessively, could not refrain from saying, in a voice intended only for her ear, "Dearest, it shall be the aim of my life to render you so happy that you will never regret this moment."

If his mother had only heard him, she might have thought, "Well, after all, there may be something of the Perkins about him; that's so like me."

The wedding was over, the bride's cake had been

passed, and the party were waiting for the carriage to convey them to the depot. Uncle Stephen, who had suddenly disappeared immediately after the ceremony, was seen beckoning the bride from the room. She hastened to join him, when he put into her hand a folded paper, saying, as he hastily turned away, "Just for your name, you know."

"Dear, kind Uncle Stephen!" said the warm-hearted girl, glancing at its contents, and thrusting it into her pocket, "is it only for my name that you have always been so very kind to me, and tried to help me to be a good girl? Don't you love me a very little for myself, too?" and she clasped her arms closely around his neck.

"There, child!" he answered, kissing her heartily, while the tears began to stream down his cheeks. "I'm an old fool to cry when I'm so happy. You're a good girl, Emma, and I myself shouldn't have objected to taking you for a wife."

This was the greatest compliment Uncle Stephen ever paid, and the bride could not help smiling through her tears. "I love you a great deal better as Uncle Stephen," she said, laughing, and again kissing her good-bye.

When they were seated in the cars, Emma placed the folded paper in the hands of her husband.

He started. "Why, Emma, you didn't tell me you were an heiress!"

"Am I?" she asked, smiling; "I didn't know it myself."

"Yes," he answered, reading from the paper, "you have funds in two banks in New York, amounting to the very pretty sum of fifteen thousand dollars."

“ I'm glad I didn't know it before,” she said, archly.

“ Why ? ”

“ Because — ” but the explanation was interrupted by the conductor, who was patiently standing at the side of the young husband, and who, finding his presence unnoticed, touched his shoulder, saying, “ Tickets, if you please.”

Alice leaned over the seat, and whispered, “ Clarence says Prof. Fowler had better resign the tickets and baggage to his care, until we leave you.”

On the return of Gertrude and Alice with their party, Mr. Henderson plead earnestly with his friend Marion to intercede for him, that his marriage need not be delayed beyond the first of June. He had in vain urged Gertrude to consent to this. She had been absent several months, and wished to remain at home until fall, especially as Edith might leave the country at that time.

A very strong friendship had grown up between Gertrude and Edith. Notwithstanding both of them were actuated by new principles and motives, entirely unlike those which formerly governed their conduct, yet their natural traits were unchanged. Gertrude was lively and rather indolent, when nothing of special interest called for her attention. To be sure she did not indulge herself in this habit, as formerly ; but this was what she considered her infirmity. Edith, on the contrary, was firm, self-relying, and energetic. These traits marked, also, her religious character. She entered with her whole heart into whatever she undertook. She might not always choose the best, or wisest means, in the performance of an action ; but her zeal was untiring. In earlier life

Edith, though several years younger, acquired a great influence over Gertrude, and it was plainly to be seen that she still leaned upon her. Happy was it for Gertrude that the influence now was ever for good.

“Would you do this?” or “Shall I do that?” were questions which Gertrude had always been in the habit of asking. Now Edith endeavored to assist her to fix principles by which to govern her conduct. “‘Is it right?’ is the question, dear sister, and the only question.” She would hardly admit there were any questions of expediency which would not come under some settled rule.

About a week after Emma had finally left them, as Gertrude and Edith were sitting in the bright moonlight, talking of the past, present, and future, “Do you know, sister,” asked the former, “that I think you are just the one for a missionary?”

Edith’s countenance changed so suddenly that it could not escape the notice of her sister; but neither of them spoke for a time.

At length Edith said, tremulously, “You would not say that, if you knew my heart. Oh, it makes me shudder when I remember what a proud, rebellious heart mine has been! Sometimes,” she added, her voice sinking to a lower key, and expressing deep feeling, “sometimes I am tempted to fear that I cannot be forgiven; that my sins have been too aggravated. But that is only when I forget the heavy price which has been paid for my ransom. Far oftener my feelings are expressed by the words which are ever running through my mind:

“‘Love I much, I’m much forgiven,
I’m a miracle of grace.’”

Gertrude grasped her sister's hand as she was speaking, and was deeply moved by her earnest words.

After a long pause, during which they sat gazing at the bright moon shining in cloudless splendor, Gertrude asked, "Do you never feel sad at the thought of leaving all you love, and going so far away to live and die among the heathen?"

Edith smiled sadly as she replied, "You have asked in a few words a question it would take me a long time to answer. In the first place, though I leave you, dear Gertrude, and never, until within the last few weeks, have known how dearly I loved you, yet I take my dearest friends with me. Without one of them at least, my heart would indeed sink, go where I would."

"One of them? Why, Edith, I didn't know any one was to accompany you but Alfred."

"You forget in whose service we go," was the whispered response, "and he says, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'" Then she added, aloud, "When I see you and Charley together, or Alice and Clarence, and think how many other ties you have to distract your affections, it often brings to mind the fact that soon Alfred and I shall be all the world to each other. I mean as far as society and social enjoyment is concerned. I almost tremble to think his happiness will be so dependent upon me, for my temper is so easily aroused. Dear Gertrude!" she exclaimed, with a burst of feeling, "you will not forget to pray for me. Think, too," she added, after a pause, "what blessings I have. What a friend Alfred has proved himself to be; and then think what a glorious work to be engaged in! To carry the news of a cruci-

fied Saviour to the poor, deluded heathen. Perhaps you cannot realize it; but I think it would be the greatest trial of my life not to go and labor for their salvation, at the same time I fully appreciate the sacrifice it will be to part from so many dear and tried friends. A father, mother, and sisters, who have borne with my obstinacy, my petulance, my self-will, and have loved me, notwithstanding all my faults. I am surprised, too, at Uncle Stephen, when he knows me so well, that he should deem me worthy to go out under his patronage, and as a companion for one whom he has loved and treated like a son; but Alfred told me, when I urged my character as an objection, that he had expressed himself as well satisfied with the choice.

Many conversations like the above took place during the summer, not only with Edith, but with every member of the family, for Edith had become very frank, with all her friends. Especially did she enjoy a quiet talk with Uncle Stephen about the manners and customs of the people among whom she was so soon to dwell. He informed her of the present state of the mission, read to her letters from Mr. and Mrs. Huntington, and then expressed more fully his wishes with regard to the schools, and the printing press, which he had lately sent out. At length one day when she was looking over and referring to a letter Uncle Stephen had read her, she came to a few words which he informed her were in Hindoostanee, when the thought suddenly occurred to her, "Why couldn't I be learning the language?" Her face flushed with pleasure at the thought, and she eagerly inquired, "Have you any elementary books in the language?"

“No,” he replied, though he added, after a moment, “I think Clarence has.”

“And will you assist me if I try to be getting an insight into it? And will you keep my secret?” were her rapid questions.

Without answering, Uncle Stephen walked quickly into the adjoining room, where Clarence kept his private library, his law books being at his office, and soon returned with a small book, answering to an English primer, and also a dictionary. “Clarence would gladly teach you,” he said.

But no, Edith preferred him for a teacher, and a teacher he gladly consented to be. Ever since his return to America she had heard both Uncle Stephen and Clarence use expressions in Hindoostanee, and when Alfred first came to the Hall, he had taught her several phrases, with which she had delighted her school companions on her return to F——, so that the sound of the language was not wholly unfamiliar to her ear. She took a lesson in the sound of the letters that very day, and lay awake nearly half the night, trying to recall the meaning of certain words which were running through her mind. When at last she fell asleep, the curiously-formed letters were dancing before her excited vision, while half-clad Hindoos seemed screaming meaningless words in her ears.

It is doubtful whether Uncle Stephen or his pupil better enjoyed the hour passed in spelling, writing, or speaking the strange tongue. The old gentleman was proud of his own skill as a teacher, and he was still more proud of Edith's success, which was indeed remarkable. He looked forward with intense delight to the time when

her secret should be discovered, and many were the plans made and rejected for bringing it to light when the proper moment should arrive. During the summer Gertrude and Edith found full occupation for their needles, in the preparations for the double ceremony which was to take place some time in the fall, and in these engagements they found efficient assistance from their mother and Alice, though the latter spent much time in the village, in her visits among the poor. She had long before given up her equestrian habits, and Clarence had purchased a light carriage, in which she could drive Felix, who was perfectly tractable. Minnie Hayden had commenced attending an infant school, and might be seen at recess keeping tight hold of the hand of her little friend, Lizzy Gates, Dexter leading them to and from school.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause.”—*Cowper.*

IN the month of August Alfred arrived from New Haven, having completed his theological course. Edith had long wished to visit Planesville, to render in person her thanks to the kind woman who had befriended her on a former occasion ; and Alfred accompanied her there. Miss Edith Carey, with her brilliant complexion, her large eyes, beaming with a mellowed light, her luxuriant black hair, twisted like a coronal around her brow, appeared wholly unlike the insane wanderer whose pale, haggard face, whose wildly gleaming eyes, and dishevelled locks had so frightened the country-woman, by her sudden appearance. When Mr. Huntington, after numerous inquiries for the retired place, drove into the yard, Edith, who remembered nothing of the persons she had come to visit, saw a neatly dressed female standing before a churn in the open shed, while, seated on a braided mat, near her, was an infant, playing with a basket of clothes-pins.

At the imminent danger of leaving her butter, which had just begun “to come,” to turn back to cream, the

farmer's wife left her churning, and advanced to the door to welcome her visitors. She rather hesitated, as she saw they were strangers, but supposing they might wish to purchase butter or cream, she stood, while they descended from the carriage, modestly awaiting them. Edith cordially advanced, and presented her hand, saying, as she did so: "Is this Mrs. Goodwin?"

"Yes, ma'am," she replied, dropping a courtesy.

"I see you do not remember me," continued Edith, smiling, though rather sadly; "and yet I have visited you and passed, at least, one night under your roof, which, if I have been rightly informed, deprived you of your rest, so that you were obliged to hold your infant in your arms until morning."

"Can it be possible?" inquired Mrs. Goodwin, having surveyed, from head to foot, the tall, elegantly dressed lady before her. "No," she added, as if speaking to herself, "the sick girl was very unlike this one."

"But I am the very one of whom you took such kind care, and if you will allow us to walk in, I will soon convince you of it."

With many blushes and apologies for her impoliteness in allowing them to stand at the door, Mrs. Goodwin invited them into her neat, cool apartment, which, as formerly, answered the double purpose of sitting and sleeping rooms. Hastily shaking up the feathers in a small, red-covered cushion, which graced the wooden rocking-chair, and pushing it toward Edith, the hostess begged her visitors to make themselves at home, and she would call Joshua to put up the horse.

The room, from having been shut up since sunrise,

was deliciously cool, the thick paper shades keeping out almost every ray of light. Edith seated herself, and laid aside her bonnet, much pleased with the situation in which she found herself, sheltered so completely from the scorching rays of the sun. It was some time before her eyes became enough accustomed to the darkness to see what the room contained. In one corner stood a low bedstead, made up very round and high, showing plainly there was no stint of feathers in its manufacture. This was covered with a gayly-colored patchwork quilt, upon which much taste had been expended in the arrangement of the figures. By its side stood a chest of drawers, the top neatly covered with a snow-white napkin, while a family Bible, cased in brown cambric, lay upon it. Just above the Bible hung a small mirror, ornamented with green feathery asparagus, with its bright-red berries,— a pitcher filled with the same, also stood in the chimney-corner. A table, upon which lay a few select and well-preserved books, together with half a dozen chairs completed the survey. Nothing could have better proved the change in Edith to be radical, than to mark the expression of her countenance as her eye rested, first upon one article, then upon another, in the simple apartment. Formerly she would have regarded the whole with supreme contempt, or as so far beneath her as to be unworthy to excite any other feeling than profound indifference; but now, in the Bible, so neatly covered, and reverently placed, she read the characters of her host and hostess, as lovers of the sacred truths it contained, as fellow-travellers, looking forward with herself to the same

blessed home in the skies, and she felt bound to them by the strongest ties of Christian affection.

At the sound of a man's voice speaking to the horse, as he drove to the well-stored barn, Mr. Huntington had stepped out to say that it would not be worth the while to unharness, as their stay would be very short. But the hospitable host would not consent to such an arrangement. His wife had told him, in a word, who had come, and he was proud to show them that they were welcome. He now entered, in company with Alfred, to be introduced to the lady, and was immediately followed by his wife, who, after summoning a boy from the garden to finish the churning, had hastily arranged her own toilet, by re-smoothing her hair, and tying on a clean, white apron, and now came in to add her earnest invitation to that of her husband, that their visitors would remain through the day, and ride home in the cool of the evening. Both Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin were so earnest in their desire to entertain the young lady toward whom they felt such an interest, that neither she nor her friend could well refuse, and Edith consented, on the condition that their hostess would not allow their coming to interrupt her duties.

"La sakes!" exclaimed Joshua, "wife don't have such a sight o' company that she can't afford to give up one day to entertaining of 'em, and I a'n't at all driv with work now; 'twill be a treat to both on us."

The boy at this moment put in his head at the door, apparently to make the announcement: "Miss Goodwin, your butter's come as hard as shot," — but, really, to take a survey of the new arrival; and Edith

begged leave to accompany her to the shed, where they had seen her at work. This shed was attached to the house, opening from the kitchen, and had large doors on either side, so that there was a fine draught of air through it. Mrs. Goodwin brought out the rocking-chair, and placed it in the most comfortable situation, while Mr. Huntington followed his host to the door, where they were sheltered from the sun, and sat down upon the steps.

“This is the coolest place, Edith, I’ve found to-day,” he said, looking back into the room; “I ought not to complain of the heat,” he added, addressing the farmer by his side, “for I was born under a hotter sun than you ever saw.”

“Du tell, now; where was it?” asked his companion, eagerly.

“In ——, about fifty miles north of Calcutta, in the East Indies.”

“Sakes alive!” exclaimed Joshua, with awe, while his wife dropped back into the butter-milk the ball of butter which she had been dexterously working with two wooden spoons.

“Yes,” continued Alfred, “my father is a missionary, laboring among the Hindoos, and Miss Carey and I are hoping soon to join them, and spend our lives in trying to bring them to a knowledge of Christ.”

“Then you’re missionaries!” exclaimed Joshua and his wife, in a breath, and looking earnestly from one to another.

“Yes,” said Edith, softly, “we hope to be, though I know I am not worthy.” This remark was added from

observing the intense surprise manifested in the announcement, and entirely mistaking the cause. She knew both Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin had seen her under the most unfavorable circumstances, and well knowing that they could not be aware of the entire renovation of her character, she thought they would naturally consider her very unfit for the station to which she aspired.

But nothing could have been further from the truth, and, indeed, as Mrs. Goodwin took her apron, and wiped her eyes with the back of her hand, she would have been puzzled to explain her own feelings, so fluttered was she at the unexpected pleasure and honor of seeing real missionaries, of speaking with them and of even entertaining them under her humble roof. She had heard a great deal about missions and missionaries, from the pulpit; and her mother, who lived in a neighboring town, occasionally sent her papers containing missionary intelligence. She and her husband always laid by a small sum, from their earnings, to be sent to the heathen; but the idea of ever knowing a missionary, of hearing from his own lips, about the great work in which he was engaged, was so much above and beyond her expectations, that she found it difficult to realize her own good fortune. Then there came welling up a feeling of pride as she thought of the interest she should create by relating to her mother, friends, and neighbors, and even to her good minister, the honor which had been conferred upon her. All these thoughts rushed so quickly through her mind that she was not aware how earnestly she gazed at one, and then another, utterly unmindful of the task before her

Poor Joshua sat awkwardly twirling his thumbs, and looking very much confused. If he had been told that the gentleman sitting on the stone step by his side, was the rich Squire Barstow, from New York, of whom he had heard so much, or the famous lawyer, C—, from Boston, he would not have felt embarrassed, for he was an independent, true-hearted American farmer, owing no man anything, and rejoicing in his liberty to think and act for himself. But to have talked so freely with a missionary, to be sitting there, on the back stoop, with a man who was going to leave all his friends and home, to take his life in his hands and go forth to dwell among heathen, the ignorant, deluded heathen, amidst all the discomforts of a barbarous state, to look forward cheerfully to it, for the sake of his divine Master — this, in his opinion, so elevated and ennobled his guest, and rendered the employment in which he had heretofore prided himself so humble, from the contrast, that, for a time, he had not a word to say. At length, he sighed heavily, as he exclaimed: "Wife, I guess this ere gentleman and lady better go in to their room, while I go out and water the horse agin; I didn't gin him much, he was so warm."

"It isn't necessary, yet," responded Mr. Huntington, laying his hand gently on the man's arm, as he was rising from his seat; "and you certainly wouldn't wish to exclude us from the enjoyment of this fine breeze; Edith," he added, addressing her gayly, to give him time to recover himself, "this will be a good opportunity for you to learn to make butter. All we shall have will be of our own making. At any rate, from what I can re-

member of the want of neatness among the natives, I should hardly relish butter worked by them."

The conversation was interrupted by the boy coming from the barn with the fat baby asleep in his arms. He had been dismissed there to amuse her with the chickens until her mother could be at liberty to attend to her. The farmer took her with a tenderness and skill which proved him to be not wholly unused to such business, and laid her upon the bed; then, having watered the horse, he returned to his seat to listen with great interest to the conversation which was going on in the shed.

Mrs. Goodwin had now recovered the use of her tongue; and, while she rapidly advanced to the completion of her business, she asked innumerable questions relative to Alfred's early days and their future life, thinking that, as she had such an opportunity to hear about that which so much interested her, 'twould be extremely foolish to waste it. Having motioned the boy, who stood by her side, to carry the wooden tray of golden-colored balls to the cellar, she brought from a closet two glasses of rich milk for her guests, which Alfred declared was a fit treat for a queen. She moved about noiselessly, putting away dishes, and preparing for dinner, her absorbing interest in the subject discussed rendering her wholly forgetful of the awkwardness of doing so in the presence of strangers; and, before any of them were aware, the table in the kitchen was spread with a neatly fringed cloth from her best drawer, and covered with a most tempting repast. Though the dishes happened to be common delft ware, and set on without regard to the latest style, of which she was wholly ignorant, yet the

young missionaries did their hostess's cookery ample justice. There was white bread and brown bread of the finest quality, a generous cake of butter stamped in the form of a large oak-leaf, a dish of preserved strawberries, fresh currants, custard and dried apple pies, cheese both common and sage, with a plentiful supply of milk for drink.

Edith as well as Alfred were hearty in their praise; the latter much delighted the good woman by saying, "We shall often think of your hospitable board and cordial welcome when we are thousands of miles distant."

After dinner Edith asked Alfred to repeat a few phrases, that their kind friends might hear the sound of his native tongue. He laughed, as he complied, to see the open-mouthed astonishment with which they listened. The boy, who was now eating his dinner, dropped his knife and fork to hear.

"Can you understand such lingo?" asked Joshua of Edith. "It don't seem as if it can mean anything."

She replied by repeating very rapidly, as if by rote, a sentence he had taught her during his first visit to the Hall. It was now her turn to laugh, as Alfred started in surprise. "You didn't think I had so retentive a memory, I suppose," she added, archly. "Don't you remember when you taught me that? Translate it for them."

"It is one petition of the Lord's Prayer," returned Alfred, and he repeated the whole, in Tamul. "I well remember the pleasure my father and mother experienced when the small class of boys and girls in the mission school repeated that prayer through in unison, and

seemed to understand its import. Mother said it repaid her for all the trials they had passed through."

The baby now awoke, and called loudly for attention. Mrs. Goodwin went to her, and, after half an hour, returned with the young miss dressed out in her best, to see the company. She was not at all afraid, and went willingly to Edith.

"What is her name?" she asked.

"I am ashamed to tell you," replied her mother, "that she has none but Baby. We keep putting it off, and she's nine months old without our having fixed upon one."

"I'll give her a name," said Alfred, coming toward them — "Edith Huntington. You couldn't have a prettier," he added, smiling, as he saw the burning blush which covered Edith's face.

"We'll do it!" they both exclaimed; "that is," hesitated the mother, looking at Edith, "if it's agreeable to her."

The young lady replied by imprinting a fervent kiss upon its brow; and so the important matter, which had caused such earnest discussion in the long winter evenings was settled, and the little cherub was Baby no longer, but Miss Edith Huntington Goodwin.

"I must have a kiss, Miss Edith, for giving you so good a name," and Alfred bent down to the child. "When I get to India, I shall be sure to send you some bangles, that you may never forget you were named for a missionary."

"How would you like to go and live among the heathen, and teach them to be good?" inquired Edith of

the boy, who stood near them, eagerly listening to all that passed.

The lad held down his head, and began making figures on the floor with his bare toes. But long years after, that question sounded in his ears; and, though he did not become a missionary, yet his heart was warmly engaged in the work, and he was ever ready to bestow his mite in the good cause.

About four o'clock, Edith, having taken an affectionate leave of her little namesake, started with Alfred for home, Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin following them to the gate, and with moistened eyes bade them farewell. They never forgot that visit; and the words of the young missionary at parting, "Though you may not be called to go into foreign lands to labor for the salvation of the heathen, yet there will always be work for Christians at home, while there are souls to be won to Christ," sank deep into their hearts.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Oh, married love! each heart shall own,
Where two congenial souls unite,
Thy golden chains inlaid with down,
Thy lamp with heaven’s own splendor bright.”

Langhorne.

“Thou art the nurse of virtue. In thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again.”

Cowper.

THE months of August and September passed rapidly away. The letters of Mr. Henderson were more and more urgent for Gertrude to appoint the day of their marriage, which had been from time to time postponed on account of the uncertainty of Alfred’s movements; and one evening, when the family were at tea, he suddenly joined them, saying that he did not intend to leave without a bride. After tea, he requested an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, where he plead his cause so earnestly, that, as the arrangements of Alfred were uncertain, so that the time of the marriage could not be fixed, and as there really was no good reason why the ardent lover should have his patience longer tested, the parents gave their consent that the wedding should take place the following week.

“I’ll leave it with you,” said Marion, “to prevail with her. I rather fear her consent to such hasty movements

will be more difficult to obtain ;” and so the discomfited lover thought, when, at the end of half an hour of eloquent arguing, which he insisted would have carried any jury in the land, he had made no advance in his suit. Gertrude only laughed at him, and said it made her catch her breath to think of the bustle that would be necessary.

Mr. Henderson felt aggrieved, and, giving her a sad, reproaching glance, he left the room, and retired at once to his chamber. Marion met him on the stairs, but he passed her in silence, and she went to her daughter to obtain an explanation.

When the young girl went up, at a late hour, to her own room, she heard a step in her lover’s chamber, and paused a moment to listen. He was walking back and forth across the floor, and the poor girl acknowledged to herself that she had decided too hastily. Her mother had been conversing with her upon the subject, and, though pained at the thought of parting with her, yet advised her to consent to his wishes, and be married before his return.

The next morning, when Mr. Henderson, grave and sad, appeared below, Gertrude, who was anxiously awaiting him, put a tiny note into his hand. He needed but a single look at her downcast eyes and rosy cheeks — but one quick glance at the delicate penmanship, to drive away all his gloom, and he was Charley again.

When Gertrude consented to his wishes, she did it with a good grace ; and her lover whispered again and again in her ear, “ In everything else, dear Gerty, you shall have your own way.”

At her special request, the wedding was to be private, but she devoted two entire days of the short time left her, to farewell calls upon her friends.

The day after Gertrude's departure, Dr. Jenks called to invite the family to a wedding at his house. Maurice had arrived a few days before, and was to sail in a fortnight or three weeks for Liverpool. The old gentleman was in high spirits, as well as in great haste, but begged all the family to honor the young people by being present. This they readily promised. The good clergyman, Mr. Badger, was certainly reaping a golden harvest. He appeared at the doctor's, and looked around in smiling complaisance upon the party assembled. Soon Maurice entered with Amy; and all were impressed with her loveliness as she gave her hand trustingly into the keeping of her husband. The young sailor uttered the responses with a fervor which called forth many smiles, and, as soon as the ceremony was through, imprinted a kiss upon her lips. Then followed the congratulations, the cake, and the partings, during which both the bride and groom came in for their full share of praise. Maurice promised to accompany his wife to Lindenwood before he sailed. He had brought home the highest recommendations from his captain, who was exceedingly anxious to retain him in the ship he commanded. The vessel was now going out to Liverpool for a short voyage; and he confidently expected to be at home again by March.

Uncle Stephen presented Gertrude, his niece, with the same sum which he had given to Emma, saying, "I didn't mean you should lose anything by it, when you

acted so nobly by Alice. The old gentleman was now meditating whether it would be better for Alfred to take advantage of a merchant vessel about to sail for Calcutta, or to wait until spring, that he might have the benefit of a course of medical lectures in Philadelphia. The latter was at length decided upon, and Edith was left at Lindenwood for the winter. She applied herself with great diligence to her studies, and really surprised her teacher by the aptness she displayed for the acquisition of the language. From talking with one who had lived so long in India, her pronounciation was remarkably perfect.

When Maurice called with Amy, he informed his friends that his ship was not to sail for another week, which he considered uncommonly good fortune. When he arose to take leave, he approached Edith, and said, with some emotion, "Though I suppose I may stand a better chance of seeing you than some others, as I frequently make voyages to Calcutta; yet we may never meet again. I wish you great prosperity, wherever you may go."

The unbidden tears gushed to Edith's eyes at this unexpected benediction, and, giving him her hand, she said, "Life is always uncertain. I may never be permitted to reach a foreign shore. You may never return to your native land; but let us strive to live in such a manner that we shall not fail to reach our heavenly home."

How many times, in after years, were these words recalled to mind!

The young sailor bowed over Edith's hand to conceal

a tear, uttered a fervent "Thank you, Edith;" then turned to leave the room.

* * * * *

It was mid winter. The thermometer outside the door stood four degrees below zero, and the appearance of passers by hurrying at full speed, with buffalo robes carefully tucked around them, while the panting horses emitted at every breath a full puff of steam, bore evidence to the biting, frosty atmosphere. But in doors at Lindenwood, the air was warm and balmy as June. A powerful furnace in the cellar sent its genial warmth through every part of the house, and, in addition to this, a large wood fire blazed cheerfully upon the hearth in the parlor. But it is not the parlor to which we would introduce you this morning. In the spacious room above it, the heavy damask curtains are draped from the bay window, to exclude the least particle of air; but in the window facing the south, a full flood of light from the sun is pouring in. Drawn up before the cheerful fire is the large easy chair, mentioned on a former occasion, and in it is seated its former occupant, pale and languid, it is true, but with eyes as bright, and mouth as sweetly wreathed in smiles as of old. Uncle Stephen and Clarence are standing near, looking first at her and then at a tiny roll of flannel lying across the lap of her mother, who is seated in a low rocking-chair, close to the fire. Alice often gazes at the same small object with a shade of anxiety crossing her brow, until an old lady, who seems very much at home, and whom we speedily recognize as Nurse Green, says, "La, Miss Alice! don't go to worrying about the baby. It's only the snuffles he's got, and

they wont hurt him while he can eat and sleep like a young Trojan, as he does now."

"I hope it won't last long," said Alice, in reply, "it seems to make him uneasy."

A low tap is heard at the door, and Edith enters, asking, "May I come?"

She advances toward the young mother, and kisses her pale cheek, at the same time expressing her joy to see her once more in her old seat.

This morning is a great occasion with all the family, for Alice has arisen from her bed for the first time, though the little boy lying asleep in the lap of his young grandmother is nearly seven weeks old. She has been very feeble for two or three months, and there was a time when the kind, sympathizing physician turned abruptly away from the inquiries of the agonized husband and the anxious father, or only answered with a moistened eye, "How can I be expected to tell what will be the result? I wish you wouldn't ask questions. No one but God can answer."

For the last ten days the invalid had rallied, and the doctor had resumed his usual warmth and frankness of manner. Alice exhibited a sweetness of temper and patience in suffering, which endeared her, if possible, more than ever to her family. In two things only was she very decided. One was, to nurse her babe herself the other, that the new comer should bear the name of Stephen Forsyth. "I am decided, dear Uncle, on that point," she said, as the good old man with a noble spirit of self-sacrifice, begged her to call it by some more modern name. "I shall love the little fellow just as well," he

urged, "if you call him anything else, and shall always remember that you thought of me first."

Alice pressed the old man's hand to her pale lips, as she added, "His name is *Stephen*. I only wish it could be *Uncle Stephen*, and I shall love it better than all the fine names to be found in the dictionary."

"Well, child," said the gratified uncle, smiling through his tears, "you always did have your own way with me."

But we will return to the pleasant group before the fire, who are now joined by the doctor and Mr. Stanley. After examining the pulse of his patient, Dr. Jenks said, gaily, "As free from fever as I am. Now we'll soon build you up. Squire Sydney, did you send to New York for some of that bitter stuff I mentioned?"

"Yes," replied Clarence, "I succeeded in getting some of the very best."

"Well, send for a bottle. Nurse, you have water and sugar here, I see."

Clarence rang the bell, and a servant soon brought a bottle from which the doctor poured a few teaspoonfuls into a goblet, put in bountifully of sugar and filled the glass with water. He stirred and sipped, putting in a little more from the bottle, and a little more sugar, until he had fixed it just to his liking. "There, Mrs. Alice!" he exclaimed, holding it to her lips, "drink every drop of it."

"It is very disagreeable to me," said Alice, laughing as the doctor stood watching her.

"Can't help it; down with it, or I'm thinking Master Stephen will have to go hungry."

"Is it good for him?" inquired the young mother eagerly.

“ Good for him ? yes. It’ll make him grow as fat as a porpoise. ’Twill make him sleep, too, and be good-natured.

Alice put the glass resolutely to her lips, and drained it.

“ Bravo ! ” laughed the good man ; “ touched the right chord,” he added, in a loud whisper, to Clarence. “ There, Nurse, you saw how I mixed it. She must take that whole bottle full in three days at farthest. Give her a glass three or four times a day. Perhaps she’d like a cracker with it. She’ll be calling for it herself by to-morrow.”

He was about turning to leave the room, when Alice called, “ Doctor, you havn’t looked at the baby.”

“ Well, he’s no great sight. What should I look at him for.”

“ He don’t breathe well.”

The doctor bent over the small specimen of humanity and put his ear down to listen. “ He’s well enough,” he replied, rising. “ Just get Nurse to rub a little sweet oil on his nose,” and bowed himself out of the room.

It was very certain that whoever else neglected the baby (though there was not much danger of that at present), Uncle Stephen would not. Twenty times in an hour he turned aside the blanket with which its small face was nearly concealed, and listened, to be sure that it still breathed. In reading his papers he turned them with great care, lest the rustling should disturb its slumber, and walked about as noiselessly as possible.

“ I do believe Uncle Stephen thinks that baby is his own ! ” exclaimed Edith, one day after having watched

him playing to the child, and witnessed his joy, when, in return to the terms of endearment lavished upon him, the little fellow cooed a reply.

"I should like to know," answered the old gentleman, with some indignation, "whose child you think it is, if it is not mine?"

Both Edith and Alice laughed heartily, at which the baby cooed again.

"I had thought," said the former, "that it belonged to Alice and Clarence; but —"

"Clarence has nothing whatever to do with the child," continued he, in a loud tone. "What does he, a boy, know about the care of children? I'll venture he never had it in his arms in his life."

And this was true. The young father's heart was full to overflowing with gratitude for the sweet gift from heaven. He never entered the room, or left it, without a peep at its tiny features; but he had been exceedingly solicitous concerning the health of his beloved wife, and, when he was at home, devoted himself almost wholly to her comfort. Never having even seen so young a child, the idea of trusting himself to take so precious a treasure into his arms, had never once entered his mind.

When Stephen Forsyth, Jr., was two months old, an immense box arrived from New York to his address. When the little fellow was informed of it, he told a very long story, which his mother perfectly understood to mean that he wished to know its contents without delay. The desire was instantly complied with, and forthwith there came from the huge box a tiny bathing-tub, a cradle, or rather a crib upon rockers, with delicately wrought

muslin curtains looped above it, then a basket of toys, of the most approved style. The only article among them which excited the notice of the young gentleman, was a gutta percha ring, which, when placed in his hands, he grasped tightly, and thrust it at once into his mouth. "Certainly," as Uncle Stephen said, "It's my boy."

In February Alfred Huntington came on to accompany Edith to Baltimore, where she had been earnestly invited to visit Gertrude, and on her return she had promised to pass a few weeks with Emma.

Alfred was reluctant to be away from his studies, and tarried only one day. In the evening, when all the family were gathered in the parlor, Uncle Stephen turned to Alfred, and asked him, in Tamul, "Do you think Edith can ever acquire the native language?" In reply he commenced, "It is said to be extremely difficult; but she is very persevering, and —"

"Take care!" she exclaimed in the same language, "I hear." Alfred and Clarence started in surprise.

"What is the matter?" she continued, archly. "What have I done that you should gaze at me so?"

"Done!" repeated Alfred, "I believe you are a witch. Where did you learn Tamul so well?"

She pointed to Uncle Stephen, who rubbed his hands and laughed aloud. "She's outwitted you this time. She can read and write as well as you can."

"Hardly that," she responded, "but I can read simple sentences."

"But just now you spoke like a native."

"Yes, I have been practising those sentences for six months."

“ And didn’t tell me,” said Alfred, with a reproachful look.

“ Never mind,” replied Edith, tenderly, “ I promise you you’ll hear enough bye and bye. I shall be obliged to tell you, or keep my secrets entirely to myself.”

The whole family were amazed at the progress she had made, though she persisted in attributing all her success to Uncle Stephen, and he, scarcely able to contain his joy, walked back and forth, saying, “ Yes, I’ve found out at last what I am good for. I must apply for a professorship of foreign languages.” In this case the old gentleman did not refuse to receive the praise which was his due.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Oh, weep not! thy loved one is sweetly sleeping
Beneath the blue ocean's crested wave,
Where low surging billows are ever singing
Their requiem round his pearly grave.
Loving thoughts of thee often swelled his fond heart
As homeward he plough'd the green sea foam,
Till called by his Saviour and God to depart,
To the land of the blest — the penitent's home.

It was a clear, bright morning in March. The weather had been bleak and windy, but now the sun was shining in full splendor, as if to make amends for the length of time during which he had hidden his face. In the sunny kitchen of Dr. Jenks, there was evidently some great occasion at hand. The large table was set out in the middle of the floor — the place it had hitherto occupied only during the preparations for thanksgiving.

Before it stood Mrs. Jenks, attired in a wide checked apron, her sleeves rolled up, and her tongue keeping time with the rolling-pin, with which she was dexterously transforming the flaky paste into coverings for the long row of pies before her. Her haste, however, did not prevent the old lady from giving an occasional glance up the street, which she could see for some distance. "Let me think," she soliloquized, sticking the end of her knife into the paste, and pausing a moment, "there's six mince and four apple, — that makes ten, — to be covered. Yes,

there's enough ;" and she hastened again with her work. " Amy, dear, wont you just open the door of the oven a minute ? I'm afraid it's getting too hot. What time did your father think Maurice would be here ? "

" Not before noon," replied the young wife, after complying with the request. " I'm on my last shirt, and they look beautifully too," she exclaimed, holding one up for her mother to admire.

" They would do any body credit, child ; but I'll venture 'twont be eleven o'clock before he'll be here. Now, don't you go to being frightened, if he jumps out from behind the door any minute," and she cast an anxious glance at the young wife. " You know he's mighty fond of surprises, and don't realize how dangerous they are at times."

" Do you think he will be pleased ? " asked Amy, in a subdued voice.

" Pleased, child, he'll be tickled almost out of his wits. There, I've got that cover too small," and she glanced for the hundredth time at the clock.

Amy seemed no less excited, though her manner of exhibiting it was different. Her joy was too intense for many words. She spread the six new shirts, she had made for her husband during his absence, on the small clothes-horse, placed it in the sitting-room, out of the way, and then assisted to put the pies into the oven.

" Now, Amy," said the mother, " if you'll beat the eggs, I'll stir up a Washington pie, and fill it with that strawberry jam, he's so fond of." Just at this moment a shadow fell upon the floor, which sent the blood wildly through Amy's heart, and made her mother

scream: "Now that's too bad, Doctor; I do say!" as she saw it was only her husband peeping in at the door.

"Not come, hey?" said the Doctor, trying to speak cheerfully. "Well, I told you he couldn't get here till twelve. The vessel only arrived in New York yesterday; and he couldn't be spared at once. He wont spend much idle time on the road, you may depend." This was the second time the father, impatient to welcome his boy, had hurried home to see if the young seaman had arrived. "And so I gave you a start, child," he said, approaching and kissing Amy. "Now, you just keep yourself cool, or I'll get wife to make you a dose of valerian tea," and he hastened away to his patients again.

An hour later and the fragrant pies stood arranged upon the table; the crust baked to a delicious brown; the Washington pie was cooling before it could be filled with sweetmeats; the sponge for cakes was rising upon the hearth, and Mrs. Jenks stood looking around her with feelings of laudable pride that her efforts had been so successful. "It will soon be time to put in the meat," she said aloud, walking to the closet where Amy had prepared a pan of vegetables. There were peeled turnips, a nicely washed cabbage, beets and potatoes. "I sha'n't calculate," she added, "to have dinner much before two; but I'll put the beets into the pot, and then change my cap."

In the meantime her son's wife had been employed in sweeping and dusting; her own room receiving especial care, and a pair of newly embroidered slippers being placed in a conspicuous position. She opened one

drawer after another to see if all were ready, and almost hoped to find something more to do for the dear one who was momentarily expected. But no, the delightful task, which had occupied her so many weeks, was ended. Not a button to sew on, not a string to fasten, and so Amy unpinned her hair, and let the long golden tresses fall over her shoulders. "How proud Maurice is of my hair," and she gazed at it, fondly, as a thing he had loved. After arranging it in his favorite style, she proceeded to array herself in a brown merino dress, and with a neat collar, fastened by a brooch, and a black silk apron, her simple toilet was completed.

For a few moments she sat down and gave herself up to the enjoyment of her own thoughts. She rapidly reviewed her acquaintance with Maurice. He had been uniformly respectful and kind in his treatment of her, but oh, from the time when he first told her his love, how freely had he poured out his affection. He had been the most devoted of lovers, the very kindest of husbands, and the young wife pressed her hands to her bosom as she raised her heart in prayer for help to be at all times a loving, faithful wife. Poor Amy!

Suddenly, hearing a step in the room below, she started up, and ran quickly down the stairs. She entered the sitting-room, and cast a hurried glance around; but no one was there. She heard the voice of her father in the kitchen, and concluded the step must have been his.

"Well, Amy," he said, pleasantly, though he himself was not a little disappointed at the non-arrival of his son, "What do you say to riding down to farmer Pond's with me? I want somebody to talk with, and he'll be sure to

be here when we come back. But as long as you and mother sit watching,— you know the old adage, ‘A watched pot ——’”

“Oh, father,” she replied earnestly, raising her serene, truthful eyes to his face, “I couldn’t be away.”

“Mother,” exclaimed the Doctor, turning from her with a sigh, which he would have found it very difficult to account for; “can’t you give me something to eat? I lost my appetite this morning.”

Mrs. Jenks brought from the pantry a large mince turn-over, and hastily pouring out some cold coffee, placed it before him,— “There, eat quick,” said she, “I want to clear up, and not have dirty dishes standing round when company is expected.”

“Company, hey!” he exclaimed, laughing. “I wonder if I should go away two or three months, whether I should be company? Well, I must be going along.” But still he lingered and looked at the clock, whose tardy hands seemed reluctantly to approach the expected hour. At length, it strikes. Now, he can’t go until the train comes in. The front door bell rings: “Oh, dear!” says Mrs. Jenks, “my hands are all flour.” Amy’s eyes plead, “I had rather not go;” and so the Doctor went, and let in a woman who wanted a tooth pulled. Amy’s heart beat now faster than ever. “In a few moments he will be here.”

Again the bell rings. “I’ll venture that’s Maurice,” exclaimed the mother, “ringing the bell to surprise us;” and she calls to the Doctor, who leaves his patient and admits the clergyman.

“I wonder what on earth he’s come here for, at this

hour, ' she whispered to Amy, after listening long enough to hear the voice of the good rector; and for the first time in her life, the hospitable woman failed to give her minister a cordial reception. "I shouldn't wonder one grain," she added, to her daughter, "if the saucy fellow had gone round the back way, and was hiding up stairs now; 'twould be just like him;" and the two started off on their survey. Room after room was searched; Amy expecting every moment to have her husband spring from some corner, and clasp her in his strong arms.

"Come out here, if you're hid, Maurice," exclaimed the mother, with some indignation, as she had, so far, been balked in her search. But even while she was speaking, the voice of Dr. Jenks was heard at the stairs. 'Mother! Amy! come down.'

The words were spoken hoarsely, wholly unlike his usually kind and cheerful voice; but he was instantly obeyed. He stood at the foot of the stairs, with his arms outstretched. Amy flew down. "Where is he, father?"

"Gone, Amy; *gone*, child."

"What do you mean, Doctor?" almost shrieked Mrs. Jenks, catching hold of her husband's arm, and shaking it, as if to rouse him to his consciousness.

"Mother," he faltered, staggering back, "your boy lies at the bottom of the sea." With one wild shriek, the poor young widow fell senseless to the floor.

Perhaps it was well for the stricken parents that their attention was, for a time, diverted from their own grief by the alarming situation of their daughter, who soon

grew dangerously ill. One fainting fit succeeded another. The expression of utter woe upon her pallid countenance causing those who watched over her to feel that it was almost cruel to try to restore her to consciousness. Before night another physician was in attendance, and his skill was eminently necessary, for Dr. Jenks could hardly be roused to speak. Early in the evening he retired to bed; and when, shortly after, his wife left the bedside of poor Amy to attend to his wants, she found him in a fit. The shock had been too sudden for the doating father, and for a time he sank under it.

Dr. Mason was still in the house, where he purposed remaining through the night,—and immediately applied the most powerful remedies, which after a few hours were successful in restoring him to consciousness, though not to his speech. His mouth was slightly drawn down, and the whole of his left side paralyzed. In all her experience, Mrs. Jenks had never passed such a night. Her husband lying in a fit—from which he might never recover; her child, Amy, now doubly dear, perhaps dying; and all this, while a dreadful weight of sorrow was resting upon her, and crushing her to the earth.

Mr. Badger, the kind rector, who had for so many years labored side by side with Dr. Jenks, sat with him during the entire night. Toward morning he called Mrs. Jenks from the room, and placed in her hands a letter from Captain Bruce directed to himself, containing the particulars of the dreadful event, which had caused such sudden changes in their once happy home. It was as follows:—

“ Rev. Mr. Badger :

“ Respected Sir, — It is my painful duty to inform you that Maurice Jenks, one of your congregation, who has for some time past been mate on board the ‘ William Bartlett ’ is no more. On the night of the 16th of March, a violent gale arose, during which our vessel was in great danger. In the midst of the dreadful scene, Maurice was perfectly calm and self-possessed; and, after one of the sailors had in vain attempted to climb the mast to let down a sail, he sprang quickly up to the top, performed the task, and was about descending when a violent lurch of the vessel, for which he was unprepared, caused him to lose his hold, and he was precipitated into the sea. The fearful cry, ‘ A man overboard ! ’ rang out on the night air. The vessel was immediately put about, and ropes thrown in every direction. Indeed, when it was discovered who was the missing man, it was with extreme difficulty that I could restrain the sympathizing sailors from throwing themselves into the water to rescue him. But the sea was rolling mountain waves, and the absolute impossibility of a man living for a moment in it, made me sternly order them back to their duty, though my heart was bleeding at the loss I had sustained, at the death of him who was one of the best mates in the world, and whom I had learned to value as a personal friend.

“ I have taken the liberty to address my letter to you, sir, from the kind interest our lamented friend has often assured me you have taken in his welfare, and from the belief that no one could more cautiously or tenderly announce the sad tidings to the afflicted parents and the

bereaved widow. I will thank you, sir, if you will, at such time as you may deem proper, present to them my most earnest sympathies in their unspeakable loss. This I shall do in person at the first moment I can leave my vessel. Unless I can do so in a very few days, I shall send the effects belonging to my lamented friend, by boat, to Queenstown.

“With sentiments of high respect, I am, sir, your truly sympathizing friend,

ANSEL G. BRUCE.”

At the dreadful announcement, Amy fell into a swoon which so nearly resembled death that the kind neighbors and friends who watched over her scarcely allowed themselves to hope that she would survive until morning. How gladly would they have seen tears streaming down her cheeks! But no; except that she breathed, there was no sign of life, and medicines which, under other circumstances, Dr. Mason would have used, might prove fatal.

On the third day after the sad intelligence reached Queenstown, Captain Bruce arrived. He was deeply moved as he heard from Mr. Badger an account of the family. The rector accompanied him to the dwelling, which was so truly a house of mourning, and had the pleasure to witness the soothing influence of the captain's presence after the first gush of feeling had subsided. Mrs. Jenks could not, however, be contented unless her poor husband could also hear the melancholy detail from the lips of their kind and sympathizing friend. Dr. Mason was consulted, and at length con-

sented to it. The good woman knew her husband to be a Christian, and that, as such he would bow submissively to the stroke with which their heavenly Father had visited them.

She was also well aware that evidence the captain was able to give with regard to the good conduct of Maurice would be the best restorative. And so it really proved. As the warm-hearted seaman sat by his side, and related many touching incidents which had occurred during their last voyage, together with the increasing fondness the young man had exhibited for reading the Scriptures, tears of gratitude rolled down the furrowed cheek of the stricken father, while he feebly articulated the words, "Lord Jesus, receive the thanks of a poor, broken-hearted father for thy mercy to his child."

"I am not a professor of religion," continued Captain Bruce, brushing away a falling tear; "but I have often wished I could feel as your son did. When the weather was calm, I have seen him gather a little company of sailors around him, and sit down in a retired part of the vessel, where for hours he read to them from the Bible or religious tracts, the honest tars listening with open mouths, as if for their lives. I had the curiosity to question one of them to see if they really learned any thing, or if it were merely their affection for the young mate which induced such fixed attention. His answer I shall never forget.

"'Jack,' said I, 'when Master Jenks is reading, can you get at the meaning?'

"'Indeed I do,' was the reply; 'and a blessed meaning there is when it tells a poor fellow who all his life long

has carried a terrible load, just how he may lay it down, and get clean rid of it.'

" 'Well, how is that?' I asked.

" 'That's just what he was telling us last Sunday. The Saviour died to take our sins. That is the load I told of. When Christ suffered so much, and at last was nailed to the cross by the bloody Jews, all to get leave to take away our burdens, it appears to me disgracefully small business, not to let him have the pleasure of doing it. I, for one, wont cheat him nor myself any longer; and so my mind's made up.'

" Then that was the sermon I heard him preach,' said I, at the close.

" 'Yes, cap'n,' he replied, that's the substance. In course I can't be expected to gin it off as he did.' "

Many more incidents were related, exhibiting the influence the young mate exerted on board the vessel. These proved a precious balm to the wounded hearts of his parents. For themselves they felt comforted; but poor Amy! For a few hours she had revived to a knowledge that a calamity had befallen her. That she connected it in some way with her husband, was evident from the fact that, whenever addressed, she slowly unclosed her eyes, and feebly whispered his name. Sometimes it was, "Dear Maurice, how long a time you have been gone!" and then, with an expression of fear, "Oh, Mauriee, don't leave me again!"

Dr. Mason, after consulting Mrs. Jenks, proposed to Captain Bruce to visit his patient in the hope of arousing her; and this the kind-hearted man was earnest to do. Indeed, he had hoped to see one so intimately

connected with his deceased friend, and who had exerted so salutary an influence upon him, for Maurice had often attributed the change in his religious feelings as, under God, owing to her consistent example and earnest piety. The anxious physician conducted him to her room, where she lay pale and motionless. She so nearly resembled death, that, with a sudden start, he bent over her to listen if she breathed. Becoming aware that some one was near her, poor Amy quickly opened her eyes, and, with an appealing expression, which brought many tears from the sympathizing man, whispered, "Maurice! Has my Maurice come?" Putting his handkerchief to his eyes, Captain Bruce hurried from the room; and he afterwards remarked that he had rather meet the stiffest gale off Cape Horn than such a look of intense woe as accompanied her whispered question.

From this time, however, she slowly gained strength, until she was able to sit up most of the day; but her mind was wandering, and her language often wild and incoherent. Sometimes the sight of any article of clothing which had belonged to her husband produced violent agitation, and she would tremble excessively; but no tears relieved her until a little Maurice came to fill the place in her heart rendered desolate by the loss she had sustained. In the warm and earnest love which welled up within her breast at the sight of the little stranger, she learned to thank God that he had allowed her even the memory of her dear Maurice, and also for the sweet babe as a precious token of his love. She devoted herself to the training of her child; and when, in after years, the estates which had been so unrighteously taken

from his mother were restored to him, and he accompanied her to Scotland, and took a high station in society, he aimed so to live that he might honor his beloved father, and spend an eternity with him in heaven.

The good doctor partially recovered the use of his paralyzed limbs, and rode about as of old among his patients. He sat for hours talking to those who had known and loved his son, repeating over and over again the anecdotes related by Captain Bruce, and showing a small pocket Bible that Maurice had always carried about him, with such passages underlined as he thought would be adapted to interest and profit the crew. But if, at any time, his patients applied to him for medicine, he invariably sent them to Dr. Mason, having lost all confidence in his own skill.

The kindness he had shown to the poor and destitute proved eminently, in his case, like bread cast upon the water, which he found after many days. Scarcely a day passed without some token, slight it might be, but no less grateful to him, of the affectionate remembrance in which he was held by his former patients and the whole community, and also of their warm sympathies with his family in their bereavement. Mrs. Jenks even complained that she should lose her skill in cooking, so little occasion did she find to practise her favorite art.

Among the numerous houses where the old gentleman was at all times a welcome visitor, there were no two places in which he so delighted as Lindenwood and the vine-covered residence of his aged pastor, whose kindness during his season of deepest trial neither he nor his family ever forgot.

At Lindenwood, the old gentleman always found his way up to the nursery, being the same room where his little favorite Louis had breathed out his soul to God, and which was now newly furnished for the use of Master Stephen. The young mother feared that her uncle, being unused to children, might become wearied with his noise, and be under the necessity of abandoning the pleasant room he occupied with them. But she was wholly mistaken. Day after day he sat in the nursery amusing himself with his little namesake, who soon learned to call after him, if he left the room; and almost daily Dr. Jenks might be seen there with him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s; but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and, in the world to come, life everlasting.”

Our Saviour.

THE visit of Edith to Mrs. Henderson was protracted far beyond her expectation. After consulting some gentlemen who had been for many years connected with the cause of missions, and finding them agreed in the opinion that every missionary ought to know something of medicine more than the hearing of a few lectures, Mr. Huntington determined to prolong his stay in Philadelphia until spring, and then go to Boston and pursue the study there for a few months, with a reference to visiting the hospitals; so that it was not until the latter part of May that Edith returned with him to the north, and made her long-promised visit to Emma. She was received with the greatest cordiality, not only by her sister and Professor Fowler, but by his mother, who was visiting them. The old lady said she wanted to take right home to her heart all who loved her darter Emma, whom she could never sufficiently praise. “Her son,” she said, “was entirely altered for the better, and now much resembled the Perkinses,” and that “she felt as much at ease with him as she did with his lovely wife.”

The first week in July Mr. and Mrs. Stanley arrived, and after a pleasant visit with their daughter, Mrs. Fow

ler, Edith returned with them to Lindenwood. In all her visiting her heart had been in her studies, and her desire to prepare herself for usefulness among the people with whom she had chosen to dwell, had daily and hourly increased. She astonished even Uncle Stephen, who had an exalted idea of her capabilities, by the progress she had made. She told him she had never realized how good and patient a teacher he had been, until obliged to depend upon herself.

September was the month now fixed upon for sailing, and every day brought new duties and cares, in the way of preparation for the important voyage. One morning, toward the latter part of August, a committee of ladies from the village called at the Hall, with a box about three feet square, which had been presented to the young missionary by her friends, as a token of their interest in the cause to which she had devoted her life. A letter accompanied it, requesting that she would not open the box until her arrival at her own station.

The ladies also expressed an earnest wish that Edith and Mr. Huntington should attend the Missionary Society in the village before their departure, which they would appoint at any time to suit the convenience of the missionaries.

Edith promised compliance, and accepted their invitation the following week, where she met more than a hundred ladies and gentlemen who had assembled to bid them farewell. The kind ladies led Edith into a back room, where, neatly folded, and ready for use, was a generous supply of shirts, flannels, and hose, for Mr. Huntington, made and presented him by the ladies of

the society. Edith was much affected by their kindness, but said she must call her friend to speak for himself, which he did with great feeling, until there was not a dry eye among them.

It was the wish of Uncle Stephen that Alfred should be set apart for his work in the church under the care of their esteemed pastor, Mr. Badger, and great was the pleasure manifested when the fact became known. It was truly a memorable occasion for Queenstown, and such as had never occurred there before. In the midst of all her cares, Edith did not forget her humble friends at the farm, and, with the permission of Mrs. Stanley, invited Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin to come to the exercises, and to bring with them her little namesake.

The eventful morning at length arrived. Alfred and Edith met by appointment at an early hour, to ask together the blessing of their heavenly Father, upon a day fraught with so much interest to them. They were to be married in church at nine o'clock. After this the public services of the occasion were to commence. When the family, together with a large number of friends, met at the breakfast-table, none were so calm and cheerful as the ones, who, for Christ's sake, were in two days to leave friends, country, and home. Uncle Stephen, whose pale countenance showed that he had passed a sleepless night, wept aloud, and when the young clergyman, whom he had educated in the very hope that this blessed event might come to pass, led him to the parlor, and tried to soothe his agitated feelings, the good old man sobbed out, "Oh, what am I, that God should have thus answered my prayers, and made me the unworthy instru-

ment of sending a missionary to the poor heathen! It humbles me to the dust to think how little faith I have had that he would order this event, so that I should live to see this day."

It was not until that long-to-be-remembered interview that Alfred became aware how earnestly his kind benefactor had wrestled in prayer for him, that his heart might be turned to this great work; nor with what solicitude he had watched his course, and how at one time, when the young student wished to study law, he had again sought the throne of grace, and with tears had plead that, if it was the will of God to deprive him of the glorious privilege of fitting him for the work of a missionary, another might be raised up; nor how severely his faith had been tried by the ardent affection Alfred had exhibited for Edith, who at that time was very unsuited to be the wife of a missionary. Now," added Uncle Stephen, with a fresh burst of tears, "during the long night I lay and thought of all the way the Lord had led you and your chosen companion, to fit you for your great work. I, in my feebleness, thought money could do it; but he saw more grace was needed. He sent you trials, and I trust they have been sanctified. But I can never sufficiently thank him for the favor shown to me, a poor, sinful creature."

At eight o'clock, the church was crowded to overflowing, so eager were all for admittance; and, had it not been that special seats had been reserved for Mr Stanley's family, they would hardly have been able to gain admittance. Notwithstanding the aisles and even the large porch were crowded, the ticking of the clock

in the orchestra could be distinctly heard, as Mr. Badger addressed the bridal pair, and the solemn responses were uttered which united them for life. When they knelt before their pastor to receive his blessing, weeping and sobbing were heard on every side.

Mr. and Mrs. Huntington returned to their seats, and, after a short pause, a young clergyman arose and read the prayer. The bishop, who had for years been a warm friend to the cause of missions, and a zealous promoter of the missionary spirit in his diocese, preached the sermon, and set apart the young missionary to his work. The services were in the highest degree solemn and impressive; and when, at the close of them, the friends of Edith crowded around to bid them farewell, there were not a few who considered their condition as one to be envied, rather than deplored, as they had heretofore thought.

In the afternoon, Emma, who, with her husband, was at home, came to the nursery, where Edith had retired for a few moments to sit with Alice, and informed her that Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin were awaiting her. She started at once to go to them, but at length concluded to send for them to join her, as they would not feel easy in so large a company as were gathered in the parlor. Little Edith could now walk about, and was really an engaging child. Stephen Sydney, after some coaxing, left Uncle Stephen to get upon the floor, and show the little girl his toys.

“That’s a fine fellow,” said the old gentleman, nodding his head with pride at his namesake’s generosity; “that’s my noble boy,” as the child took one thing after

another from his basket, and placed them in the lap of the little girl, all the while prattling to himself, while she gazed first at him, and then at the wonderful sight before her, but could not venture to speak a word.

Edith found her good friends had come over early in the morning, and attended the services in the church, but had hesitated to intrude themselves at a time when they knew there were many who had more claim upon her attention. She sent to the parlor for her husband, when both Joshua and his wife were much affected at parting from them. When Edith took the little girl in her arms to kiss her and bid her adieu, she threw over her neck a chain of gold, attached to which was a locket containing a small miniature of herself, painted by her mother, with her own hair and that of her husband inserted in the back.

How many times, in the course of the next year, the event was related to admiring friends, by both Mrs. Goodwin and her husband, and the locket exhibited, it would be difficult to say.

The next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Huntington, accompanied by Uncle Stephen, Rev. Mr. Badger, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley, Gertrude, Emma, and Alice, with their husbands, started for New York, from which port they were to sail the following day. The baggage having been safely seen on board ship, the whole party accompanied Edith to the vessel, to take a view of her accommodations. And here the knowledge of Uncle Stephen was invaluable; for, though Edith declared the arrangements to be complete, yet he perceived quite a number of articles which he pronounced absolutely necessary, and

ordered them to be bought forthwith. They then returned to the hotel, to pass together one more evening before they should be separated forever in this world.

Correspondence was planned, advice given, and many sentiments of undying affection exchanged, when the evening was closed with prayer by their aged pastor.

When they were about to retire, all were impressed with the holy calmness which had settled upon the brow of the young missionary. Her whole soul seemed to be elevated by the greatness of the work which she had undertaken. Could this be the Edith whom we first introduced to the reader? Yes, the very same, but with a heart purified by affliction, sanctified by divine grace, and elevated by close communion with her heavenly Father.

The vessel was advertised to sail at ten o'clock. At nine the family from Lindenwood (including little Stephen and his "ayah," as the old man persisted in calling her) went on board. The few articles which they brought with them from the hotel are soon in the allotted places. The books which Edith and her husband wish to use on the voyage are taken from a trunk below, and placed in a locker in their cabin. Jars of pickled limes and other articles are ranged in rows, and confined to keep them in place. Then they return to the deck, where Uncle Stephen has a short, earnest consultation with the captain, and Alice sees him put something which very much resembles a bank-bill into the good captain's hand, who decidedly refuses to keep it until something more is said by Uncle Stephen. All is now ready. The sailors stand at their post. Suddenly they doff their caps, and stand

reverently, while the white-haired minister commits his beloved charge to the care of Him who holds the waters in his hand. The prayer is ended. The sailors are only waiting the command of their captain to begin their hearty song of "Ho, heave ho!" The parting kiss is given, the last whispered word of love or counsel; and, amidst smiles of hope on the part of the dear ones who will soon be far away, and tears of sorrow from those who are to lose them, the final separation takes place. The party of friends descend to the wharf, where they try to suppress their grief, that they may not lose one look of the two who stand clasping each other by the hand, and leaning over the side of the railing.

And now the honest tars begin their work. The gallant ship is loosed from the wharf; and, amidst a hundred cheers from the shore and the vessels lying at the wharf, which are heartily reëchoed, the noble bark glides on her way.

With bursting hearts, the weeping friends incline forward for one more look. Yes, that is Edith. She waves her handkerchief, and points heavenward!

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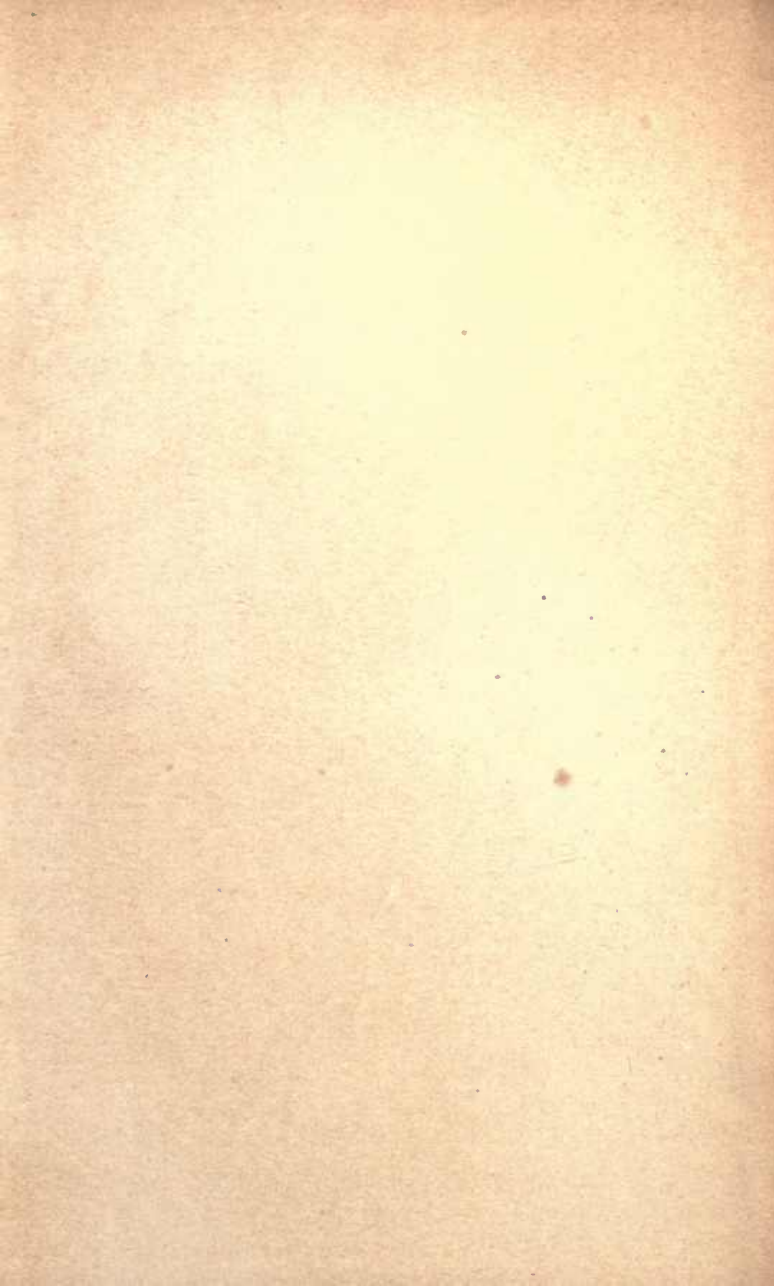
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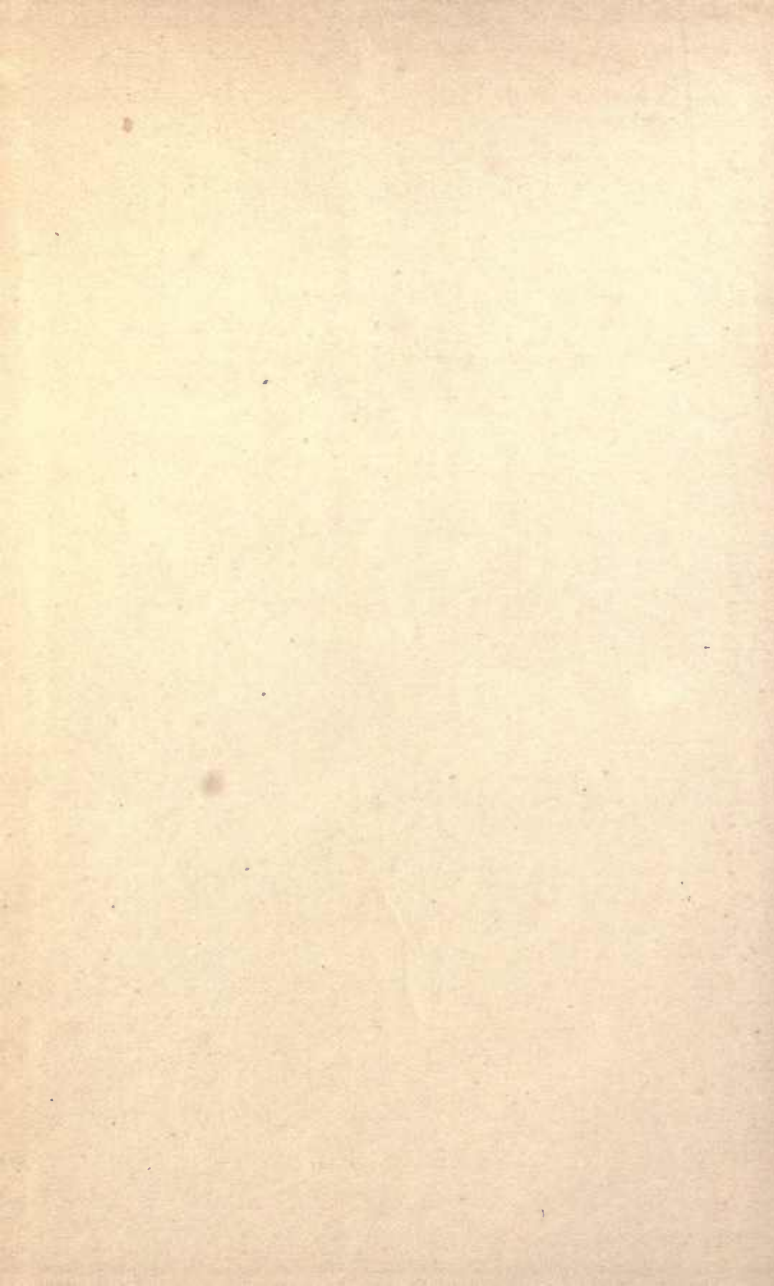
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