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ALDERBROOK:

A COLLECTION OF

FANNY FORESTER'S

VILLAGE SKETCHES, POEMS, ETC.

BY

MISS EMILY CHUBBUCK. *7*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. 

ELEVENTH EDITION.

REVISED, WITH ADDITIONS.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LVI.

P5 2156
J3 A7
1856

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by
WILLIAM D. TICKNOR AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

Stereotyped by
GEORGE A. CURTIS;
NEW ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY

TO

HIM WHO IS HENCEFORTH TO BE

MY GUIDE THROUGH LIFE, ITS SUNLIGHT AND ITS GLOOM,

THESE FEW LITTLE FLOWERS,

GATHERED BY THE WAYSIDE BEFORE WE HAD MET,

ARE HALF-TREMBLINGLY, BUT MOST AFFECTIONATELY,

DEDICATED.

MAY THEIR PERFUME BE GRATEFUL ;

THEIR FRAGILITY BE PARDONED ;

AND

HEAVEN GRANT THAT NO UNSUSPECTED POISON MAY BE

FOUND LURKING AMONG THEIR LEAVES !

FANNY FORESTER.

LETTER FROM THE WRITER TO THE PUBLISHERS,
AS A
PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

TO MESSRS. WM. D. TICKNOR & Co. :—

DEAR SIRS:—The copy of Alderbrook which you were so kind as to forward, reached us some weeks since ; and really it came to me, in the midst of my new associations, like a spectre from the world of the antediluvians. It seemed scarcely possible, as I turned over leaf after leaf, that I could ever have been conversant with such scenes — scenes in which not only the human face, but everything, down to the little bird and flower, were so utterly unlike those, which are here daily becoming more and more familiar. It is astonishing how many years may be lived in one.

I send you a list of corrections for a new edition. The poem entitled “The Weaver,” I re-wrote soon after leaving Boston ;— please admit the emendations.

Of the various articles which the book contains, I am the least satisfied with “Ida Ravelin ;” because it verges too closely on a class of writings just now somewhat mischievously fashionable in America. Beside, it is the only article written without “aim or object ;” and, I think, the only one which has no foundation in reality. One of the last things which I wrote before leaving America, was the “Angel’s Pilgrimage ;” and, as it properly belongs to this collection, I should like to see it substituted for “Ida Ravelin.”*

Accompanying this, you will receive several articles which should have been in the poetical list of the first edition. One of the pieces formerly appeared in the Knickerbocker Magazine ; two or three in other periodicals, and some have never been published at all.

While I have been telling you these things, and especially while copying the old poems, memory has been practising some very pleasing illusions ; so that I seemed to be revisiting my old haunts. But now I am at home again — talking across the ocean to a world which begins already to gather shadows about it ; and I must once more repeat the adieu to Alderbrook — a final farewell.

E. C. J.

Maulmain, Dec., 1847.

*We have taken the liberty to retain the story here referred to, as the objection brought against it by the author is more than balanced by the graceful beauty of style and admirable spirit in which it is written. The piece intended by Mrs. Judson as a *substitute*, is now printed as *additional matter* to volume second.

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A L D E R B R O O K .

G R A C E L I N D E N .

FOUR AGES IN THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.—EIGHT.

“ THIS will be quite pleasant, after all, mother—quite pleasant. This nice little room is just the place for me. We will train a vine over the window, and my books shall be upon the table close by—”

“ We shall need the table now, my daughter. Your father thinks we can take two boarders, though for my part I see no place to put them,” and the mother cast an anxious, troubled glance about the apartment.

“ Two boarders! It will come hard upon you, mother.”

“ Oh no, dear, no! Not so hard, Abby, as upon the poor children. I cannot bear the idea of their being shut up the livelong day—stifled for the want of pure air—work, work, working every moment, till their little limbs are ready to drop off with pain. It is horrible to me, Abby!”

The poor woman, as she spoke, shuddered at the sad picture which needed not the coloring of a mother's imagination. For a moment the pale lips of the girl trembled, and a tear quivered in her eye; but, with a strong effort she suppressed the emotion, and replied cheerfully. It was certainly, (so said the sympathizing Abby,) a hard thing for the poor children to

be shut away from the sunshine ; but she was sure the labor would be light ; Mr. Russel promised that ; and if it was found in any way injurious to health, or even spirits, a change of some kind must of course be made. "It is only a trial, dear mother," she added, smiling.

"My life has been *all* trials," was the desponding reply, and the mother might have added, that she knew one awaited her harder to bear than all the others.

The life of Mrs. Linden had, indeed, been one of severe trials ; of sufferings and sorrows untold, and scarce imagined by her delicately nurtured country-women ; for, thanks to the chivalrous spirit of America, her women are her jewels. But in the midst of all her trials, Mrs. Linden had never till now despaired. Now want, absolute want, stared her in the face. She had, as she believed, immolated her children ; and a dark unhoping midnight had settled upon her prospects and theirs.

The changes of fortune, common in America, would scarcely be credited by a dweller in the old world. There, men must necessarily be, in a great degree, what they are born and what their fathers were ; but here, each individual takes his destiny in his own hands, and no human power, no law of conventionalism, often still more oppressive, interferes with what he wills. It rests with himself and the great Governor whether he sit down with the honorable of the land, or droop in an almshouse, or crouch, and grovel, and coil himself in a kennel.

Mr. Linden had spent his youth in the city of Boston, where, on the death of his father, he became sole proprietor of an extensive mercantile establishment. When in the full tide of prosperity he married the daughter of an ex-governor of his native state. Soon, however, the fabric of his fortune began to crumble. It was like the melting of a snow toy in the spring, gradually and imperceptibly wasting away until all was gone. This change of fortune could be attributed neither to extravagance nor vice. It was simply miscalculation, mismanagement ; a lack of energy and perseverance, joined with a low estimate of the worth of money, save at the moment when it was needed. Men said, Mr. Linden had no

business talent. He struggled a while, but quite ineffectually, and then he gave up all and removed to another state. In the interior of New York, another effort was made, but it was only to *live*; and so year after year, year after year rolled on, and found them struggling still.

The father of Mrs. Linden commenced life as a New England farmer. Without well considering the disastrous consequences to his pecuniary affairs, (for the people of democratic America are quite too wise to support the honors they deign to confer,) he accepted several offices of trust, and for one term presided as the governor of his native state. This was the death-blow to his laudable ambition; for, finding his purse drained, his land, and even the house in which he was born, mortgaged, he declined a second nomination. His family consisted entirely of daughters; and so, though his exertions enabled him to protect them from want, he was quite unable to afford assistance to those removed from his care.

Abby Linden, the eldest daughter of the immigrants, had a very indistinct recollection of large, airy rooms and elegant furniture; a moment of terror when her father threw himself upon the sofa and groaned aloud, while her mother wept and conjured him to be comforted, was more strongly impressed upon her memory. After events were spread out on her chart of the past in too deep colors to be forgotten; for, when sorrow came, the child was made the mother's friend and confidante, and from that moment she had never ceased to sympathize, cheer, and even advise. Abby had labored too. With her little straw bonnet tied closely under her chin, and her basket on her arm, she had for years gone every morning to the low, uncomfortable district school-house, and won over the rebellious spirits there to obey her. And then, when night came, she would walk two weary miles; not loitering under the solemn old forest trees, where it would have been her delight to linger; but hurrying onward to perform another task with her needle, and again another over her books, before she retired for the night. But things were changed now, and the darling, idolized eldest daughter, the

companion, the friend, the all that a mother's heart could desire to love and rest upon, was gradually but surely going down to the dead. Her bright sparkling eye, her hollow burning cheek, her faltering footsteps, her frail figure, slightly bended, and her thin transparent hand, all told a tale that filled a mother's bosom with anguish. Till now, what with the eldest daughter's little salary and the proceeds of the mother's ever busy needle, despite the father's small bargains, by which he was sure to lose more than he had been able to gain for weeks before, the family had contrived to live in comparative comfort. But now that poor Abby was confined within doors, she could only advise and cheer. The other children were yet too young to be useful. Francis, a bright boy of twelve, and "the little girls," two fair, slender creatures of eight and six years, were all that the grave had left. Small debts accumulated, and finally credit was refused. What could be done? Poor Abby revolved the subject in her mind night and day, and finally she ventured to propose a last resource. She told her mother that factory labor was respectable in America; indeed none but respectable people could gain employment in these establishments — there was light work in them expressly for children — Frank and Grace were old enough to be employed, and Lizzy might be sent to school. For her part, the doctor had spoken very encouragingly of her case, and while the warm weather continued she might make herself very useful. She would teach Frank and Grace writing and arithmetic, and see that the children's clothes were in order, and possibly she might be able to do a little extra sewing herself. All this had cost poor Abby long nights of weeping; for she had looked on a side of the picture that she did not attempt to describe; but now the proposition was made so cheerfully and confidently, that it received but slight opposition. Indeed, the father, from constant discouragement, had grown almost indifferent; he was sure that fate had nothing worse in store for them; and the mother had been too much accustomed to rely upon the daughter's judgment, to take a fair survey of the subject until it was too late. But when

she looked on the long narrow building, with its dingy walls, and doors which received their ebony blackness from the soiled fingers of the laborers, and thought of her tender children being immured there all through the pleasant summer days she had well nigh preferred beggary—beggary in the open air, the fresh green fields, beneath the broad laughing heavens—to this life-crushing imprisonment. As for Frank, he whispered mysteriously in his little sister's ear of running away; hinted that his mother was a very cruel woman to shut them up so; pouted over his fishing-rod; examined the edge of the little axe so well accommodated to the strength of his arm that he had been able to use it for several years; and then boasted of the mighty exploits he would perform when once free from his mother's control. But Grace had a heart all sunshine. She was a genuine honey-gatherer, and she made all about her sip of the same flowers with herself. There certainly was, she owned, a something very prison-like about the old factory, "but then think of the ten shillings a week, Frank!" she would add, triumphantly.

"Two dollars, you mean, Grace."

"Yes, *you* can earn two dollars, and so will I before long. Oh, it is *so* nice to be earning something for mother and poor sister Abby. Don't you think so, Frank?"

But the first morning that Grace looked into the dark, dirty factory, with its strange machinery, making noises that frightened and almost distracted her; its greasy blackened walls and disagreeable smells, the sunshine of her heart was well-nigh overshadowed. She clung close to her father's hand, avoiding as much as was in her power a nearer approach to the machinery, and looking askance at every pillar, as if she doubted whether anything in that strange place could remain stationary. Grace trembled more and grew still paler as she looked upon the faces of the laborers. So many strangers she had never seen together before, and their faces, all begrimed with dye from off the wool, presented features anything but attractive. As she turned away and clung closely to her father's arm, a boy darted before her, grinning and

throwing himself into various attitudes, evidently on purpose to alarm her.

Oh, that long deep breath as she once more stepped forth into the free air! How it relieved her! And then how her little bosom swelled, as she thought of days, and weeks and months, perhaps years in that same place! She looked up into her father's face as if for a word of encouragement, of hope, but it was darkened with gloom. Grace was frightened, and trembled more than ever. The noise of the machinery — the grating, crashing, thundering, were still in her ears. Again she saw those besmeared faces staring at her, and saw the sickly, yellow light struggling through windows dim with blackness, and oil and filth, and flaunting with the long wreath-like cob-webs, hung with black wool dust, accumulated from that which constantly filled the air, she would soon be compelled to breathe, from early morning to the setting of the sun. That first sight of her new abode had cast a spell upon her young, gay spirit; it had scared away its joyousness; and little Grace Linden, finding the bird-like melody of her soul hushed in gloom, might become prematurely old, careworn before her time. Now, she hurried away from her father before any one had seen her; and, crouched in an obscure corner of the unceiled chamber, with her apron thrown over her head, and her face resting on her knees, she sobbed and sobbed, until her little strength yielded to her first overpowering grief, and she found rest in sleep.

A few days found Grace Linden all ready for her labor; a neat cap, fitted by Abby's careful fingers, confining the bright curls that had been accustomed to wander freely about her shoulders, and a brown linen apron, reaching from chin to ankle, enveloping her graceful little figure. The child laughed at the oddity of her own appearance, heavy as her heart felt at the moment; and Lizzy clapped her little hands and outlaughed her sister. Frank, too, joined, half in vexation, half to show that he was not vexed. Abby smiled encouragingly, and crushed with her thin hand a tear that was forcing its way among her long, dark eye-lashes, and Mrs.

Linden turned to the window and concealed her face among the snowy folds of muslin. As for the husband and father, he was none the less to be pitied that he had neither tears nor words. He lacked the self-sustaining power that to his wife and daughter had been the gift of adversity. With a full share of intellectuality, morbidly sensitive, yet fully conscious of his deficiency in all the attributes that make up the *character*, his whole life had been but a continued nightmare dream — a striving *to do*, while a dead numbness seemed to settle upon every limb and faculty. Now, unless something of importance roused him, he seemed in a continued reverie, utterly regardless of everything passing around him. And this was a moment when the whole past, the present, and the dark, dark future, all together, stared him in the face. He could not bear it; and for a whole week did he shut himself in his room refusing to admit even the gentle Abby to console him. At first, Grace thought her work very easy; and the ambition consequent upon learning something new, made her forget to look at the walls that had so much inspired her horror. A long, low table was behind, covered with a cloth, which, by rollers at each end, was kept creeping slowly onward with its light layer of woollen rolls. These, Grace was to take up by handfuls and fasten, one by one, to the ends of those extending down an inclined plane before her, covered in the same manner with a moveable cloth. These rolls, in their turn, were fastened to spindles behind the plane, and a man, with a low forehead, small peering eyes, and a bushy beard quite innocent of clipping, turned a crank, at the same time walking backward, until the wool was drawn out into a thick thread, afterwards to be spun into a finer one. Grace had no opportunity to falter in her task; for the man kept up his steady monotonous tramp, tramp, tramp — turn, turn, turn, until her little head grew giddy, and she found a moment's pause to mend a broken thread, an inconceivable relief. The boy, too, whose grimaces had so frightened her on the day of her first visit, was close beside her, supplying the carding machine with wool; and he seemed inclined to take advantage of

her timidity, thrusting his hideous face, marked as it was with black, before her at every opportunity.

Oh, how her heart leaped when the heavy strokes of the dinner-bell sounded from the belfry, and all the machinery stopped in an instant! And how bewildered she seemed at the strange silence, till some half dozen persons about her burst into a loud fit of laughter! Then Frank came and took her by the hand, and they hurried home together, so delighted with the moment's respite that Mrs. Linden was delighted too, and thought the poor children might be happy after all. But the afternoon—oh, how long it was! Grace thought it would never end. Her little fingers, from constant rubbing their backs upon the rolls to fasten them together, began to bleed; her head felt like bursting, for it seemed as though the machinery was constantly grating against her brain; and her feet ached till she thought the bones had certainly perforated the flesh. That night, poor Abby kissed and carefully bound up the wounded fingers, and took the little feet soothingly between her hands, and talked of brighter days, and sung with her faint, soft voice, little hymns, until, ill able as she was to bear the weight, the child nestled in her bosom, and slept as only those who love and labor can.

Week after week passed by, and though little Grace Linden's feet ached less, her heart ached more. Dick Crouse, the malicious machine-tender, became an object of absolute terror to her; it seemed his delight to torment her by every means in his power; and though the man turning the crank often defended her, it did not lessen her fears. She trembled when he looked at her during the day, and at night dreamed that he was an evil spirit dragging her away from her mother and Abby, to a place of horrible darkness. The trees budded and leaved; flowers bloomed and faded, leaving their places to brighter flowers still; the brooks frolicked and jostled their tiny drops together; and the birds answered back from ten thousand fresh green coverts with startling bursts of gladness. All this passed, and Grace Linden, the darling little woodland fairy, that might have claimed the flowers as

sisters, and the birds as chatty friends and playmates, scarce looked upon the laughing sunlight. True, on a Saturday afternoon, she was free two hours before sunset; free as the winds of heaven and almost as wild. She laughed, and sang, and shouted, and laughed again, to catch the ringing echo of her own voice, as its music was caught up and prolonged by the bold bluff just over the river. Then she would fling herself upon the turf, and nestle close to the ground to smell its freshness; and at last, when the hour for returning homeward could be no longer delayed, she would load her little arms with all that was green, and beautiful, and fraught with life, because sister Abby, too, loved the things of summer. But Grace grew pale and thoughtful. A sensation of heaviness, as though neither mind nor body had strength to support its own weight, crept over her. She was sad, as though some great sorrow had passed above her and left an immovable shadow. August came, with its warm, sultry days, and brought no relief. It had now become a habit with Grace to droop her eyelids heavily upon her wan cheek, as though she would thus shut away the pain from her temples; and whenever her hand was at liberty, to press it against her side. Poor Grace!

One morning, as little Grace Linden happened to glance upward from her work, she observed a fine, spirited boy of some fourteen summers watching her languid motions with an air of interest. He went away on being observed; but his tour through the cleaner and pleasanter rooms above, was soon made, and he returned to the carding-room. He looked around and whistled a little, and approached the quarter where Grace stood, by studied evolutions. But once there, he could not well be accused of that most *unboyish* of all traits, bashfulness.

“I say, Sliggins,” he called out, authoritatively, “why don’t you stop that tramp and let this little girl have a minute’s rest?” The man at the crank gave a knowing wink with the left eye, and jogged on as before, while Grace cast a look of wonder, not unmixed with gratitude on the daring intruder.

That look was quite enough for the boy, for, without waiting a farther consultation, he marched direct to the carding-machine and threw the band from the wheel.

"There, Sliggins! Look'ee, Mr. Machine-tender, you will be glad of a rest, I dare say, so snuggle down on the wool, and mind you sleep fast, my boy." Dick Crouse leered at Grace over his shoulder, and drawing near, whispered something that made her utter a suppressed scream of terror; then, dancing for a moment with malicious satisfaction, and rubbing his hands gleefully, he betook himself to a pile of wool.

"Rest! Oh, yes, Master Hal, rest never comes amiss to factory folks; but your father moughn't like it quite so well," said Sliggins, good-naturedly, at the same time seating himself on a roll of satinet and resting both elbows on his knees. Without paying any attention to this answer, Henry Russel busied himself with arranging a comfortable seat for Grace; who, without knowing whether to be grateful or not for a display of power characteristic of the *boy*, even though for her benefit, mechanically availed herself of his officiousness.

"Is your name Grace?" inquired the boy, "is that what Sliggins called you?"

"Yes."

"Grace — Grace — Gracey! that's it! that's a pretty nickname! I like nick-names, don't you?"

Grace was not quite sure, for she had always thought nick-names were something bad; but she was certain that *Gracey* was not bad; and then she thought of Abby, and Frank, and Lizzy, and she said "Yes," again.

"Then you must call me Harry, or Hal, or Hank — though I think Harry a little the prettiest for a girl to speak, don't you?"

Again Grace said "Yes."

"Well, I shall be here all the vacation — six weeks; and I'll come down e ery day and stop the machine, and make Sliggins give you a rest. Would n't you like that, Gracey?"

Grace felt like saying *yes*, again, and blessing this wonderful magician with all her heart; but she remarked, instead, "Mr. Sliggins said your father would n't like it."

"Poh! he likes everything that I do — for, you see, I don't come home but once a year, and then it would n't become him to be cross to me."

Grace thought it would n't become anybody to be cross to such a good-natured boy; and, as this thought was coming up from her heart, (the source of little girls' thoughts,) she could not avoid a glance towards the quarter where the two eyes of Dick Crouse were peering out from the wool — and then she shuddered and involuntarily drew near her new friend. Harry had followed the direction of her eyes, and remarked the shudder.

"I don't think that's a very good boy, Gracey?"

Grace made no answer, but she stole another glance at the wool-pile.

"Halloo there, fellow!" shouted Harry, "turn your big starers the other way, if you can't shut them."

"Oh don't, don't!" whispered Grace, seizing his wrist in alarm. "He's a dreadful boy, Harry, and I don't know what he would do if you should make him angry!"

Harry only laughed and shouted still louder, "Do you hear, Blackey?"

Dick dropped his head, and Grace, evidently relieved, interposed: "He can't help getting black in this dirty place; but if he would n't mark that black ring around his eyes, and make up such awful faces, and tell me such horrible stories, too."

"He's a bad boy, Gracey, I know he is, and I'll tell father all about it — *he* will make him walk straight. Father will employ nobody that is not good; for he says that would make factories in this country almost as bad as they are in England. He shall hear all about this mean Dick Crouse; and then, if the fellow don't look out, he will have to clear. To think of his being hateful to you, and you so nice and good!"

"Oh, no! he don't do anything to me — anything much,

I mean. Mr. Sliggins will not let him strike me any more, and he says he shall not pinch me and pull my hair, but Dick does that so slyly that nobody finds him out."

"Why don't you tell?"

"It scared me dreadfully to see him and Mr. Sliggins quarrel, and it makes Dick tell me worse stories when nobody hears him. Oh! I would rather have him pinch me — ten times rather, than hear those terrible things! they make me dream so badly. I wish you tended the machine, Harry — I don't mean I wish you were poor and had to do it, but it would be very nice to have some one here that was kind and good-natured all the time."

Harry thought it would be very nice, too, and almost wished that his father would let him leave school for the purpose. Grace, however, assured him that she would rather have the company of bad Dick Crouse, than that he should do such a thing. To this, Harry responded very generously; and so a half hour passed in just the most agreeable and childish chat in the world. At the end of this time, Harry started up with a loud "hurrah!" threw the belt upon the wheel of the machine; buried Dick Crouse in the wool; gave the roll of cloth a push, which made Sliggins turn a quite unintentional somerset; and then, with a hearty laugh, in which Grace joined quite as heartily, and Sliggins uproariously, took an abrupt departure.

The next morning, true to his promise, Harry Russel was at the factory; but he told Grace that his father was not quite pleased with his stopping the machine, and so he would do a better thing than that. She should teach him to splice the rolls, and he would help her all day. "But why do you work in the factory?" he inquired, looking into her face very earnestly. "If it were not for that ugly cap and this queer apron you would be very pretty."

Grace thought the cap that sister Abby made could n't be ugly, and she said so. Harry admitted that it looked well enough; but he had had a glimpse of the curls peeping out at the side, and they looked much better.

“But why,” he continued, pertinaciously, “why do you work in the factory, Gracey? To be sure I think it is about as good as moping in the corner, the way most girls do; but don't you like running in the fields and hunting birds' nests, and would n't you like to see me fish, Gracey?”

Grace could not answer. She was choking with tears; for she thought of the summer previous, when she had tripped it by Frank's side along the borders of the brook, wallowed in the rich clover, made little bouquets of the field daisy and queen of the meadow, and tested fortune by holding the but-tercup beneath her brother's chin. Harry's words had recalled all this; and the tears came crowding into her eyes, and her head drooped upon her bosom, until she was startled by an angry exclamation from Sliggins.

“Poh, Sliggins!” said the merry voice of Harry, “never mind if a few rolls did run in! It will rest your arm to mend them. You needn't look so cross, old fellow! Only wait a little, and Gracey and I will keep you jogging!”

As Harry grew more expert in his new business, the two children had more time for talking; and at last he succeeded in extracting from Grace the cause of her working in the factory. He declared it a sin and a shame, that all people, at least all good people, could n't have just as much money as they wanted. As for Grace, she should have the ten shillings a week, and she should not work either. He would speak to his father about it that very day, for his father was a good man and had oceans of money. Then they would have rare times, for he assured her, in confidence, that the girls at Factory Huddle were just the stupidest set he ever saw; and there was not one that knew what fun meant but her.

This was a happy day for Grace; she had been assisted, and amused, and encouraged; indeed, she had quite forgotten to count the hours, and was comparatively but slightly fatigued. But better than all, Dick Crouse, though there was a world of malice in his eye, had not ventured to play her a single trick since morning, when Harry had duly punished

him for an attempt at one; and for this she was grateful to her new champion in proportion to her former fears.

The next morning Harry Russel appeared full half an hour earlier than on the preceding day, bringing with him a little package of linen, which he said was to be made into an apron like the one Grace wore. His soiled cuffs and collar had given his mother an inkling of his new occupation; but when Grace suggested that it was wrong to come there at all in opposition to his mother's wishes, he laughed outright. "Mother never minds what I do," said he, "unless I get into what she calls bad company. To think of your being bad company, Gracey! She laughs at my tricks at school with the rich boys, but if I have anything to say to the poor ones, she scolds me and teases father about it from morning till night. Oh! it is rare fun to get into company with some of these ragamuffins, and make her believe I like them. But then I suppose it is wrong to plague her; if you think so, Grace, I'll never do it any more, even if she is queer."

Grace assured him that it was very wrong; but still she was sure *she* was not bad company, and pouted very prettily upon the occasion, till Harry assured her he would stay at the factory all the time, just to show that he dared do it. Then she begged of him not to disobey his mother, and intimated that she was not quite sure of its being right for her to make the apron at all.

"Bless your heart, Gracey!" cried the boy, opening his eyes wide in astonishment, "my mother never approves of anything. I am sure I never obeyed her a half dozen times in my life. Why, don't you know she's a *lady*, a real *fine lady*, and not a sensible woman, like your mother, Grace? I'm sure I should always obey your mother."

"But your father, Harry?"

"Oh! father says it don't hurt boys to work at anything. He gave me the stuff for the apron, and told me to get my pretty little Gracey (mind, he called you *my* Gracey) to make it."

Grace doubted whether she should be able to accomplish

such a feat; but as Harry declared that *his Gracey* must know how to do everything, she promised to try. Poor Grace! Little did she know what she had promised; for though she was very well versed in over and over seams, and could, upon a pinch, hem a pocket handkerchief, *cutting out work* was quite out of her line. Little girls are mimic women, and Grace was a complete little girl, with all the sensibilities, the refinements, and pretty little concealments that characterize the sex; so instead of going to her sister with the apron, and talking frankly of her new friend, as Harry had done of her, she stole away to her chamber and tried to cut one apron by the other; measured and re-measured, made mistakes and rectified them; but never gave up the task till she could pronounce the garment in some degree shapely. Then Grace begged a tallow candle from her mother, and plied her needle all alone till far into the night. The next morning she was up with the first grey dawn, singing gaily as she worked; and right proud was she to fold the apron in her pocket handkerchief and bound away to the factory at the very moment the bell called. Oh, beautiful was the light in the little girl's eyes when Harry Russel appeared that morning, though she tried to look unusually demure; and beautiful the dimples that *would* trip it across her pale face in spite of her assumed soberness. As for Harry, he ranted in his new dress like a stage player, and stalked about in a manner that Grace thought excessively amusing, quite forgetful of his self-imposed duty, till he saw the little girl press her hand against her side.

Day after day passed by, and Harry was still at his post, as sympathetic, and vigorous, and noisy as ever. Although he had somewhat overrated his influence with his father, when he promised Grace the wages without the work, his complaints of the machine-tender received more attention. Mr. Russel investigated the matter with promptitude; and, as Sliggins brought several other charges against him, he was at once dismissed, and Francis Linden, as a special favor to himself and sister, was allowed to take his place. On the evening of the day on which Dick Crouse was discharged, as Grace sat

alone in Abby's little room, she was startled by a rustling of the vines at the window. She raised her head and caught sight of the face of her tormenter peering at her through the opening. Grace screamed and started to her feet, while the face kept moving slowly forward until half of the body was within the room. Grace could not scream again, and the boy probably thought he had alarmed her sufficiently; for, shaking his clenched fist, and declaring that he would remember the work of that day forever and ever, and pay her for it, and Harry Russel too, he drew himself back and darted out of sight.

A dear, sweet respite was that vacation for little Grace Linden, and when it was passed, and Harry had returned to school, the fruits of his kindness still remained; for her brother was close beside her, and his cheering voice, rising with difficulty above the noise of the machinery, beguiled many a wearisome hour. But a cloud was destined to eclipse even this faint glimmer of sunshine. The first autumnal frost fell like a blight upon the frail form of Abby; and she drooped with the flowers that she had loved in summer time. Oh, never was there a being more loved, more cherished, more idolized than she who was now stricken! Never were raised prayers more fervent, more wildly agonized than those which broke from the bursting hearts that gathered around her bed; and yet she died. They buried her before the November days came on, deep in the quiet earth, where the bleak winds could not reach her, and where she might rest on her cold, damp pillow, undisturbed by the busy thoughts that scared away her rest while living. Sorrow made the mother sharp-sighted, and she now detected the strong resemblance between her living eldest daughter and the dead. The high fair forehead, with the blue veins crossing it, the large meek eyes, the thin pale cheek, the sharpened chin, all were the same that had once been Abby's; and this same paleness and thinness, and sharpness of outline, had been the marks of disease, immediately preceding the preternatural brightness which had for a long time been effectually deceptive. Grace's ten shillings

could be dispensed with now; the mother did not say it, for it seemed sacrilege to accept of a relief which death had brought; but she insisted on removing back to her dear beautiful Alderbrook, and living as they best could. Behold them, then, in the humble cottage which they had left six months previous; the mother and little girls busy with their needles, Frank apprenticed to a country printer, and Mr. Linden deep in a job of copying, which he had been lucky enough to obtain on his arrival.

CHAPTER II. — EIGHTEEN.

IT was a fresh, bright August morning, and a group of young girls had collected in the hall and on the portico of a fine large building in one of our principal cities. There was a wreathing of pretty arms, a fluttering of muslins, a waving of curls, and a flashing of bright eyes, peculiarly fascinating to any one (could such an individual be found) failing to share in the popular disgust felt toward "bread-and-butter misses." A carriage stood at the door, and a fair girl, graceful as a drooping willow, and strangely, spiritually beautiful, equipped for travelling, was yet detained by the gay throng about her.

"Nay, one more kiss, Gracey, dear," said a bright little creature, bending her neck, and putting up a pair of fresh, red lips, with the daintiness of a bird; "don't forget *me*, darling!"

"And remember *me*!" exclaimed another, balancing on her toes to peep over her neighbor's shoulder.

"*Pensez à moi, ma chère amie*," responded the tall neighbor, with an attempt at tune and melody that elicited two or three ringing laughs.

"Good-bye, Gracey, dear!"

"Be a good girl, darling!"

"Be sure you are back the first of the term!"

"Take care, Gracey! don't lose your veil!"

"Nor your heart, either!"

"Keep a sharp look-out for — *you* understand, Gracey!"

"*Regardez!* — now behind the pillar! Look, Grace! he he!"

These were only a few of the exclamations rising above a Babel of sounds, such as only school-girls — and those very chatty school-girls — can produce.

“Good-bye! *au revoir!*” answered Grace; and, jumping into the carriage, she wafted back kisses on her gloved hand, answered the waving of handkerchiefs by allowing her own to stream out a moment on the air, and then disappeared around a corner.

And this was Grace Linden — the pale, sad little girl, who had spliced rolls away in the dismal factory — now a beautiful creature, in the full pride of maidenhood. She, who had been deemed an unfit associate for the son of a manufacturer stood on a perfect equality with the refined and highly-bred daughters of the proudest families America can boast. What change, will be asked, had come over the Lindens? Had they become suddenly possessed of an immense fortune? or had some wealthy friend, in compliment to the young girl's evident superiority, taken upon himself the pleasant task of educating her? Neither. Mr. Linden made bargains, as usual; and Mrs. Linden plied her needle; Frank had become a partner in the printing establishment where he was apprenticed, and was flourishing away, with the least of all little capitals, as a country editor; and Lizzy was teaching a school of young misses at Alderbrook. Nothing unusual had occurred, but all had been busy — Grace quite as much so as the others. The struggle was not now what it had formerly been; for all were able to help themselves. Women often atone for their deficiency of muscular power, by making capital of the brain; and Grace Linden early learned that her hand could be no sure dependence. She therefore followed the example of Abby, and gathered a little school about her; but she had not poor Abby's drawbacks, and all her efforts were prospered. Mrs. Linden and Lizzy were adepts with the needle, and Frank, now and then, threw an extra dollar, which economy multiplied to a dozen, into the general fund; and so the family lived respectably and comfortably. But there had been a time when Grace had learned *to think*, and thought once busied

will never leave the heart till death. Ay, the *heart*—for thence proceed the weightiest thoughts. She was not a *schemer*, but she looked at the present and into the future; she regarded her mother's pale cheek and her father's sad countenance, and resolved to leave nothing undone to render their age easy and happy. It was for this that she had taught, and studied far into the night, and laid by her little savings with almost miserly care, until, at eighteen, she had raised a sum large enough to place her in a boarding-school of the highest character. She entered only for one year, for she had already, by her own unassisted efforts, laid the foundation, and almost built up the superstructure of a superior education. Half of that year had passed; and oh! how happy was the young student to meet her friends, after that first wearisome separation! It was a very humble home to which Grace Linden repaired to spend her vacation, but a very sweet and pleasant one, nevertheless. Holy affections consecrated it; and so happy was Grace that she thought not a moment of her companions, treading on soft carpets and lounging on rich sofas, receiving splendid presents and enjoying costly amusements. Her mother's eye beamed lovingly upon her; her sister's arm encircled her waist; her brother strewed her table with the books marked by his own pencil, and fresh flowers cultivated by his own care; and her father followed her dreamily about, in pride and wonder, and seemed almost happy.

But this was not all. Grace and Lizzy, notwithstanding their humble circumstances, had gathered about them a little company of friends and companions, and these, on the return of the elder sister, flew to welcome her; and walks, and drives, and picnics became quite the order of the day among the young people of Alderbrook.

“An old friend of yours proposed calling on you this evening, Gracey,” said Frank, one day, “and mind, my lady, to have on your very prettiest face, and make your very prettiest speeches; for, to my certain knowledge, you will be the first *feme sole* in town to be so highly honored.”

"Ah!" said Grace, stitching away on her wrist-band with the most unconcerned manner in the world.

"'Ah!' you would say something more than '*ah*,' if you knew what an object of envy you will be to all the misses and mammas in the village. Here's our mother now; her imagination will be striding off in seven-league boots, the minute she hears the name."

"Mother guesses the name," said Mrs. Linden, glancing up from her work archly, "but she will leave the romancing to younger heads."

"A truce to your mysteries!" exclaimed Grace, "who is this wonderful personage? Come, I am prepared for any announcement. Is he an Indian nabob? or a German prince?"

"You recollect the Russels, Grace?"

"The Russels! yes; or one of them at least. Dear, kind, generous Harry Russel! I shall recollect him as long as I live!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Frank, "that is a good one, Grace! Generous and kind enough is this Russel, for aught I know; but—ho! ho! the boldness of young ladies, now-a-days, is unparalleled! don't you think so, mother? Imagine Grace, with that demure face, saying '*dear Harry Russel*,' of a stately six-footer, so handsome as to turn every girl's head in the neighborhood, and so proud as never to give them even a smile to make amends! Why, Grace, do you think everybody stands still but your own womanly little self? There's no such little boy as Harry Russel, now; but there's a '*Henry J. Russel, Esq., Att'y. at Law, &c., &c.*,' and a fine, noble fellow he is, too."

"I had much rather see the gallant little Harry of yore," said Grace, with a decrease of animation. "Does this Russel visit here?"

"Of course not. He visits nowhere but among his legal brethren; and so you have reason to feel wonderfully flattered, you see."

"But did this proud man, that it seems I shall not like at all, call himself an old friend, Frank?"

“Oh, no! he is too much of a gentleman to make an allusion that he was not quite sure would be pleasant. He is in the habit of coming into the office every day, so we are no strangers; and this morning he made very particular inquiries after you, mentioned having met you once at Mrs. Sommers', when he was there, three or four years ago, and expressed a desire to renew the acquaintance. Of course, I would throw nothing in the way of '*dear Harry Russel!*;' and all I have to say now, is, *look your prettiest.*”

But Frank was obliged to say much more; for Grace had a hundred questions to ask about the Russels, of whom she had not heard for the last two years. A year or two after the Lindens abandoned their scheme of factory labor, Mr. Russel had turned his attention to a different branch of business, and consequently removed to the city of New York. The accidental meeting of Harry and Grace at the house of a mutual friend, some time after, had been extremely embarrassing for both; they were just of that awkward age when we poor foolish mortals learn to be ashamed of frankness and simplicity, and are too unpractised to appear at ease under the mask we choose to assume. Grace now learned that Mr. and Mrs. Russel were both dead; and that the wealth, on which the mother had so prided herself, had passed with them. The son, thus deprived of the fine fortune that he had been accustomed to consider his own, had yet his profession left, and he bent not for a moment beneath the disappointment. Finding, however, that he must hew out his fortune by his own strong will, he resolved to shrink not from severe labor; and he knew that a young man, without money or powerful relations, may occupy a more respectable position, and advance more surely and steadily in a country village than in a large town. It was with this view, and at the urgent solicitations of an old friend of his father's, wishing to retire from business, that he returned to Alderbrook; and even in less than six short months, by his talent, his legal knowledge, his sterling worth, and gentlemanly accomplishments, he had won the confidence

of the oldest and most influential inhabitants, not only of the village but of the county.

Grace thought it very strange that such a distinguished gentleman, as Mr. Russel was considered, should endeavor to seek her out, and she did not believe—not she—but there was a little touch of her old friend Harry about him yet. At any rate, there was no harm, as Frank had said, in looking well; and so our heroine examined her little wardrobe, and spent a half hour in deciding which of her very limited number of pretty dresses would set off her figure to the best advantage. Lizzy said a lemon-colored *battiste*, but Mrs. Linden spoke a word in favor of a plain white muslin, and Grace submitted to her mother's judgment, not a little influenced by the consideration that Lizzy wore white muslin too.

Very lovely was our charming Grace Linden that evening, and very much bent on entertaining her visitor, in whose large dark eyes she detected a lingering resemblance to her friend Harry. At first, Russel seemed surprised at the beautiful vision before him; perhaps he too had forgotten the flight of time, and expected to see his little Grace again. However that might be, before the evening was far advanced, he was evidently reconciled to the change. As for Grace, she succeeded very well in making "pretty speeches," whether she studied them for the purpose or not, but she did not succeed so well in feeling entirely at her ease. She would have been much better satisfied making aprons for the good-natured Harry Russel, than playing the agreeable to the courtly gentleman whose call had been pronounced such an honor. She *did* play the agreeable, however, to the admiration of her sister Lizzy, particularly, who was quite sure "dear, darling Grace" must be the most accomplished lady in the world, and watched her with proud, loving eyes the whole evening.

In a week from this time, Mr. Russel was quite domesticated in the family of the Lindens. He came almost every evening, but he no longer devoted himself exclusively to Grace. Indeed, a kind of reserve seemed to have sprung up between them, which curtailed the strides of the booted imag-

ination amazingly. The attention of Grace was necessarily very much devoted to the young friends with whom she had for years been on terms of intimacy. She sang and played for them, and chatted, and laughed, and danced; and, whenever she did, she was sure to receive a full share of flatteries and caresses. And then, in the midst of her triumphs, when her lip put on its brightest smiles, and her eye flashed with pleasurable excitement, Russel would look upon her, and think of the pale, sad little girl, that had so strongly excited his boyish sympathy. Could this gay, thoughtless creature be the same? this pretty butterfly, basking in the sunshine of admiration, as though it were the life of her spirit? Could this be the Grace Linden that he had longed to look upon again, as something consecrated to all that is beautiful, and good, and pure, though the impersonation of suffering? Russel might be unreasonable, but he could not bear to see Grace Linden so happy. Perhaps he had hoped again to be her comforter. Be that as it may, he felt displeased, disappointed, almost resentful; and the more he saw of the lady's singular power of fascination, the more closely he devoted himself to the unassuming, single-hearted Lizzy, and her no less unassuming and still interesting mother. Russel had yet to learn that a settled steadiness of purpose, an earnest spirit, and a deep, changeless, watchful, living love, are not incompatible with light words and gay smiles.

"She has rare endowments," he would say to himself, "and is strangely accomplished for one so young and friendless; but Lizzy, with her artless ingenuousness, and truthful simplicity, is far more lovely." And yet, while drawing these sage comparisons, Russel's eyes followed their unconscious subject from place to place, as though he deemed that might check her mirthfulness, or throw a veil of homeliness over perfections at which he chose to carp. The truth is, Russel was reading in a strange book, and he had yet the alphabet to learn. With all his lore, the key to woman's nature had not been given him. In the effort to please and render happy, he saw only a fondness for admiration; the good nature which

smiled at a gross flattery, rather than wound the flatterer, was in his eyes vanity; and in the sensitiveness which led Grace to forbear speaking of a time when she was the object of his pity, when she was even more miserable than he could well imagine, he read pride and heartlessness. When obliged to acknowledge the unquestionable superiority of Grace over those around her, he lamented the selfish ambition that he believed had led her to labor all her life long for her own advancement, rather than sit down at the simple hearth-stone consecrated by love alone. Such a picture would Russel draw of Grace Linden, meanwhile, shutting his heart against her; but it always faded before one of her gentle, winning glances, and then he would sit and converse with her by the hour, strenuously resisting every interruption. As for Grace, she saw herself, for the first time in her life, the object of criticism. Russel was studiously polite to her, but she knew that he was not always pleased, and she began to watch herself as she thought he watched her; until, by natural distrust, she was driven to very humiliating conclusions. All this could not be without its influence on her manners, and she grew capricious. Sometimes she was timid and reserved, sometimes startlingly brilliant; again gay and trifling to an excess in ill keeping with her thoughtful face and character of pensive sweetness; but never quite simple and easy, and natural; it was impossible when Russel was near. She had looked up to Harry Russel confidingly, and acknowledged his superiority by constant deference, when they were first associated; but now that distance seemed immeasurably increased, and she had learned to fear him. Russel always listened attentively to all she had to say, and seemed pleased to hear her converse; but notwithstanding the promise of his boyhood, he was no lady's man. He was unskilled in the use of those pretty nothings, which are usually thought to be all important; his words were full of meaning, and Grace, in listening to him, forgot to reply. Then she was free and natural, and Russel failed not to admire her; but this often gave way to a strange embarrassment that made her almost awk-

ward. At such times, after he was gone, poor Grace would review every foolish sentence she had uttered, and dwell painfully on some thoughtless act, which she was sure she would not have committed in any other presence. The pleasant vacation that Grace had promised herself grew uncomfortable, and she almost wished that Russel would be a less constant visiter; but when he did chance to stay away, the eyes of Grace were off the door scarcely a moment. Had she offended him, she constantly inquired of herself, or could it be indifference or disgust?

One morning Grace was very pleasantly surprised by a piece of new music from Russel; and she practised upon it all day that she might play it to him in the evening; but when evening came she was dissatisfied with her execution, and refused to play until a long time urged, and then her hand was not firm, and she touched the keys falteringly. Russel seemed vexed — she had played for others, well and often — why would she never do anything that he wished? Grace saw that he was displeased, and her eye moistened; then she recollected that he had no right to be, and, with a very cold, quiet excuse, she turned from the piano, and joining a young friend on the other side of the room, was soon engaged in a very animated conversation. Now and then the sound of Russel's deep, manly voice, made her reverse a sentence or forget to finish one; but nearly a half hour passed before she ventured to look at him. He was explaining to her brother the true bearing of some political question, and seemed deeply interested; but whenever he paused, Grace observed a deep, painful seriousness upon his brow that was quite unusual. "He has something to trouble him," thought the fair girl, "and I, foolish child that I am, have added to his annoyance." Instantly every thought of his superiority vanished — she did not care if he did consider her a simpleton — she was sure she could not appear more of one than when she attempted that show of dignity so little in accordance with her character. He was inquiring for a paper which Frank did not think was in the house; Grace knew where it was, and she glided qui

etly out of the room, and returning, slid it into his hand with a pleasing, winsome glance, which seemed to inquire, "Can we not still be friends?" Russel looked up, surprised and delighted; and that bright, earnest, heartfelt expression, which Grace so well remembered in the boy, lighted up his countenance. And they *were* friends — such very interested friends, that Frank, and Lizzy, and young Edward Sommers, and two or three other mischievous persons, amused themselves at their expense for the rest of the evening.

"You must hear me play that exquisite air before you leave, Mr. Russel," said Grace; "the fault was all in my hand before; I can assure you the will had nothing to do with it."

"And the rare pet you got into afterwards, Gracey?" inquired Frank.

"That was — but I'll not have you for my confessor, with your saucy questions and brusque ways; would you, Mr. Russel?"

Russel thought he should like to propose a candidate for that office himself; and when Grace again crimsoned, and made some remark to her mother to hide her embarrassment, he wondered that he could ever have esteemed her cold and heartless, ruined by her ambition. She sat down to the piano; and now, conscious of his approbation, she played with more spirit and animation than was her wont. Once she cast a quick glance at Russel. He stood in breathless attention. Then her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed, and her beautiful neck arched itself proudly. She finished, and rose from the instrument in conscious triumph — her only thought that she had redeemed her fault. Russel wished she had not played; and Grace easily detected the want of heart in his cold, measured compliments.

"He is not worth the trouble that I have bestowed upon him," thought Grace, as, with pouting lip and swelling bosom, she curtsied him out of the room.

"Ruined by her ambition," thought Russel, all the way home; and all night long it was the burden of his dreams.

As Russel walked home that evening, a drunken man staggered up to him, guided by the light from a low-eaved, filthy grocery, and, slapping him familiarly on the shoulder, poured forth a profusion of half-profane, half-vulgar slang, of which nothing could be well understood. Russel, however, caught the name of Grace Linden; and, swinging the impertinent intruder around, he dropped him by the roadside and proceeded on his way. In the mean time the drunken man crept from the gutter; and, half-sobered by the energetic proceedings of Russel, turned slowly down the street and walked on until he reached the house of Mr. Linden. Here he paused, and gazing up at the lighted windows, seemed revolving a bitter subject. "Yes, it is all owing to her," he muttered, "all; and if I should die on a gallows I would say she brought me there. She did n't like my face, forsooth, and my voice was not so smooth and soft as old Russel's son's, and so I was sent out to starve. Now, by all the powers of hell—" the miserable man, pausing in his malediction, as though his hatred could not be shaped into words, shook his clenched fist toward the window, and then, leaning over the fence, seemed engaged in eager plotting with his own cunning. Now and then, he would raise himself, and gaze up at the house with a dark, fierce glare; but, one by one, the lights went out, till every window was darkened, and then the drunkard stretched himself upon the sod, and slept more sweetly than many a better man.

As Grace Linden looked from her window early on the ensuing morning, she observed a miserable wretch, in tattered garb and with a face distorted by evil passion, regarding her intently from an opposite corner. A feeling of indefinable fear crept over her, for there was something strangely familiar in that malicious expression, which led her at once to think of the boy who had filled her little head with tales of horror, that even now she shuddered to recall. Immediately, the face peering at her through the vines of Abby's little window, with all its dark malignity, was portrayed in living colors; and hastily drawing the little curtain before the window, she sat

down upon her bed-side, and wept long and bitterly, not over the sufferings, but the touching sorrow of the past. That Abby's lot had been *so* dark, *so* sad! and now they were all so very happy! Grace, however, soon dried her tears, and tying on her bonnet, stole silently down the stairs, through the garden, up a well-trodden foot-path, and soon she was kneeling on her sister's grave, within the enclosure of the village church-yard.

"And when six months more have passed, you will take up your abode in Alderbrook, I suppose, or, perhaps, favor some brighter clime with your presence," said Russel, one evening, when Grace had been drawing a mimic picture of her return to school; and as he spoke, he bent his searching eyes upon her, as though he expected to read the answer more in her face than words.

"Oh! the brighter clime, of course, has my patronage," answered the lady, gaily; "my next visit to Alderbrook will be a flying one."

Russel's countenance fell. "Your friends," said he, with some bitterness, "will doubtless find the parting easier, since it is for your happiness."

"Yes, for my happiness," echoed Grace, with an ill suppressed sigh.

"On what quarter of the globe, fair lady, will you deign to cast the sunlight of your smiles?" inquired a slim clerk, in the first and worst stages of dandyism; stepping daintily towards the seat which Grace occupied.

"That is beyond my circumscribed prescience, O most gallant subject mine," answered Grace, mischievously; "will you cast my horoscope?"

The flowering dandy seemed a little puzzled. It was evident that he was no lexicographer, and he retreated without attempting any familiarities with the stars.

"Then you have not decided as to the future, Miss Linden?" inquired Russel.

"*Circumstances* must decide me, Mr. Russel," and the lips

of Grace remained apart as though she would have added more, but was for some reason withheld.

“We are all very much at the mercy of circumstances,” remarked Russel; “but it seems hardly fitting that one like you should confide your destiny to such a capricious guide.”

“It may be so,” answered Grace, almost gloomily, “but in that case the world has but a choice few, well-guided.—I must bide my destiny,” she added, with more cheerfulness.

Russel was silent. There was evidently a thought he would have spoken, but it was probably something that he had no right to speak, and so he bit his lips and crowded down the temptation. Meanwhile Grace was not quite sure that she had not said too much of herself and her plans; and, confused by his silence, she proceeded, like all embarrassed persons, to say more.

“Not that I anticipate a severer destiny; it is much pleasanter to look for sunshine than clouds.”

“And you have no reason to look for clouds,” said Russel, with a sad smile; “I predict for you a smooth destiny.”

“Then I shall add the weight of your prediction to my own hope,” answered Grace, cheerfully; “and, looking upon the whole past, I will venture to believe that Fortune may not so change as to prove herself a severe ‘step-dame.’”

“Heaven grant that she may not!” answered Russel, “and yet, success is not always for our best good; I have known its influence on the character to be anything but salutary.”

“I hope my character stands in no need of reverses *now*,” answered Grace, affected beyond control; “you, Mr. Russel, better than any one else, should know how deeply it has been tried. The future can have nothing too dark, too bitter for me; for the remembrance of *that one gloomy summer*, with the toils and privations that succeeded it, would make all after adversity a light thing. Forgive the allusion to those days—I had thought never to mention them; but the remembrance is with me always; and I cannot separate the generous boy to whom I owe perhaps life—reason, I am almost sure, from—” Grace had been too much excited, she had gone too

far. One thought of the proud, stern countenance of Russel, abashed her; and, unable to extricate herself, she found relief in an ungovernable burst of tears.

“Do not separate them, dear Grace, do not try!” The words fell upon her ear in low, thrilling tones, that she could scarcely recognize; and Grace dared not raise her eyes, lest she should discover that they had been spoken in mockery of her emotion.

“What a stupid couple you are, here in this corner!” exclaimed Frank, coming forward, as is the fortune of some people, just when he should not; “and tears, as I live! Between ourselves, Russel, Gracey is getting to be the veriest cry-baby in Christendom. I wish you could convince her that it will spoil her eyes to be so mopish.”

“Mopish!” repeated Russel, abstractedly.

“Excessively — if you could only have seen her the other evening, just when you were not here to see her —”

“Frank!” exclaimed the sister, quite thrown off her guard. “Don’t believe anything he says, Mr. Russel; his word is not to be depended on for a moment. You know I am always happy — it is my nature to be happy. I could not be mopish if I should try. By the way, Frank, did you bring me the — the book you promised?”

“What book?”

“Why the nice story-book, that was to amuse me while travelling. Frank has a very treacherous memory,” she added, turning to Russel.

The young man started and looked up vacantly. “Were you speaking to me, Gra — Miss Russel — Miss — Miss Linden?” and poor Russel, confounded by his most awkward of all awkward blunders, reddened and looked more confused than ever Grace had done.

“Ha, ha, ha! O yes; I recollect all about the book, Gracey!” laughed Frank, brimful of merriment, at the sudden light that broke in upon him; and, with a very knowing look, and a very low bow, he turned, as he said, to company less pre-occupied.

“Frank is very merry to-night,” observed Grace, “he must have been visiting the Ashleys.”

There’s nothing like woman’s tact to disentangle the Gordian knot of a double and twisted embarrassment, that, originating in nothing, tends to nothing. The Ashleys afforded a fruitful theme, and they were discussed with a genuine relish for gossip, that had never before been developed in either of our young friends. It may be that there were mingling some home-allusions, and direct personalities; it is certain that there were looks and tones not quite in keeping with the careless words; otherwise, what should place the two young people on the very peculiar footing that they evidently occupied at parting?

The next meeting between Grace and Russel was joyous and cordial on one side, timid, pleased, and gracefully shy on the other. They met in the magnificent old woods, where conventionalism seems a mockery, and heart speaks to heart through the medium of invented words, or the more eloquent language traced by a divine finger on the countenance, and colored from the soul.

Side by side, they walked beneath the grateful shadows, talking in tones low and deep, as if every word had its origin in the inner sanctum of the spirit; and carelessly crushing the bright-eyed flowers, and the large, round dew-drops, scattered in their path-way, as if they had never admired the humble beauties of the woodland. And there Grace unfolded all her plans for the future — those plans that she had never fully confided even to her darling brother; and looked up for approbation, just as she would have looked to Harry Russel ten summers before, only far more confidingly. And yet Grace was no longer the child, but the strong-minded, deep-judging, all-enduring woman; beautiful in her simplicity, generous in her unmeasured trustfulness, and strong in those high resolves, which had been the dreams of her childhood, and were now approaching to realities. And now Russel learned the object of that ambition which he had so often censured. Lizzy must be allowed advantages equal to her

sister's ; and Lizzy's father and mother must be provided with a comfortable, pleasant home, and find again the happiness they lost in youth. It was a debt she owed, so Grace insisted, for all the care and wearying anxiety which she had occasioned them in childhood ; and she would repay it, though grey hairs should come long before her mission could be accomplished. And Grace was surprised to see the dignified, manly Russel, with all his coldness and sternness, display an almost girlish weakness of feeling, at the unfolding of a plan so simple and natural. She wished him to praise her ; — indeed, it would have made her sad to think that he did not appreciate the self-denial it would require to separate herself from all she loved, and spend years of toil among strangers. She was no heroine, but a fond, devoted, confiding woman, ready for any sacrifice of her own interests, but in the midst of all, panting for that breath of life to every true woman — sympathy. And yet she saw no cause for the deep emotion which almost unmanned her lover. She knew that she was doing right ; that she was acting as the world would call (if the world ever knew it) generously ; but little did she know the touching beauty, the deep, tender sacredness, which her character from that moment assumed in the eyes of the hitherto suspicious, though fascinated Russel. It was late before they emerged from that now endeared forest ; and then words had been spoken which are *thus* spoken but once ; and which never, *never*, even through a long eternity, could be recalled. The solemn stars had witnessed their betrothal ; and the green forest leaves, fluttering their fresh lips together, murmured it to each other, and to the wandering breezes ; and the spirit of the dead sister, in whose bosom Grace had wept her bitterest tears, carried the holy vows to Heaven, and saw them engraved on angelic tablets.

CHAPTER III. — EIGHT-AND-TWENTY.

“ AND you have never heard from him since, dear Grace ? ”

“ Not a word.”

“ And yet you feel no resentment ? ”

“Not resentment, but something of disappointment,—a great deal disappointed, indeed. Few persons in the world would stand a ten years’ trial, Lizzy; but I did have full confidence in Russel. However, it has not made me distrustful of my kind; faith and hope are yet strong within me, and even if the past failed, I am quite satisfied with the present. Our home here is a perfect little paradise. Your husband is the most perfect specimen of a man (always excepting one that I have no right to remember) in the world; and ‘Gan-papa’s little pet, Charley,’ the dearest and cunningest little fellow—a perfect Cupid, Lizzy! I am *so* glad you persuaded Sommers to settle near us! As for Frank’s wife, I shall love her dearly. She is so patient, and gentle, and amiable! I see that father and mother are very fond of her.”

“And well they may be. She is entirely devoted to them and Frank. At first, mother had some misgivings about living with a daughter-in-law, but Mary is so respectful and dutiful, and so companionable withal, that she would not part with her now for the world. But do tell me, Grace, what you suppose could have actuated Russel to treat you in such a manner?”

“Nothing, I think, but time and absence. It is perfectly natural—or would be in any other man; but I was foolish enough to suppose him exempt from all the frailties of humanity. Indeed, I now think him exempt from most of them.”

“How strange!”

“What, Lizzy?”

“Why, your talk. Do you know, I have been watching your face this half hour, and at last have come to the conclusion that you were never in love?”

“Ah!”

“The truth is, Grace, you are a little too much reconciled to suit me.”

“Do you wish me unhappy, then?”

“I cannot say that I do, exactly; but it would be impossible to pity you with that smiling face, and happy way of saying and doing everything. Own, Gracey, that you only

fancied Mr. Russel — that your heart was touched only on the surface.”

“It may be so,” said Grace, carelessly.

“Good! and now solve a mystery. Why did n't you fall in love with that amiable young Frenchman that you wrote me about?”

“Because my fancy (since you call it that) was pre-occupied.”

“The only reason, Gracey?”

“The only reason, I suspect. If I had seen him at eight, or even at eighteen, Russel might never have had the opportunity to exhibit his fickleness.”

“But when you ceased hearing from Russel?”

“It made no difference, Lizzy. My vows to him are as binding as though his remained unbroken.”

“Oh, Grace! do not say that! His falsehood must not condemn you to a life of loneliness. You would make such a dear, loving little wife! I would forget him just out of spite, if I were in your place.”

“And so spite myself. Ah, Lizzy! that is too often the case with us foolish women; but we are spirited at a vast expense. To show a false lover that we can do without him, we sell the remnant of happiness which he has left us, and become martyrs to our own vanity.”

“But think of your being an old maid, Grace!”

“Ha! so it comes to that after all! An honorable sisterhood, Lizzy!”

“Grace, a strange notion has just possessed me. Let me see Russel's last letter.”

Grace walked across the portico very slowly, and by the time she again stood before her sister, her face wore its usual expression of subdued, but heart-felt cheerfulness.

“Those letters, Lizzy, I have not looked upon in three years. It is not well to test our strength of character too far. They are so, *so* like him!” she murmured, as she again turned away and bent her face close to a little rose-bush that stood beside her.

At another time, it is probable that Lizzy would have observed all this; but the calm, quiet manner of her sister had effectually misled her, and she was only intent on looking into the mystery.

“But tell me, Grace, if you discovered any change in his letters — any coldness or indifference —”

“Oh, no! they were like himself to the last — as he was before I left home for New Orleans — so tender, and generous, and noble! No, Lizzy! his letters never changed.”

“Then, Grace, my word for it, that Frenchman, that young De Vere, who loved you so much, is at the bottom of the mischief. I am certain his letters were intercepted.”

“Never, Lizzy! at least by De Vere. He is the soul of honor. I would sooner suspect you, or myself, or anybody, of such a crime.”

“Then what could it be, Grace?”

“Time and constant occupation — nothing else, I feel assured.”

“But is n't it strange, then, that he has never married some one else?”

“Lizzy, dear Lizzy! let us change this subject. We cannot account for all Russel has done; we only know that he is lost to us, and forever. I cannot feel resentment for what I know to be very natural. I have schooled my heart into submission and cheerfulness, and I intend to be very happy with you here — dear loving ones, that you are! But, Lizzy, I have a woman's heart, and I must own to you that it has not yet learned to subdue its many weaknesses. No tears, darling, I do not need them — indeed, I do not, and you must not pity me. I am no love-lorn damsel, but neither am I a stoic. Now for a ride on horseback, and let us forget for a while that there is anybody but us two in the wide world.”

Ten years had not passed over the head of Grace Linden without leaving an impress. They had matured her beauty, added polish and dignity to her manners, ripened her intellect, but cast a deep, deep shadow on her heart. In pursuance of an original plan, on leaving school, she had gained a

situation as governess in a southern family. The first few years of her exile from home had been tedious and wearisome; but then she entered the family of the De Veres, and from that time everything was changed. She had spent but a few months with them before she became less the governess than the friend and companion—the daughter and sister. As she intimated to Lizzy, delighted would they have been to make her so in reality, to keep her with them forever; but when Grace gently and truthfully gave her great reason for a refusal, she suffered no diminution of kindness. Political troubles having driven the De Veres from their own country, they had brought with them those republican sentiments which were the fruit of the times, together with cultivated minds, refined tastes, polished manners, and a high-souled generosity that sometimes led to the most noble and chivalric actions. Such spirits have a mesmeric lore by which they read each other's natures at a glance; and this must have been the secret of the strong attachment between Grace Linden and those she served. The residence of Grace in this family was highly advantageous to her; for she mingled with them freely at home, and accompanied them abroad as the daughters' friend; at the same time receiving a salary which enabled her fully to carry out her intentions with regard to her parents.

For five years, almost every act of her life and wish of her heart were known to Russel; and he found time, even in the midst of his high duties, to return her confidence warmly and without measure. Then, as the time for her returning home drew near, he became of a sudden strangely silent. Grace was all-trusting, and, from day to day, from week to week, she busied herself with framing excuses, which, if not satisfactory, yet served the purpose of busying the mind. She did not cease to write; and every day, with a kindling eye and beating heart, did she descend to meet the post-boy at the hall door, returning as often to weep over her disappointment alone. And still did she try to excuse. He was so *very* busy—it was selfish to ask so much of his precious time—then the letters might have miscarried—those southern mails

were so irregular. Yes! they had certainly miscarried, and she would write again. And again she wrote, and again; and her heart grew sick with disappointment. Then came the fearful conviction of his illness — illness among strangers, looked after only by hirelings; for poor Grace had not yet a doubt of his truth. She could not inquire of her friends, for Russel had been for years a popular metropolitan lawyer, and they seldom saw or communicated with him. And Grace, with her usual unselfish consideration for others, concluded that since they were unable to assist her, she would not trouble them. But her fears for his illness were soon dissipated, for she one day saw, in a northern paper, a notice of a fine plea which he had made a few days previous; and his eloquence, his legal learning, and lofty principles were so highly extolled, that for a moment Grace forgot her own troubles in her pride for him. But it was only for a moment. Gradually came the conviction that his success was no longer aught to her; that, however brilliant his career might be, her future must be one of darkness and loneliness — she was studiously neglected and forgotten. Oh! that hour of wild, withering anguish! that dark, deadly struggle of every power within! It was fearful, but Grace was alone, and not a human heart dreamed of the depth of her wretchedness. Then came a sense of utter, utter desolation, when all her treasured hopes were crushed within her bosom; and then a dead, cold calm, as if the life-current had been suddenly congealed, settled upon her heart. Her friends knew that she was unhappy; and, without seeking for the cause, showered upon her the most tender attentions, till Grace was ashamed not to reward their unwearied kindness with success. For their sakes she tried to be cheerful, and the attempt was not altogether in vain. The time came when Grace should have returned to her home in the north, but every motive for returning had now been taken from her. She could not bear that those, whose happiness had been the whole care of her life, should see her changed, and know that grief had so changed her: that would be blotting out the work of her own hands,

extinguishing the light which she had herself created. The De Veres were about to make a visit to the old world, and were urgent that she should accompany them. And Grace consented. Though she had now shut up her inner heart against her other self, and resolved not to be the victim of her own dead hopes, it yet made but little difference where she was, provided the earliest and noblest of her plans failed not through her own sorrows. She wrote to announce her intention of going abroad; and then, for the first time, she spoke of her changed prospects, though, so lightly, as to leave the impression with all that the arrangement had been made amicably and very probably for the good of both parties. When she returned home, four years after, she was so entirely the Grace Linden of other days, that no one would have dreamed a single woe had crept into her heart, a single grief shaded her clear, open brow, or a tear dimmed the lustre of her deep, soulful eye. Months passed before she even made a confidante of Lizzy, and then she only gave her facts, carefully covering up all that might be painful in the history.

“Take care, *cognata mia!*” said Edward Sommers, as Grace playfully pointed her little riding whip at him, while he stood cautioning for the dozenth time his young wife, “take care! your day will come yet, my gay Beatrice.”

Grace flourished her whip again, the horses arched their necks and touched the pavement daintily, as if proud of their fair burdens; and, without waiting the conclusion of another caution, which the careful husband was just commencing, the sisters bent their heads with a gay laugh, and tightening the reins, away they flew like two beautiful birds. A shower of rain had fallen an hour before, and whole strings of large liquid crystals clung quiveringly to every spear of grass, while many a big drop lay snugly nestled in a flower-bell; and every now and then a breath of pure fresh air came sweeping by, and scattered thousands of the bright tremblers from the trees that overhung the wayside. The sky was beautiful and clear, and the air delightfully refreshing; and, as the two ladies reined in their gay palfreys and paused to

listen to the bursts of music issuing from the woodlands, they would catch the gladsome strain, and echo it back with a true joyousness that proclaimed their sisterhood with the spirits of the green wood. On they went, now prancing along under the laden trees and catching the rain-drops as they fell, now entering a green pasture and galloping upon the turf, and again emerging into the high-road, and pursuing their way at a pace more sedate and dignified.

“Grace, do you recollect your old tormentor, Dick Crouse?” inquired Lizzy Sommers, as the two sisters slackened the rein, and proceeded amblingly over a very rough road.

“It would be impossible to forget him,” answered Grace, with a slight involuntary shudder. “I never should have dreamed of the existence of such malice if I had not seen it displayed.”

“He lives yonder,” returned Lizzy, pointing to a low, board hovel, set down in the midst of a potato-patch.

“He!” and Grace involuntarily turned her horse’s head.

“What a coward, Grace!” and Lizzy, smiling over her shoulder, cantered gaily forward.

In a moment Grace was beside her. “Now slower, Lizzy, but do not look in the direction of the house; I always have a horrible feeling connected with my thoughts of that man; and there is not a being on earth I should be so much afraid to meet alone. There is something fearfully supernatural in all my notions concerning him, for I once actually believed him an evil spirit clothed in flesh and blood. But how came he here? and how does he live?”

“He haunted the village until grown to manhood, sometimes spending a year or two away, but always returning, until about the time you went south; he then disappeared, and nothing was seen of him for a long time. About three years ago he came to Alderbrook, bringing with him a coarse virago of a woman whom he called his wife, and a child then six months old. They lived in the village, and supported themselves by any little jobs of work which they could get, until about a year ago, when the wife died. Crouse behaved

like a brute upon the occasion, openly rejoicing at his freedom."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Grace, glancing around her in alarm, for now the hut was very near.

"Oh! it was inhuman! but then, Gracey, if you could have seen the poor motherless baby, clinging around his neck -- forlorn little thing as it was! you would have respected him some, (you could n't have helped it,) for the child's sake. He could not have been so loved by such an innocent creature, if there were not a little humanity yet within him."

Grace mused a few moments. "Lizzy, I cannot altogether divest myself of the idea that I have injured that man. It was a silly child, scared at my own shadow, and it may be that I deprived him of his only honorable means of subsistence. I believe people are as often driven into crime as reformed by injudicious punishment."

"It may be, Grace, but what better could have been done? He was thoroughly bad, even then, and I have never heard of his performing a good action in his life. The only redeeming trait in his character is an all-absorbing love for his child."

"What has become of the child?"

"Several of the neighbors offered to take it and bring it up respectably; but he ridiculed the idea of not being able to care for his own, and removed at once to this hut. But look, there is some one with him!"

Grace had no need to look, to know that Dick Crouse was near, for she heard a volley of oaths that she firmly believed could issue from no other lips. Before the door of the hut stood a horse, and beside it, Crouse, holding the half-mounted owner of it by the collar.

"Let go!" said the stranger, soothingly, "let go! there would be no use in my staying any longer, and there are a dozen other patients waiting for me."

The two ladies shuddered at the answer, so full of blasphemy, so replete with agony -- and hurried on a few steps, then paused and looked back. The physician, for such he

evidently was, had shaken the hand of the desperate man from his collar, and was now trying to free the reins from his maniacal grasp.

“I tell you, Crouse, I cannot help her! You should have called me earlier.”

Again the wretched Crouse renewed his oaths and threats, and the physician, evidently out of all patience, was raising the butt of his whip over his knuckles, when a sharp, shrill cry, as of intense suffering, issued from the interior of the hut.

“Come, in God’s name, come!” exclaimed Crouse, “she *shall not die!*” And dropping the reins he hurried into the hut, while the physician, relieved, turned hastily homeward. The two sisters, pale with fear, looked into each other’s faces, as though each expected the other to speak first.

“Let us go in,” said Grace, in a low hoarse voice; “we ought to go; the child is sick, and Doctor Clay said he could do nothing to help her.”

“But he is such a horrible man, Grace.”

“He would n’t hurt us, if he knew we came in kindness.”

“How dreadfully he talked!”

“Dreadfully, but the poor child—”

Another piercing shriek interrupted her, and Grace sprang from her horse. Instantly Lizzy followed; and, leaving the two animals to nibble the fresh grass, they turned to the hut.

The first object that met their view on entering the door, was a little child three or four years old, tossing upon a miserable substitute for a bed, in a burning, raging fever; it was flinging its little arms about its head, and rolling from side to side in agony. A few feet from the bed, stood Crouse, with glaring eyes, set teeth, and folded arms, the clenched fingers almost buried in the flesh, and his features distorted to a dreadful expression; nor did he turn his head, nor move an eyelash, until Grace had laid her cool hand upon the forehead of the child. Then he bounded forward like a tiger.

“Away! away! would you kill my child?”

“No! I am come to help her, if I can,” said Grace, softly.

“Help her! no! no! I know that smooth voice. I have seen Grace Linden before. Help! ha! ha! ha!”

Grace shuddered, and every nerve quivered with irresistible fear; but she passed the hand soothingly over the child's limbs, and made no answer.

“You would help her, as you helped her father. Oh! *you* do good gloriously!”

“Mr. Crouse,” exclaimed Lizzy, stepping firmly forward, “if you have any love for your child, you will cease this. We came to do her good, but if we meet with hard words or ill-treatment from you, we leave her to her fate.”

Crouse was bending over the bed, as she spoke, and the child put up her little arms as though she recognized him. He was instantly subdued.

“Leave her! Don't, don't leave her! My poor little Nannie! Oh! help her if you can.”

“We will!” exclaimed Grace, tears rushing to her eyes, at the sound of his altered voice, “we will do all we can for her.”

Lizzy had employed the few moments that had elapsed since her entrance, in taking a survey of the little hut. She found it as she expected, destitute of everything most needed.

“There is no use in staying,” she began; but suddenly she paused in fright, for the manner of Crouse became furious; “but we will come back and bring what is necessary.”

“No, no, no! You think her grave-clothes are necessary! But she shall not have them yet. A shroud for *her!* *Her* so young? Oh! I meant no suffering, no harm, no wrong should ever come to her! My poor, poor Nannie!”

The wretched man crouched upon the floor, like a wounded dog, and groaned aloud.

“I will stay!” said Grace, in a low, half-hesitating tone. Then she added, more cheerfully,

“Hurry home, Lizzy, and send Frank with fresh linen, and — everything that is needed — you will know what. And, Lizzy, ask Frank to bring Doctor Furman; he will help her if anybody can.”

“ Now, God bless you, Grace Linden !” exclaimed Crouse, in a subdued tone, “ if you had made me ten times the villain that I am, God bless you for this !”

“ Will you help my sister to her horse ?” asked Grace quietly.

Crouse hurried to the door, but Lizzy recoiled from his touch, and mounted without assistance.

“ Ride for life, dear Lizzy !” said Grace from the doorway.

The child screamed, and the answer was lost ; for Grace was alarmed at the rough handling of the frightened father.

“ I shall need some warm water, Mr. Crouse,” said Grace, as soon as the paroxysm ceased, “ and then will you please to bring me a tub, and soap, and towels ? We must try to cool this terrible fever ; poor child ! her flesh seems on fire. In the mean time, I will bathe her temples in cold water if you will bring me a basin.”

Grace spoke in those calm, quiet tones, which are so puissant in subduing madness, and poor Crouse performed her bidding with the submissive simplicity of a little child. He listened to every word, watched every look, and obeyed the slightest direction to the letter ; starting at the child’s screams as though every pang had been his own, but only bending his eager eye on her for a moment, and then turning away, as though satisfied that she was in better hands than his. When Grace had bathed poor little Nannie’s aching limbs, and smoothed her hair, and beaten up and spread anew her little cot, cooling the linen in the doorway, she laid her down gently ; and, fanning her with a fresh green bough which Crouse had brought her, the little sufferer was soon in a troubled slumber. When the miserable father perceived the effect of Grace’s care, he crept cautiously to the bedside, and crouching upon the floor, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin on both hands, he gazed long and fixedly upon the sleeper. At last he turned to Grace.

“ You have wronged me, Grace Linden, and I you ; but if you knew all, you would never —” and he pointed to the bed.

“ If I have ever had the misfortune to do you a wrong,”

answered Grace, feelingly, "it was unintentional, and I am sorry for it. If it is not too late now to remedy it—"

"It is too late!" growled Crouse, sternly.

"Perhaps it may be done in the person of your child," faltered Grace, timidly; for there is nothing that makes us such cowards as the slightest consciousness of having performed a reprehensible act.

"Ay! save my child, my poor little Nannie, and I will be your slave—your dog, to do your bidding while I live. There is nothing, Grace Linden, nothing, that I will not do for you, if you make Nannie live."

He paused a few moments, and then began brokenly—

"You were a child, only a child, and could not know what you did. It was the fault of others—*they* should have seen that the poor were not trampled on, and driven to theft, and—and every crime. No, Grace, you were not so bad, you did n't mean to ruin poor Nannie, and I *have* wronged you."

Grace thought the man was going mad, and she fixed her eyes on him apprehensively, repeating after him, "To ruin Nannie?"

"Yes! to ruin her—to make us glad to put her in the grave. Oh! I did not hate you without a reason, Grace Linden—but that is passed, all passed, and you will save my own poor little Nannie; you will save her, won't you?"

"If I can; but of what other Nannie have you been talking?"

Crouse looked at her suspiciously. "What other Nannie? What one but her that they drove into the street to make room for you—her that—"

"I never heard of it, Mr. Crouse."

The face of Grace vouched for the truth of her words; and Crouse, after being a little urged, proceeded to explain to her the cause of his original hatred. He was not very explicit; but Grace gathered enough to account for the infinite pleasure Dick Crouse had seemed to take in tormenting her, and to free him, partially, at least, from the charge of unprovoked malice. The boy's parents, being both drunkards, the children

often suffered for the necessaries of life, and Dick and his elder sister Nannie, were at last glad to gain situations in the factory of Mr. Russel. It is easy to be believed, however, that they were no favorites, and when Mrs. Linden wished employment for two of her children, it is not strange that Mr. Russel made a vacancy in favor of Grace and at the expense of Nannie. The sister of Dick Crouse was then nearly fifteen, indolent, careless, and vicious; and, as she could not obtain a situation in a respectable family, her course was from that time downward. This tale was told brokenly, sometimes in piteous tones, sometimes with harsh words and a wolfish expression of countenance; but Grace discovered the iron that had been cankering in the man's soul his life long, the ban of society brought by a parent's crimes! Oh! that she had sooner known all this! Even as a child she might have saved a world of wrong. Her heart grew sad as she sat in that gloomy hovel, by the bedside of the dying, perhaps, and in the company of one, not only sinning but sinned against, and, as she now believed, by her own self.

Oh! glad was Grace Linden when her brother arrived with all the little sick-room comforts, prepared by her mother and Lizzy. And glad, too, was she to see the wrist of the sufferer spanned by the fingers of good Doctor Furman; for she knew that if man's skill could avail anything, little Nannie Crouse would yet be saved. The kind physician advised Grace to return home, and leave the patient to his care; but the proposal seemed such a startling one to Crouse, that she concluded to remain and keep watch with her brother during the night. In the morning the fever was somewhat abated, and little Nannie seemed quite rational; for she put up her parched lips for her father's kiss, and passed her hot hand over his face, winding the fingers in the shaggy beard, and trying to win a smile even in the midst of her suffering, till the boldly vicious man was fain to turn away his face, ashamed of his softness. On his return to the village, Doctor Furman engaged a careful nurse to attend upon his patient; and every day Grace and Lizzy showed their kind, cheerful faces at the

hut, until the child was pronounced out of danger. Long before this, it would have been difficult for Grace Linden to recognize her old enemy, Dick Crouse, in the timid, gentle, grateful being, who, she doubted not, would go the world over to save her; and yet, at times, a strange expression flitted across his face, an expression so full of meaning, and such mysterious meaning, too, that Lizzy, and sometimes Frank, thought it boded no good. But Grace was sure the wolf was tamed; and when she spoke of it at home, Sommers laughed, and professed his implicit belief in the veritable history of "Beauty and the Beast." For more than a week before little Nannie's nurse was dismissed, Crouse went out in search of employment, and when he obtained it, set himself to work industriously, saying to all who rallied him on his improved habits, that he had need of money. As soon as the child had recovered, he brought her in his arms one day to Mr. Linden's door, and very humbly begged of Grace to afford her protection and shelter during a short absence. "And," he added, struggling with some almost overpowering emotion, "and if I never return, whatever may chance, Grace Linden, oh, do not let her starve! My poor little Nannie never wronged you."

Grace accepted the charge, and gave her word that the child should be cared for while she lived; and the strange man went away grateful and satisfied.

"Be sure that you do not fail us," said Grace Linden to Mr. Sommers, as she parted from him at the hall door; "and bring Charley. His little eyes will lose none of their sparkle by being kept open one evening."

"You must convince mamma of that," said Sommers. "We careless fathers will believe anything you tell us."

"Well, I shall expect you and Lizzy, if 'leettle pet' is confined to his crib;" and Grace tripped lightly up-stairs to her own room, and, tired with her long ramble, flung herself upon a couch beneath the window. Grace was in no particularly musing mood, but the tide of thought is never still; and numerous and hope-fraught visions came clustering thick around her, though in none of them was there room for self.

Her parents were happy — so happy that their hearts were constantly gushing forth with thankfulness, and their joy was told in words that meant not to tell it — words of the most eloquent simplicity. Then Lizzy, the proud young wife, and prouder mother, could not have admitted another drop into her cup, for it was already brimming over; and Frank, though performing the innumerable duties of a country editor, and swelling his tiny capital by immeasurably small particles, yet found time to be the most heartily gladsome of the whole family. Then Grace thought of Mary, her quiet, gentle, affectionate sister-in-law; and she sprang lightly from her couch, and, opening a drawer, began hastily turning over a bundle of laces.

“Yes! she ought to wear caps,” thought Grace, “pretty little dress caps; they are so becoming to her sweet face. I will make one this very evening.”

The door-bell rang just as Grace was deciding whether the cap should have a little crown to cover the braid, or pass over the top of the head and fall on the neck at the sides, leaving the hair more uncovered.

“Too early for Sommers and Lizzy,” she thought, pulling out her watch.

Old Janet tapped at her door, and put in her head. “Mr. Russel, Miss;” and little Nannie Crouse squeezed in beside her, repeating “Mittah Ushil!”

Grace started, and the whole box of laces fell from her hand.

“*Who* is it, Janet? You have made a mistake! he did not call himself — *that?*”

Janet began to protest that he did call himself *that*; and that she heard just as plain as day; and that (this was said in a lower key, however) some folks could hear a great deal better than some other folks; but the appearance of Frank cut her short.

“Your old flame, Russel, Grace — in the greatest tease to see you — could scarcely say *how d’ye do* to me. But, bless me! how pale you are! Water, Janet! Bring some water! quick!”

Grace put away the proffered cup, and, bending her head upon her cold, white hands, only murmured,

“To come *now*, when I was so, *so* happy! it is too much!”

“Don’t go down, Gracey, dear! Don’t try!” whispered Frank, drawing near. “There is something here that I do not understand, but you must tell me at another time. Now I will make an excuse for you. I will say you are ill — engaged — anything you like; and tell him to come again, or intimate that you will be always invisible. Don’t try to go down, Gracey!”

And Grace thought at first that she would not. Then came all her womanly pride to aid her; and she would not, for the world, that Russel should suspect her of being less indifferent than himself. She immediately arose, and wreathing the long masses of hair that she had allowed to fall over her shoulders, into a knot, attempted to confine it; but the bodkin slipped from her trembling fingers, and Frank was obliged, though somewhat awkwardly, to act the part of tire-woman.

“Now, can you assist me farther, Frank? Put a pin in that lace, close to the top of the dress — how rumped!”

And Grace passed her clammy hands over the folds of her flowing skirt, to see that each one was in place.

“Never mind, Gracey, it is well enough; and if there was but a little more color in your cheek, I have never seen you so pretty. Now look in the glass.”

“I don’t care to be pretty, just now, Frank; that makes no difference. But if Russel should see me carelessly dressed, or less cheerful than I used to be, he would suspect what, my dear brother, I do not like to have him know — that he has caused me sorrow.”

“But he has, Grace! has he not? Oh! why have you not told us this before?”

“It was nothing — was not worth telling. Come now with me, Frank, and leave me at the door.”

The young man took his sister’s arm in his, but as he perceived she walked totteringly, he clasped her cold hand

closely, and wound his arm around her waist. "Grace, my poor sister, this will be too much for you!"

Grace pressed forward. Slowly, step after step, as though joining in a funeral march, they descended the stairs; the strong arm of the brother alone preventing her from falling: Poor Grace! Her heart was the grave of its own crushed, withered, but now intensely alive feelings. They drew near the door, and Frank paused, with his hand upon the latch. 'Grace, let *me* see this man! If his perfidy has occasioned all this, it is fiendish in him to come to you now. As your brother, your best friend and protector, I should and must shield you. Indeed, Grace, you are not equal to this severe task. Let me seek an explanation."

"Never! no! no!"

"Well then, I will not; but don't see him to-night — don't, darling! You are so pale and miserable!"

Grace pressed both hands upon her temples, as if their throbbing would madden her; and then leaned her head against her brother's shoulder and sobbed without restraint. Frank bore her from the door, and, without opposition, guided her back to her room.

"It is *so* long since I have thought of these things, and now they come upon me so suddenly!" she whispered, as he imprinted a kiss upon her dewy forehead. Bitter were the thoughts of Frank Linden, as he turned from his suffering sister to encounter the expected cold eye, and civil speeches of the accomplished man of the world.

Russel was examining a port-folio of pencil sketches as he entered, and the centred light of his fine eye, and the quiet smile lurking at the corners of his exquisitely moulded mouth bespoke a complacent happiness, strikingly contrasted with the wretchedness he had occasioned. A joyous smile broke from his parted lips and flashed over his whole face like a sunbeam, when the door opened; and then a look of disappointment followed, so deep and heartfelt that Frank was sorely puzzled. He had heard neither side of the story yet, and could only read faces.

“ My sister has taken a long walk and is very much fatigued to-night. She wishes me to make her excuses.”

Russel looked still more disappointed — somewhat distressed even.

“ If she could afford me a few moments — my business is important.”

“ Another time perhaps : now she is resting and I would not, on any account, have her disturbed.”

“ She is not ill, I trust ?” and Russel looked so anxious, so troubled, so unlike his usually proud self, that Frank’s resentment began to give way, and he assured him that she was quite well — stronger and healthier even than when he last saw her. Russel said no more, but drew a small parcel from his pocket, and writing a few lines on the cover delivered it to young Linden, with the expressed hope that it might soon find its way to his sister’s hand. When Frank entered her apartment, Grace was seated by the window, leaning her forehead against the raised sash, and gazing upon a retreating figure, now almost invisible in the grey twilight.

“ And he will never come again ?” she asked, turning suddenly.

“ I do not know ; here is something he left you ;” and Frank placed the package in her hands.

Grace clutched at it convulsively and drew it close to her bosom ; and then she gasped for breath, and attempted to tear away the slight fold of lace that shaded her neck, as though it had been that which so oppressed her. Frank was alarmed and was about to call for assistance, but she arrested his design.

“ No — no ! I am better now. It was only a momentary struggle and will be the last. I shall be your own Grace again in a few days — as happy as I was before this terrible interruption. He did right to return my letters, and I ought to thank him for it. I suppose there is no danger of his coming again.”

Frank thought not, and with a few soothing words — words

so beautiful falling from a brother's lips — he left her to herself.

“It is all over,” murmured Grace, “and we are parted forever and ever. Oh, why did he come to disturb my happiness?”

Hour after hour passed by, and still Grace Linden sat in that same position; her white hands buried in her loosened hair, and her cheek pressed closely upon the table before her. Frank came in, and, folding her in his arms, gave her the good night kiss, and Mary pressed her soft, loving lips upon the aching forehead; but she scarce knew it. Midnight drew near, the candle flickered and yielded up its light; and the moon went down behind the trees, leaving the chamber in utter darkness. Still Grace moved not: it was her hour of utter abandonment. Morning came, and Grace slept — her head resting on her crossed arms, and her face buried in the sleeves of her robe. Again and again there came a light tap at the door, and a pitying face would look in for a moment; but despair has a deep sleep, and this was not easily broken. At last Grace moved, and murmuring her brother's name, awoke. She looked around her with a wild, troubled expression, as of one haunted by the memory of a fearful dream.

“Oh, that it could be a dream!” she murmured, but her hand fell upon a little parcel in her lap, and she remembered all — all her agony and all her hopelessness. Slowly she raised the package and unwound the string, and as a number of letters fell from the envelope, she pushed them from her to the other side of the table, and shaded her eyes from them as though the sight was painful to her. Then she mechanically smoothed the wrapper that she had at first crumpled in her hand; examined the seal, bearing simply the letters “H. R.,” and the superscription, his own hand-writing, until finally her eye fell upon some pencilings, and wandered over them at first quite vacantly. In a moment she raised her hand as though she would brush away the haze that obscured her vision, and read, although the strange words half bewildered her:

“ I would give the world, dear Grace, to see you to-night, for I have everything to say. But this package will explain all — it contains our intercepted letters. A miserable wretch, touched by your kindness, has confessed the fraud and delivered them up. Forgive, dear Grace, my credulity, though even then I shall not forgive myself. H. R.”

The sun had been up nearly two hours, when Lizzy Sommers found her sister extended upon the floor senseless, with the paper crushed in her two hands, and her white lips parted with the first involuntary expression of surprise. She had borne her sorrows well, and but few had even suspected their existence ; but the transition was too sudden, too unexpected, and her power of endurance was spent. In a few moments her heart palpitated wildly ; a crimson flushed her cheeks ; a light broke from her eye, and throwing herself on the friendly bosom of her sister, Lizzy was for the first time made acquainted with all her weakness and all her strength.

Russel found no difficulty in obtaining pardon, for if his rich, manly voice, had pleaded in tones less winning, and spoken words less delicately tender, and if those deep, soulful eyes, had looked into hers with but a tithe of their thrilling earnestness, there was that in the heart of Grace that would have forgiven a greater offence than being convinced of her untruth when there remained no longer a foothold for faith. Grace had not loved Russel for the power which she had gained over him ; she had never even dreamed how great that power was, and testing it, by way of learning, she would have deemed degrading to them both. It was his rare intellectual endowments, his high-toned character, his conscious manliness, that had at first won her ; and although other and tenderer qualities had conspired to make him dearer than she could have known, had not sorrow unveiled to her her own secrets, she could never have rested so securely in his heart, had that manliness ever bent too low beneath the weight of passion. He had poured out the priceless wealth of a noble heart at her feet — it was a fit offering, and it could not be made richer. His reason, his independence were his own :

hers, as far as their guidance and support were needed, but they were no part of the sacrifice. Perhaps it might have been otherwise had Grace loved less ; men have often yielded up their noblest traits of character to womanly caprice, but never to womanly love.

Russel and Grace had so much to talk of, so many little plans to frame and reframe, and so many more interesting revelations to make, that it was several days before she was in possession of the facts concerning the letters. She had, however, found time to read all his, and had been duly remorseful on finding that his package numbered more than hers, and that several of them bore a later date.

Soon after Russel's departure from Alderbrook he had found Crouse in abject circumstances, and, thoroughly conscious of his unworthiness, he had been generous enough to employ him in several petty services out of mere charity. Crouse had nursed the hatred, imbibed in boyhood, for all those who he believed had influenced for ill his fortunes ; and he had brooded over his wrongs in solitude and wretchedness, until they had assumed a most portentous form, and swallowed up every other consideration. The very name of Russel roused the demon within him ; and, but for the bread which he *must* have to keep him from starving, he would have poured forth his pent-up venom without measure. As it was, he contented himself with petty annoyances, which at first were not noticed. One day, however, Russel found occasion to reprimand him severely, and Crouse went away angry ; but driven by necessity, he soon returned, and pleaded his cause so effectually that the young attorney took him into his service again. It was nearly six months after this, that Miss Linden's letters suddenly ceased, and although Crouse was employed as post-boy to and from the office, he had been so faithful in other respects, that he was not even for a moment suspected. His position, too, shielded him ; if Russel had looked for villany, it would have been to a quarter less ignorant and degraded. As for Crouse, he had evidently laid no plan for injuring his victims ; but discovering one day, accidentally, to whom the

letters were addressed, he withheld them merely for the purpose of carrying out his system of annoyance. One letter of inquiry addressed to Mr. De Vere, and another to Francis Linden, shared the same fate; for Crouse had been too long accustomed to read upon Grace's letters, "Care of Monsieur De Vere," not to understand the object of the first, and the other bore the name of Linden. Russel, however, had persevered in his attempts to discover the cause of Miss Linden's unaccountable silence, until she set sail for France. Then he repeated, but in a tone more sad than bitter, (men learn tolerance by living long with mankind,) "ruined by her ambition." He caught one glimpse of her from a position whence he could not be recognized, when she landed in New York; but notwithstanding the truthful expression that seemed deepened even on her still beautiful face, her easy cheerfulness only confirmed his belief. He thought a noble spirit had been sacrificed; and he lost all confidence in the truth of human nature, even while he learned more sincerely to pity and forgive its follies.

Crouse threw the letters into an old trunk that had been his sister's, and therefore was preserved with a strangely tender carefulness. He had never thought of them since, except to chuckle in private over his successful villany, until he saw Grace Linden watching by the side of his sleeping child. Gratitude broke up the dark, bitter fountains of hate, and threw a smile upon his heart which had never visited it before. Then he resolved to make all the restitution in his power, though he little knew the injury he had done. And often, when he looked upon Grace Linden afterwards, he exulted in the thought of being able to show, in some degree, his appreciation of the kindness which almost bewildered him. As soon as he was able to earn a little sum to defray travelling expenses, notwithstanding his fear of deserved punishment, he started in search of his wronged master; and Russel, more inclined to reward him for the present, than to punish him for the past, lost no time in repairing to Alderbrook

Before the autumn leaves had all fallen, there were rejoicings and weeping in the family of the Lindens ; for the bridal festivities were only the precursor of a sorrowful separation.

“ Why not build a little villa, and have one horse for us all,” said Sommers, shaking heartily the hand of his brother-in-law. “ The world you are bustling in will never reward you for half your labors.”

“ Suppose my labors were of a nature to reward themselves ?” answered Russel, smiling.

“ Pursue them then, but be sure never to look beyond your own bosom for it. I have but little faith in gratitude *en masse*; I would deal with the individual.”

“ Ay,” said Frank, unconsciously moving his fingers after the fashion of a compositor, “ kind deeds do sometimes meet with gratitude when they assume the form of personal favors ; but who ever heard of a whole state, or county, or village even, being grateful for the most disinterested services ?”

“ How now, Frank !” exclaimed Russel, laughing. “ What brother editor has been giving you a specimen of his talent at blackguardism this morning ?”

“ Frank is right, however,” answered Lizzy. “ Only think of Dick Crouse. By a little kindness, without positive inconvenience to herself, Grace has secured his everlasting gratitude. She might have built a hospital for sick children, (a dozen of them for that matter !) and good, generous-hearted people might have enjoyed its benefits without feeling the least touch of an emotion so pure and unselfish as animated Dick Crouse in spite of his degradation. So much for laboring for the public !”

“ True, Lizzy,” began Grace, “ but —”

“ But ! No — no, Grace ! None of your buts now ; we all know what is coming. These young brides always take their cue from their husbands ; but wait, Mr. Russel, till she has been matronized a few years — only wait ! She will be as positive and opinionated as any of us.”

“ Well, of one thing I am certain,” said Grace, gaily, “ as

long as Mr. Russel looks well to one individual, I shall not interfere with his public services, I can assure you."

"Recollect that the individual has a fee to pay, however," answered Russel, "since the public is so ungrateful."

Our newly-wedded friends took their departure at an early day, and proceeded to the city of Washington. Russel was now deeply engaged with public affairs; and Grace entered with a greater zest into his plans, and encouraged his designs, because she found him actuated by true patriotism, and knew that his honorable spirit would never stoop to the petty artifices of manœuvring politicians.

CHAPTER IV. — EIGHT-AND-THIRTY.

It was a scene of rare brilliancy. Large mirrors flashed back the blaze of the glittering chandeliers, and mimicked on their surface the varying features of the crowd traversing the magnificent saloon. There were noble dames in jewelled tiaras and robes of every description, from the royal ermine and glossy velvet, with its rich, heavy folds, to the silver gossamer floating like a misty veil around some figure of rare etherealness. Beauty cast its spell around, and wit and sentiment sped like light-winged, pearl-tipped arrows, flashing from lips all familiar with the elegant artillery. Brave, high-born men, bearing honored titles, (men, who from infancy had looked on scenes of regal grandeur, and become so familiarized with the gay, trifling pageantry, as to act their parts perfectly with absent thoughts,) passed up and down the thronged apartment, and bent their heads, and smiled, and dropped dull words that passed for wisdom, or wise ones that no one appreciated, with a courtly air that disclaimed kindred with all associations below the level of the palace.

"A rare masquerade! every face is as completely *en masque* as though the famous iron one had been put in requisition for all."

So spake an elegant woman, standing in the recess of a window, and half shaded by the folds of crimson drapery.

from the gay scene on which she commented. She seemed quite at home amid all that glitter, and yet not like one whose heart was in it very deeply, though in the meridian of her days, and passing lovely. She wore a robe of black velvet, fitting closely so as to display the beautiful contour of her form; and her head-dress was of fleecy whiteness, looped by a single diamond set with rubies, and surmounted by a magnificent plume bending beneath its own rich weight to the shoulder. Her ornaments were few and tastefully arranged. We have said she looked like one whose heart was not with the gay scene in which she mingled; for her large, humid eyes had in them a meek lovingness, and sometimes a pensive abstraction, as though the shadow of serious thought had fallen early upon them and mingled with their light forever. She received gracefully the flattering attentions of the crowd from which the heavy curtain had not been able to shield her; for beauty is a born queen and counts her vassals everywhere; and, the wife of the American ambassador (such was the rank of the lady we have presented) was beautiful enough and accomplished enough to command no little share of admiration, even if her position had been less distinguished.

“You leave us early, Mrs. Russel,” remarked a gentleman who had just elbowed his way through the crowd in time to hear the lady give directions concerning her carriage. “It would be worth the while of some of our court geniuses to spend their wit in inventing some fascination that should keep you with us beyond the magic *one hour*.”

“Nay, do not attempt it, my lord. I am already quite bewildered by such an array of splendor, and it is only to save my poor republican brain a total overthrow that I fly the field while I may.”

“Ah! if that be all, come with me, lady. Yonder is a delightful alcove, where a few choice spirits—”

“Ah! my lord! the danger is not always in the broadest blaze. I am but a novice in all these enchantments and my only safety is in flight.”

“That means, lady bright, that you have conned the law

of mercy. But when your fair republic deigns to drop a choice star among us, we like not that it should be veiled."

The lady bent in graceful acknowledgment, and the conversation proceeded more gaily, until Mrs. Russel's carriage was announced to be in readiness; then his lordship, carefully wrapping her cloak about her, handed her to a seat within, bowed his head almost to her gloved hand, drew up the glass, and the carriage whirled away. In a few moments the lady of the ambassador was at her hotel. She tripped lightly up the broad stair-case, and flinging cloak and hood into the hands of her half-sleeping maid, with a bright smile which many a weary belle whom she had left behind might have envied, passed onward to an inner apartment. A night lamp stood burning on a marble table; and, as she came near, her foot touched some light substance on the floor. It was a child's slipper, tiny enough for the foot of Titania herself; and, as the mother clasped it in her jewelled hand, there was a dewiness in her soft eye, that told how touchingly dear to her was everything hallowed by connection with her heart's treasures. She paused and bent over the couch of a fair sleeping girl, parted the bright curls from her forehead, and gazed fondly on the exquisite chiselling, then pressing her lips upon that, on the closed eyes and rose-bud mouth, turned lingeringly, and proceeded to the little crib beyond. It was the nestling place of Cupid himself. The round, rosy face looked out from its golden ambush of curls, with almost its waking roguishness of expression; and the fat, white arms were clasped determinedly over a little whip, the most petted, because the newest of his playthings. Those dimpled arms received many a fond kiss before they were enveloped in the folds of the night-dress; and the little whip was removed as carefully as though it had been the choicest of treasures. Then the mother bent again over the fair boy, and while her eyes rested lovingly upon him, her heart went up to heaven with all those holy aspirations which often shed their halo on the path of men when the spirit that breathed them has gone to its rest. As the lady emerged from the nursery she was

met by her husband, and they returned to her dressing room together.

"You made a masterly retreat to-night, Grace," he said; "now if I only had half your assurance, I should be as grateful as grateful can be. Oh, how I pity those poor ladies that must stay and mope to the end of the chapter!"

"And how they pity people so little *au fait* to the ways of the world as we are! Why, only last night, I overheard a lady duchess remark of your charming wife, 'poor thing! how *new*!' and all because she turned in disgust from a very disgusting scene at a card-table."

"And were you not very much shocked, Grace?"

"Of course, it was a very shocking thing, but I could not resist the temptation of turning to assure her grace that it was a defect which *years* would remedy. She is as much ashamed of being *old* as though it were a crime."

"And you of course knew the sensitive point by intuition, and touched it in a most lady-like manner. You are a true woman, Grace. Who would once have thought of 'my Gracey's' ever tilting with these gossiping court ladies? Fie! fie! It is ill-natured of you."

"It ought to please you, Harry; it proves that I am not *new*. But truth to tell, I am sick myself of this constant sharpening of wits never over bright. I am afraid they will be worn out before I have my own fireside again to use them by. If you had not promised that your public career should end with this embassy, I verily believe, Harry, that I should run away from you, and nestle down in a certain quiet nook away in the green woods of New York."

"You are not so very miserable here, Grace?"

"Miserable! oh, no! I can afford to go and play my part in such a great farce every day, since I may come home to you and the children; and it suits me very well indeed, since I know it is not to last."

"And what think you, dear Grace, of those ladies, who have neither husband nor children to go home to? that is,

those who have both, but scarce see them from week's end to week's end."

"Oh! they are the initiated — born fine ladies. You know I am a butterfly so late from the chrysalis that I have some very contracted notions clinging to me — notwithstanding my fine wings," she added, glancing at the magnificent plume that had formed her principal head ornament for the evening.

It will be seen that our old friend Grace was yet unchanged. Prosperity had not turned her head, nor a mawkish sentimentality stepped in to supply the place of heart. She had no interminable flood of murmurs to drawl forth against the follies that surrounded her, no repinings, no peevish fretfulness; but on her pillow she did picture a charming little retreat, close beside a little village, in which Lizzy and Lizzy's children figured largely; and a darling old lady, smilingly receiving the homage of loving hearts, occupied the foreground. Her own transformation, instead of serving as food for vanity, amused her with its strangeness; and philosophy itself — Diogenes in his tub, and Epicurus in his sensual elysium — might equally have envied the cheerful equanimity with which a fair American dame could mingle in the gayeties of one of the gayest European courts, keeping meanwhile close in her heart the little domestic paradise that she had loved beyond the seas. Grace Linden (we like not to change the name) twined jewels in her hair, fastened the broach and clasped the bracelet, and thought no more of them; but there was a plain gold ring that she always looked upon with earnest, sometimes with tear-dimmed eyes. When no one was near — not even husband or child — the homely ornament was often pressed long and fervently to her lips; she would not have bartered that simple ring for the whole court's wealth of diamonds; it had once encircled the pale finger of her sister Abby. Rich, costly vases, filled with the choicest flowers, made the air of her apartments heavy with perfume, and rare plants wooed the sunlight in her recessed windows; but in the midst of all she forgot not to write to her brother Frank: "Do not take, as you threatened, that

pretty eglantine from the window that was mine the last summer I spent at home. It was just scrambling up the third pane then, and you must not let it grow higher, or I should never know it. And plant the sweet peas across the little patch down by the currant bushes. I have watched the bees by the hour, glancing about them like lost specks of sunshine, and then plunging among the bright leaves with a hearty boldness that made the robbers quite fascinating. Do not change anything, Frank; you cannot make better the dear, dear spot, and I must find every violet and marigold in its place when I come home."

Two years had passed. A light, simple, airy mansion had risen behind an avenue of native forest trees, close by the unpretending home of the Lindens; and the young lawyer who had commenced his professional career in our small village some twenty years before, was now its most honored citizen. It was a mild autumn evening, and the three families, as was their wont, had gathered in the little parlor, more dear to all than any other, because more particularly associated with the hopes, and fears, and loves of other days. Half buried in a large cushioned chair, in the corner, sat Mrs. Linden, a very little bent and a good deal wrinkled, with her snowy locks parted smoothly on a brow as serene as a summer evening, and her sweet mild eyes wandering from face to face, in maternal fondness. Close by was her husband, dandling another little pet, that had taken the place of Charley, on his knee, and amusing the company, from time to time, with the self-same anecdotes (so the old lady asserted) that he had told at her father's table during the days of his wooing. Two lovely women, evidently sisters, occupied each an ottoman close beside a work-table, and as one pored with her scissors a little from the neck of a muslin collar, she would lay it on the other's shoulders and smooth it with her hand, and then remove it to her knee again, dropping, from time to time, those artless remarks which make such a poor figure in the telling, but weave many a golden link in the chain of love. Near to these, a placid matron, a

year or two older, was leaning over the shoulder of a fine boy engaged with his pencil, and talking in a soft whisper of spoiled eyes and aching heads—things so preposterous as to set the large, mirthful orbs, at which they particularly pointed, in a dance of glee. The village clock was on the stroke of nine, when the family party received an accession. Neddy Sommers, the pet, sprang from grandfather's knee to father's arms, begging to be allowed to sit up just a little while longer; a larger, firmer hand began guiding the pencil of the embryo artist; and the manliest figure of the three bent over the arm of grandmother's rocking-chair, and listened to her with the most respectful tenderness.

“What is that you were just saying of my lady—Crinkum-Crankum—jaw-breaker, Grace?” inquired Frank, replacing the pencil in the boy's hand. “You had better look to your wife, Ned Sommers, or all this foreign trash will quite run away with her reason.”

“Oh, yes!” returned Sommers, quietly, and tossing the baby within an inch of the ceiling. “I expect no less; I am prepared for any extravagance, even to a livery.”

“I should be obliged to put it upon you and the children, then,” answered Lizzy; “for I think you gave your last ‘help’ a holyday week, this morning.”

“You had better be upon your good behavior, all,” said Grace, “or we will get up an establishment in right princely style, and press you into the service. There is Frank, calls himself a capital whip, and Mr. Sommers would let down the steps with superlative grace, I dare say.”

“Frank,” inquired Russel, with a twinkle in his eye, and a mischievous curl at the corners of his mouth, “did I ever tell you the story of your gracious sister and the footman of——”

“Harry!”

“You see she don't like me to expose her follies.”

“Oh, tell! Let us hear! Give us the story, by all means!” exclaimed three or four voices.

“Did she mistake him for his master?” inquired Frank.

“Not exactly, but——”

“ Now, Harry ! ” and Grace rung the bell violently.

Small things are matters of mirth where hearts are merry, and the laugh against poor Grace had not had time to subside, when a sad little face was thrust in at the door.

“ Nannie, bring ‘ Mittah Ushil ’ a pie — a whole one, mind, for he is near starving. Excuse me, Mary ; I should not presume to play mistress of the house, but in an extreme case like this. Try that apple, Harry. It may serve your turn till the pie comes.”

“ I am sorry to see you so discomposed, Grace,” remarked Russel, with provoking coolness ; “ but since you so earnestly desire it — since,” and here he glanced archly at his brothers, “ since it is perfectly natural that you should desire it, we will put the story over till another evening.”

“ What is it, Grace ? ” whispered Lizzy.

“ Oh, a foolish thing. He makes half of it, and it was ridiculous enough to begin with. A silly fellow managed to get a fine joke upon me. It was nothing at all — but if Frank should hear of it, I should have no peace.”

“ Nannie looks sad, poor child ! ” remarked Mary. “ She has been telling me to-day that her father is in trouble again.”

“ That fellow is incorrigible ! ” said Russel.

“ What has happened to him ? ” inquired Grace.

“ He is confined in the county jail, as a vagrant,” was Mary’s reply.

“ I do believe he might be made to reform, if proper means were taken. Nannie came to me to-day, with streaming eyes, and said, if the gentlemen would but procure his release this once more, she would coax him to be good and industrious. She was sure he would n’t drink any more, when he saw how badly she felt — and it was all the drink, she knew it was. Her father was too kind to do wrong when he was in his right mind. I wish something could be done.”

“ Something must be done,” said Grace, earnestly. “ We know the good that is in Dick Crouse better than police-officers, and a seat at the table beside Nannie, in your kitchen, Mary, would do more to reform him than all the jails in

the county. You will see him, Harry, in the morning, will you not?"

"If I could be as sanguine as you and Mary. However, the poor wretch must not be given up. We shall be obliged to allow him another trial — a half-dozen more, very likely."

"If you could get upon some plan, Harry, to employ him, and have him under your immediate care —"

"It would be a somewhat troublesome care, Grace."

"I mean, keep him where he will believe you have a constant interest in him. Then I might take pains to drop a word to him, now and then, which would have some influence. I can't believe that he is past hope yet."

"I believe," said Sommers, "no man is past hope, as long as proper means are taken to reform him."

"Then if the *means* be all, consider Dick Crouse a useful citizen hereafter; for with such a superabundance of *means* as we have here, neglecting him would be a greater sin than any he ever committed."

"If means were all, there would be few vicious people within the sphere of your influence, Grace," exclaimed her husband, with affectionate pride. "At any rate, Sommers, we will give your theory a trial, and if Grace fail —"

"She will not fail," returned the brother; "such as she never do."

"Good! And now, Ned, as a kind of a reward for that handsome compliment, you shall have the story of the footman. Don't 'oh, Harry' me, Grace; I will leave the embellishments for another day. You must know that a certain nobleman whom we met abroad, had a servant so much given to his cups, that he could not be trusted. He was a good, honest fellow, and a favorite withal, and so every means had been used to reform him that could be devised, but without success. The worst of it was, he had an aged grandmother and blind sister entirely dependent on him; and when in his sober senses, he would plead their cause so eloquently that it was impossible not to be moved by his entreaties. At last, however, his master became exasperated, and refused to keep him

another day. Grace happened to be a witness to this scene, and became a sort of sponsor for the fellow."

"That is all, Harry; only he never became intoxicated again."

"Oh, if you could have seen him, drunk as he was, blubbering away on her — not *hand* but *foot*! We all laughed —"

"Ah, Harry! All those pocket-handkerchiefs were not hurried out so suddenly to cover nothing but a laugh. The truth is, there were tears in more eyes than mine; and well there might be, for the poor fellow's gratitude would have stirred up the very stones to feeling."

"I never saw a scene more ludicrously pathetic, and what with weeping and what with laughing, the drunken footman had the honor of producing quite a sensation. But it seems that Grace was not altogether satisfied with this demonstration, and so —"

"You are too bad, Harry!"

"And so she took her opportunity to draw a promise from him, and the pledge was sealed by a ring, which he was to wear until he had broken his word. Afterwards, whenever she met him, at the house of his master or in the public street, he would bow low, as though again in search of the lady's foot, and hold up the finger with the ring upon it. At first, we paid no attention to it; but after a while, Grace began to blush —"

"You looked so comically —"

"And you so confused! Oh, Grace, you ought to thank me for giving the story such a favorable version."

"I do, Harry; for it is the first time that you have told it correctly, and I was not quite sure before that — that —"

"That I was not jealous of the poor footman, eh?"

"That you thought I did right."

"You never do *wrong*, Grace!"

"And never did since she was a little baby in my arms," broke in the tremulous voice of grandmother. "Abby told me, on her dying bed, that Grace would be a blessing to the family, and she told me true."

“ True ! true ! ” repeated Mr. Linden, in the deep tones of emotion.

Lizzy’s arm was twined around her sister, their two hearts beating together ; a large round tear-drop stole silently down the manly cheek of the brother ; and the proud husband bent his eloquent eyes on her who was for the moment the focus of all eyes, in deeper, holier admiration than ever stirred the pulses of an unwedded lover.

CLINGING TO EARTH.

O do not let me die! the earth is bright,
 And I am earthly, so I love it well;
 Though heaven is holier, all replete with light,
 Yet I am frail, and with frail things would dwell.

I cannot die! the flowers of earthly love
 Shed their rich fragrance on a kindred heart;
 There may be purer, brighter flowers above,
 But yet with these 't would be too hard to part.

I dream of heaven, and well I love these dreams,
 They scatter sunlight on my varying way;
 But 'mid the clouds of earth are priceless gleams
 Of brightness, and on earth O let me stay.

It is not that my lot is void of gloom,
 That sadness never circles round my heart;
 Nor that I fear the darkness of the tomb,
 That I would never from the earth depart.

'T is that I love the world — its cares, its sorrows,
 Its bounding hopes, its feelings fresh and warm,
 Each cloud it wears, and every light it borrows,
 Loves, wishes, fears, the sunshine and the storm;

I love them all: but closer still the loving
 Twine with my being's cords and make my life;
 And while within this sunlight I am moving,
 I well can bide the storms of worldly strife.

Then do not let me die! for earth is bright,
 And I am earthly, so I love it well —
 Heaven is a land of holiness and light,
 But I am frail, and with the frail would dwell.

ASPIRING TO HEAVEN.

YES, let me die! Am I of spirit-birth,
 And shall I linger here where spirits fell,
 Loving the stain they cast on all of earth?
 O make me pure, with pure ones e'er to dwell!

'Tis sweet to die! The flowers of earthly love,
 (Fair, frail, spring blossoms) early droop and die
 But all their fragrance is exhaled above,
 Upon our spirits evermore to lie.

Life is a dream, a bright but fleeting dream,
 I can but love; but then my soul awakes,
 And from the mist of earthliness a gleam
 Of heavenly light, of truth immortal, breaks.

I shrink not from the shadows sorrow flings
 Across my pathway; nor from cares that rise
 In every foot-print; for each shadow brings
 Sunshine and rainbow as it glooms and flies.

But heaven is dearer. There I have my treasure,
 There angels fold in love their snowy wings;
 There sainted lips chant in celestial measure,
 And spirit fingers stray o'er heav'n-wrought strings.

There loving eyes are to the portals straying;
 There arms extend, a wanderer to fold;
 There waits a dearer, holier One, arraying
His own in spotless robes and crowns of gold.

Then let me die. My spirit longs for heaven,
 In that pure bosom evermore to rest;
 But, if to labor longer here be given,
 "Father, thy will be done!" and I am blest.

UNDERHILL COTTAGE.

NAY, reader mine, it is all a mistake, all — Fanny Forester could not *breathe* (for a long time) in New York or Albany, or any other pavement-cribbed spot of earth, that men seem to have leased of the Hand that made it, to torture into unnatural shapes for their own undoing. No, no! Give her

“———— the fresh green wood,
 The forest's fretted aisles,
 And leafy domes above them bent,
 And solitude,
 So eloquent!
 Mocking the varied skill that's blent
 In art's most gorgeous piles—”

Give her this, and “other things to accord,” and then — a fig for all town attractions!

Wouldst see, O sympathetic public, the little nestling-place, almost in the wilderness, to which ‘Bel’ Forester’s country cousin is most warmly welcomed after a half-year’s absence? Then turn thy myriad-footed locomotives thitherward, (forestward, I mean,) as soon as the swelling buds begin to burst, in the spring-time, and the odor of fresh turf and apple-blossoms is out upon the air. Nay, straighten that curl in the lip, and drop the uplifted eye-brow. What if it be a simple spot? Simplicity is a rare thing, now-a-days; and the people of the great world have a wondrous liking for what is rare. Moreover, I doubt if they had purer dews, or softer airs, or brighter waters, where the Euphrates tinkled the first note of time, and the breath was borne to the lips of our mother upon an angel’s wing. I am not sure that there are any angels here; but the flowers sometimes have a look to them that makes me afraid to break their stems; and there are moments when it

would require infinite daring to toss a pebble into the brook ; for who can tell but it might hush one of those voices that sing to me in the holy solitude ? The trees, too, have a strange lovingness, leaning over the brook protectingly, and shadowing the little violets, as many a high spirit stoops to watch over a poor human blossom. Oh ! there are beating pulses in the trees, and I love them, because I know there is a Great Heart somewhere, that keeps them all in motion. Perhaps —— But you shall not be told all the things that have been whispered in my ear by those fresh-lipped leaves, when not a mortal foot was nearer than the far-off road ; though feet enow were tripping it over the grass blades, and a listener sat perched on every spray. Page on page of spirit-lore have I gathered there ; but I have closed the book now, and “ clasped it with a clasp.” That is my wealth, and I am a miser.

Come to Alderbrook, I say, *in the spring time*, for the crackle of the wood fire, by which I am writing, might be a music which would scarce please you ; and, sooth to say, our winter cheer offers little that is inviting to a pleasure-seeker. It is well to take to the turf when you reach the toll-gate at the foot of the hill ; for the road has a beautiful green margin to it, grateful to feet sick of the dust of a day's ride. It is not a difficult walk to the top, as I well know ; having climbed it a score of times every year, since first I chased a playful little racer of a squirrel along the crooked fence, fully persuaded that there *was* some sudden way of taming it, notwithstanding its evident scorn of the peeled nut, which I held coaxingly between my thumb and fore-finger. High hills, skirted by forests, are rising on the right ; and on the left, is a slope, terminating in a deep gorge, through which the little brook tinkles, as though myriads of fairy revellers tripped it there, to the music of their own silver bells. Perched on the top of the hill, is a tall, weather-painted house, of a contracted make ; though, like some people, whose mental dimensions have been narrowed, with a very smart, uppish air about it ; and fronting it, away down in a deep, wild ravine, is an old,

moss-grown saw-mill. It has been forsaken this many a long year; the wheel is broken, and the boards are rotting away; but yet it is verily believed by many, that the old saw still uses its rusty teeth o' nights, and that strange, unholy guests, keep wassail there, at the expense of a poor mortal long since mouldering in his shroud. Alas! for thee, old Jake Gawesley! It was a fearful thing to raise such a pile of worldly possessions between thyself and humanity! How gladly wouldst thou, in that last hour, have bought, with the whole of them, a single love-softened hand to soothe, with such a touch as love only knows, thy throbbing temple! Oh! it is a horrible thing to turn from the world, and bear not away the pure passport of a mourner's tear! Thy grave has never been watered by the dews distilled from a human heart, like the flower-planted ones around it; the small grey stone at its head is broken, and no one cares to replace it; and the thistle nods to the wind above thee. It is said that this saw-mill was erected on an orphan's rights; and men are as fond of the doctrine of retribution, as though they never sinned. Hence the superstition.

You will see, from this point, the little village of Alderbrook, so near, that you may count every house in it. There are two pretty churches; one on the top of the rise called "The Hill," the other nestled down in a very sweet spot on "The Flat." Then we have, besides, the seminary made memorable by poor Jem Fletcher; a district school-house, painted red; and a milliner's shop, painted yellow; three stores, two taverns, (one with a sign-post, once tantalizing to my young eyes, so candy-like did it look in its coat of white, with a wisp of crimson about it,) a printing office, in which the "Alderbrook Sun" rises of a Wednesday morning; a temple of Vulcan, and two or three other establishments, sacred to the labors of our native artisans.

As you pass along, you will find the road lined with berry-bushes and shad-trees, now (it is spring, you know) white with their bride-like clusters of delicate blossoms; and many a thick-shaded maple and graceful elm will wish that you

had waited till midsummer, when they might have been of service to you. Very hospitable trees are those about Alderbrook.

You are within a quarter of a mile of the village; and now the fence on the left diverges from the roadside, making a pretty backward curve, as though inviting you to follow it down the hill. A few steps farther, and you look down upon the cozies of little cottages, snuggled close in the bosom of the green slope, with its white walls and nice white lattice-work, looking, amid those budding vines, all folding their arms about it, like a living sleeper under the especial protection of Dame Nature. Do you feel no desire to step from the road where you stand, to the tip of the chimney, which seems so temptingly near, and thence to plant your foot on the brow of the hill over the brook? It may be that you are a sober-minded individual, and never had any break-neck propensities; may be you never longed to lose your balance on the wrong side of a three-story window, or take a ride on a water-wheel, or a sail on a sheet of foam down Niagara, or even as much as put your fingers between the two teathed rollers of a wool-carder. There *are* people in the world so common-place as to have no taste for "deeds of lofty daring."

There are eglantines and roses grouped together by the windows; and a clematis wreathes itself, fold on fold, and festoon above festoon, in wasteful luxuriance, about the trellis that fences in the little old-fashioned portico. You wonder how any horse-vehicle ever gets down there, and may think the descent rather dangerous; but it is accomplished with perfect ease. A carriage cannot turn about, however, and is obliged to pass up on the other side. The house is very low in front, and has an exceedingly timid, modest bearing, as is sometimes the case even with houses; but when you see it from the field-side, it becomes quite a different affair. The view from within is of fields and woodland; with now and then a glittering roof or speck of white peering through the trees between us and the neighboring village. The back parlor window looks out upon a little garden, just below it;

and beyond is a beautiful meadow, sloping back down to the brook. From this window you have a view full of wild sweetness; for nature has been prodigal of simple gifts here; and we have never been quite sure enough that art would do better by us, to venture on improvements. So the spotted lily rears its graceful stem down in the valley, and the gay phlox spreads out its crimson blossoms undisturbed. There the wild plum blushes in autumn with its worthless fruit; the gnarled birch looks down on the silver patches adorning its shaggy coat, quite unconscious of ugliness; and the alders, the dear, friendly alders, twist their speckled limbs into any shape they choose, till they reach the height that best pleases them, and then they droop — little brown tassels pendant from each tiny stem — over the bright laughter below, as though ready, every dissembler of them, to take an oath that they grew only for that worship. There are stumps a-plenty, marking where the forest used to be; and growing from the decayed roots of each, you will be sure to find a raspberry, or purple currant, or gooseberry bush, or at least a wild columbine, whose scarlet robe and golden heart make it quite as welcome. We like the stumps for the sake of their pretty adornments, and so they have let them stand. (Would you know who *we* and *they* are? come, then, at evening; you shall be most cordially welcomed; for, the kindly forbearance with which you have looked upon the first simple efforts of one there beloved, has made you quite the friend.)

Beyond the brook, rises a hill, bordered on one side by a wild of berry bushes, and on the other, by broken rocks, with a little wizard of a stream, leaping, like an embodied spirit of mischief, from fragment to fragment, with a flash, and a clear silvery laugh, to which, I believe, the inhabitants of Underhill Cottage owe the gay bubble dancing on the brim of every heart. The hill (Strawberry Hill we call it, and if you had come to us last midsummer, you should have known the wherefore) is capped with hemlocks, with sprinklings of beech, ash, elm and maple, that, in autumn-time, make an exceedingly gay head-dress for it; and, peeping out from

their midst, stands the log-cabin of an Indian woman, who is said to have been a hundred years old when she wove my first blossom-stained rattle-box. Last year she went about with her thick blanket, which passed over her shiny hair, fastened under the chin, and surmounted by an old woollen hat; and, on her arm, a huge basket, inside of which was a smaller one, and a still smaller one in that, until they diminished to the size of a fitting shell for the nest of a humming-bird. But now, sadly do we miss the little curl of silver that used to rise so gracefully above the trees; for the log-dwelling is deserted, and its age-worn owner sleeps in the grave-yard. Dear old Polly! many a son of ambition, with his laurels on his brow, will be laid in his coffin, crowds trooping ostentatiously after, with fewer tears to embalm his ashes in, than thy humble virtues won for thee.

A little way from the bridge, is an immense elm tree, draped in green down to the very roots; and just where the shadow of its massive top falls heaviest at noon-day, is a little — for want of a more descriptive name, I must call it a *bower*. Dear was the boyish hand that tied those branches together, and trained the wild grape-vine over all, because a little sister sometimes wished for a dreaming-place more exclusive than the old ledge on the hill-side, or the shadow of the black cherry-tree in the meadow — dear was that kindly hand; and none the less dear is it now that it may never again rest upon the head it has toyed with hours and hours together, long before the mildew of disappointment had spread itself upon our hearth-stone. These days are passed forever and forever; but bless God for the rich memories clinging to every shrub, and tree, and hillock! What is there in all the gay visions dancing before us, one-half so dearly grateful as a single love-glance, a word, a smile, a tear, a touch of the hand, a kindly act, embalmed in the heart when it is young, to keep in flower the spot where it lies, until it has ceased its wearied pulsations? Hope is a butterfly, and Imagination loves to chase it from flower to flower, and from glitter to glitter; but Memory is an angel, that

comes in the holy night-time; and, folding its wings beside
as, forges silently those golden links, which, as years wear
away, connect the spirit, however world-worn, with its first
freshness. But I am dreaming, when I should not.

Come in the spring-time to Alderbrook, dear friend of
mine, whatever name thou bearest; come when the little
birds are out, careering, stark mad with joyousness, on their
riddy wings; when the air is softest, and the skies are
rightest; come, and I will cut the nib from my pen, owning,
with a right good will, its clumsy inefficiency; and then,
mid bursting buds and out-gushing music, thou shalt have
far less reason than now, to complain of the dulness of thy
iceróne.

LITTLE MOLLY WHITE.

WE have our excitements at Alderbrook, as well as in your great Babel of "brotherly love," (love like that of the first brothers, I have heard it insinuated,) but the doctrine of cause and effect has a slight *twist-about* between the two places which might puzzle a philosopher. In your great city, a great cause produces a small effect; in our small village, a small cause produces a great effect. Does a barn or a blacksmith's shop take fire at Alderbrook, the whole village — men, women and children — are up and out; and it furnishes matter for conversation at every tea-party during a year, at least. With you, a whole street may burn down, while you lie quietly snoozing in your beds, or mentally denounce "that noisy engine," between naps; and in less than a week the whole affair passes from the minds of all but the sufferers. You may see a dozen hearses move by in one day, and never be sobered by it; is there a death in our village, the shadow falls on every hearthstone, and a long, solemn train of weeping mourners (the mourning town) leave their various avocations and amusements, and go to lay the sleeper in the dust. Oh! let me die in the country, where I shall not fall, like the single leaf in the forest, unheeded; where those who love me need not mask their hearts to meet the careless multitude, and strive as a duty to forget. Bury me in the country amid the prayers of the good and the tears of the loving; not in the dark, damp vault, away from the sweet-scented air and the cheerful sunshine; but in the open field, among the flowers I loved and cherished while living. Then —

"If around my place of sleep
 The friends I love should come to weep,
 They might not haste to go;
 Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom,
 Should keep them lingering by my tomb."

But to return to our contrasts. A ruffian meets a stranger in a dark alley, and stabs him to the heart, for the sake of self; another whips his wife to death, or perhaps butchers a whole family. The lawyers and paragraphists are thereby furnished with employment — for which they are of course thankful — and, except in extreme cases, no one else cares. It is quite different with us. A drunken Indian murdered a white man, at Alderbrook, some twenty years ago, and paid the penalty of his crime, near the foot of the slope, at the west end of the village, while thousands on thousands stood gaping at the terrible spectacle. This tale, whispered to me in the dark, furnished one of the gloomy visions which used to haunt my childhood; and I would as soon have taken the trip that Orpheus did, as go within a quarter of a mile of ‘the spot where old Antoine was hung.’ The same story, in all its horrible and disgusting details, is to this day repeated and re-repeated by many a gossip of our village, while jaws drop, and eyes stand out with terror, and every stirring leaf or quivering shadow causes a start of alarm; for it is said that the troubled ghost of old Antoine still walks up and down the forests of Alderbrook. With you, picked pockets are such every-day and every-hour things, as to excite no attention at all, except perhaps a laugh now and then, when the feat has been performed with unusual adroitness; but if an axe disappear from a door at Alderbrook, or a couple of yards of linen are taken from the grass in the night-time, the whole village is in commotion, and wonders, and guesses, and sagacious nods and mysterious innuendoes, constitute, for a month at least, the staple of social intercourse. You will not think strange, then, when I tell you of the wonderful excitement that has fairly swept every other topic under with us, for more than six months past. It has been suspected for a long time, that a band of thieves existed somewhere in our quiet county; but such crimes are so unusual here, that no one likes to be the first to give them a name; so, though every washerwoman put her wet linen under lock and key at dewfall, and stables were double-locked and shops

double-guarded, the careful ones only shook their heads mysteriously, as though something lay at the bottom of their knowledge, which they might tell, but that they were too generous, while others scouted at the idea of — county's harboring such rogues. At last, however, some who had lost to an uncomfortable degree, began to speak more plainly, and incredulity wavered. Finally, one night toward the latter end of last May, a farm-house in the neighborhood was fired, obviously (that is, it was obvious when too late) for the purpose of drawing away the villagers, while the principal shop in Alderbrook was despoiled of its most valuable goods. Such a daring deed! said everybody. It was now supposed that the villany must have been carried on for years, and many persons who like a large story, declared that the band must consist of at least fifty men. There had not been such an excitement here since the execution of poor old Antoine. One man was arrested on suspicion, and flattered and threatened by turns, in the hope of bringing him to confess. At last, he promised to do this, and betray his associates, provided he could be assured of his own safety. This was the latest news which reached us one evening toward midnight, and so we concluded to pillow our curiosity until morning.

"They have diskivered the robbers, at last," said old Uncle Felix Graw, hurrying, all out of breath, into our breakfast parlor, and throwing his ungainly figure into one chair, while he stretched his long legs to another. "They have diskivered the robbers, neighbor Forester, every one of 'em!"

Down went forks and up went eye-brows in a twinkling, and old Uncle Felix was the focus of all regards, much to the detriment of the smoking muffins which Nancy had just placed on the table.

"What! how! who are they, Uncle Felix? Nobody belonging to Alderbrook, I hope."

"Not exactly, though the village has just escaped by the skin of the teeth; Jem White is in for it."

"What! that scape-grace of a son of honest Jacky? Poor old fellow! this will be worse for him than digging in the mud, with the 'rheumatis' in his shoulder."

"The old man never has had very comfortable times with Jem," said Uncle Felix. "He is the laziest fellow this side of purgatory, but I never thought he would be caught in such a sorry piece of business as this. They say it will go hard with the rascals — burglary and arson both."

"The old story of idleness and crime. Poor Jacky! I pity him!"

"Everybody pities him; and for one, if I could catch Jem White, I'd give him a thrashing that he would n't forget when he was gray, and let him go, the scoundrel! for his father's sake."

"Then he has not been taken?"

"No, but there is no doubt he will be. Dick Holman, (the cringing serpent! I could pound him to pomice-stone, for I have no idee but he druv on the whole lot,) Dick Holman has blabbed, turned state's evidence, to save himself, and exposed the whole of 'em. Great good will the state get from such a rascally knave as he is; and a great honor is it to the laws, to pay a premium for such abominable sneaking meanness! I would n't mind to see the rest in iron wristbands, (barring Jemmy White, for his father's sake,) but Dick Holman, the mean, cowardly villain! hanging is too good for him."

"How many have they taken?"

"Three, last night. Dick Holman helped them hide, and so betrayed them. One has been traced as far as Albany, and another to Rochester. They will get clear, I dare say; but Jem White has skulked away by himself, and nobody knows where he is. There were only seven on 'em."

"Do you know where White was last seen?"

"He was sneaking about, Saturday evening; he even had the barefacedness to go into Willard's grocery and get a glass of grog. Some pretend to be sure that they saw him yesterday, but folks make a thousand mistakes in such cases; but at any rate, it is pretty certain he must be somewhere in the neighborhood yet. The old 'Sun' press worked hard, I tell you, last night; and, before this time, the handbills are

scattered far and wide, so that he can't get away. And I would n't give an oat-straw for his hiding-place, with Dick Holman to scent him out. He was prowling about after him before sunrise this morning, and trust him for a blood-hound, any day. Ugh! if they should let such a chap as that go scot-free, I, for one, should rather fancy speaking to Judge Lynch about it."

No wonder that honest Felix Graw should be exasperated against the traitorous knave, who, after leading all the idle young fellows that would listen to him into iniquity, turned deliberately about, and, to save himself, delivered his victims into the hands of justice. Dick Holman had been for years the pest of the neighborhood — one of those dirty, cringing plausible villains, whom everybody despises, but upon whom it is difficult to fix any crime. When, however, it was discovered that a regular system of robbery had been carried on throughout the county, probably for several years, suspicion busied herself at once with the name of Dick Holman; and before he had time to concoct any plan for escape, before he even knew himself suspected, he was seized and brought, by means of threats and promises, to divulge all he knew. And a more rotten-hearted traitor never existed; for now that his own precious person was in danger, there was no indignity to which he would not submit, and no act in which he would not gladly engage, (even to hunting for his most reluctant pupil, poor Jem White,) in order to buy himself consideration. As for young White, he received but little sympathy except on his father's account; but old honest Jacky was, in his way, a great favorite at Alderbrook. There was scarcely a young man in the village for whom he had not conjured whistles out of a slip of bass-wood, in days gone by; and scarce an old one but owed him, poverty-stricken as he was, some generous neighborly turn. Then it was from honest Jacky that we always learned where the blackberries grew thickest; and he brought wild-wood plants for our gardens, and supplied the old ladies with wintergreens and sweet flag roots to munch of a Sunday. But it was scarce these little acts

which made old Jacky White so universally respected. He was the kindest and simplest of old men, kind to man and beast; and if but a worm lay in his path, he would "tread aside and let the reptile live." Toil, toil, toil, from morning till night, and from year to year — toil, toil, toil was the lot of honest Jacky; but not a word of complaint ever escaped from his lips; he was contented and cheerful, and scrupulously honest. Fortune had treated him most scurvily; for notwithstanding his patient, unremitting industry, he had never known at one breakfast what should serve him for the next. After all, however, I do not know as it is quite becoming for me to rail at fortune, since he never did; and, moreover, it is possible that the artless old man was as much in the fault about the matter as the partial and fickle goddess.

Days went by, and nothing was known of Jemmy White. So confident was everybody of the impossibility of his having made his escape, that parties were still out in search of him — and the zeal of Dick Holman was indefatigable. The village was still in a state of feverish excitement, and the "stores" were thronged with people from the remote parts of the town, who flocked in to trade and hear the news.

I was out in my little back garden one bright morning, spoiling the doings of the wanton summer wind, which had had quite a frolic among my treasures the night before; when old Bridget came to the door on tiptoe, with her finger on her lip, and her gown, scarce full enough or rich enough to make much of a rustle, gathered up in her hand. "Fanny, Fanny! st!" Bridget spoke in a suppressed whisper, showing all her teeth in the operation, as though, by drawing her lips far back, she might give the words egress with less noise.

"What now, Bridget?"

"Hush, Fanny, dear! 'st!" and putting the fore-finger of one hand to her lip, she beckoned with the other, making a motion with the elbow joint very much like that of a jack-knife with a spring at the back.

Bridget is always having secrets, and shaking her head, and looking solemnly wise, and finding strange mysteries,

which to everybody else are as clear as the sunlight; so I may be pardoned if I did wait to tie up a sweet pea, and give three pretty rose-buds a more desirable position among the wet leaves.

“Fanny, darling!” was again breathed from the opened doorway.

“Yes, Bridget!”

“Hush, dear! 'st!” and Bridget beckoned more earnestly than ever. There was no resisting such importunity, so forward Fanny went, fully expecting to find a chicken with two hearts, or a biscuit that had hopped out of the oven mysteriously, or (an every-day occurrence) a churn full of cream that needed a horse-shoe in it.

“Look, Fanny, look! is n't she pretty?”

Pretty! Old Bridget has some taste at least. Beautiful as a vision of Paradise! I held in my breath while gazing, as my good old nurse had done, and very probably kept my lips out of its way precisely in her fashion. There is always a shade of grey in the passage leading to the kitchen; and here, in the sober light, sat a little child sleeping. One arm was straightened, showing the pretty dimple at the elbow, the fat little hand supporting her weight upon the floor, while the other grasped, as though by way of a balance, a basket of green lettuce, which had wilted during her long walk in the morning sun. The shoulder of the supporting arm had slipped up from the torn calico frock, and its polished whiteness contrasted beautifully with the sun-embrowned cheek. The light golden hair lay in waves, pushed far back from her round forehead, and was gathered up into a knot, half curls, half tangles, behind, probably to keep it out of her way; but carelessly as it was disposed of, it could scarce have been as beautiful in any other fashion. Dim as the light was, a beam had contrived to find its way to the curve of her head, and left a dash of brightness on it, no ill omen to the wearied little stranger. Long lashes lay against the bright cheek, all sparkling in crystal; for the tear that could not climb over it, had turned the little valley about the eye into a well—a very

pretty one for truth to lie in. The child had probably wept herself to sleep; but her little spirit had gone to a land of brighter things now, for the smile that curved her beautiful lips had none of the premature sadness bathing the shut eyelids. There were broad gaps in the clumsy shoes that lay beside her, for she had relieved herself of the incumbrance, and her chubby little feet, stained with the purple flowers which she had crushed in her morning's ramble, were cooling themselves against the bare floor.

"It is nobody but little Molly White, Miss," said Nancy, coming forward, with the pot-lid in her hand. Nancy's voice is none of the softest, and again Bridget's teeth and tongue were put in requisition, and her lips parted to emit the expository "'st, 'st!"

"And who is little Molly White?"

"Don't you remember Molly White, who used to go tripping by every day last summer, as merry as a bird, to sell blackberries to the villagers, never seeming tired, though she had to walk three miles across the woods, and pick her berries besides—poor thing! But I remember now it was when you were in the city, at your Uncle Forester's, you know; for you didn't come home till the plums were all gone, and the leaves were pretty much off the trees."

"Does she belong in any way to old Jacky White, who lives in the woods beyond the hill?"

"The very same, Miss. Old Jacky's last wife was a young woman, and sort of delicate like, and she died, poor thing, when Molly was but little more than a baby. She always said though that she didn't suffer nor want for anything, for the children were all amazing good to her; and Jem, bad as he is now, nursed her almost as carefully as a woman. Poor thing! she would feel sorrowful enough if she knew what a dreadful end he had come to, for she loved him as she did her own blessed child."

"I have seen pretty Molly many a time when she was a baby. She seems heavy-hearted enough now, poor child! we must try to cheer her up."

“It’s of no use, Miss; she takes Jem’s misfortune to heart terribly.”

“Misfortune! But you are right, Nancy. The vicious, though justice in the shape of legal officers do not hunt them down, *are* the unfortunate of this world.”

Our conversation seemed to disturb the sleeper, for suddenly her cheeks flushed, her eye-lids worked convulsively, her bright lips quivered like a little bird so frightened as scarce to struggle for liberty, and the pretty arm which supported her shook beneath the weight.

“It seems cruel to wake her,” said old Bridget, compassionately. “This is a sorry bad world for such as she is, poor innocent!”

The child seemed yet more agitated, and tossed her fat round arms above her head, while a broken sob came struggling forth, and, in a voice laden with heart-ache, she exclaimed, “You shall not take him! it was n’t he that did it!”

“Molly! Molly!” exclaimed Nancy.

“Mother said we must love one another when her lips were cold, and I will. I *will* love poor Jemmy. You shan’t — oh, you shan’t take him away!”

“Molly! Molly!” repeated Nancy, more emphatically, and shaking the child’s shoulder.

“No, I will not tell; never — never — never!”

“Molly White! Molly!” Nancy raised the child to her feet, who looked about her a few moments, in a kind of bewildered alarm, and then burst into a passion of tears, which nothing could soothe.

Poor suffering little one! that the dregs which usually await a sterner lip, should be upon the brim of thy beaker! that the drop which sparkles on the surface of life’s bowl, should be deadened in childhood’s tears! the flowers which crown it, concealing the strange mixture for a little time from eyes like thine, fallen, withered, dead! It was a bitter, bitter draught first presented thee by Fate, (may I miscall it — by *sin*,) sweet Molly White. What strange contrasts does this world present! That day so bright, so beautiful, so replete

with the everywhere outgushing spirit of joyousness, and that poor little heart aching with such misery as the guilty ever bring to those who love them ! No wonder that old Bridget and even Nancy, (blessings on their kind souls !) should be strangely blinded by the gathering tears as they led the child away. Throw me out, wretched and friendless, on the wide world, and I am not sure but I should creep to the kitchen rather than the parlor, though I know that generosity, and kindness, and sympathy, are the inheritance of no one condition in life.

It was a glorious day in the beginning of June. Beauty smiled up from the earth ; beauty bent to us from the bright sky ; beauty, a delicious, all-pervading kind of beauty, which often makes the spirit drunk with happiness, shone out upon us everywhere. It was not a day to be wasted in-doors, when the balmy airs, the warm wet skies, and the quivering life-full foliage, were all wooing without ; and we have no hot pavements to flash back the light into our faces, or cramped-up streets, where the air is stifled into sickness before it meets us, at Alderbrook. The broad wavy meadow, spangled all over with bright blossoms, is our magnificent thoroughfare ; and when the sun shines too brilliantly the brave old trees rear for us a rare canopy in the forests. The little wizard stream, leaping and dancing over the rocks, to drop itself into the brook at the foot of the hill, and the long cool shadows lying on the grass beside the trees, each had a magic in them which was quite irresistible. So I went out, and sauntered dreamily adown the meadow, with half-shut eyes and a delicious sense of pleasure stealing over me, at each pressure of my foot upon the yielding carpet. Crossing the little log-bridge at the foot of the slope, I picked my way among the alders on the other side, close by the marge of the stream. Myriads of little pearl-white blossoms bent their soft lips to the wave which bounded to meet them ; and side by side with them, the double-bladed iris sent up its sword-shaped leaves, as proudly as in its prime, though the bare stalks which grew from its centre were all stripped of their blos-

soms. The queen of the meadow stood up in its regal beauty, not far from the water's edge ; further back the spotted lily nodded gracefully on its curved stem, and the crimson tufts of the balm-flower nestled in clusters of green shrubbery ; while the narrow leaf of the willow turned out its silver lining, and the aspen quivered all over, like a loving heart blest with its prayer, above. Beyond, tier on tier, rose galleries of green, with but a step between the uppermost and heaven, all radiant in the luxurious garniture of June. How glorious and grand, and full of life was everything — and how my nature expanded in the midst of it as it would embrace the whole universe. I know there are moments on this side the grave when the shackles of clay do really fall off, and our spirits grow large, as though they had looked into the boundlessness of eternity, and we lift a wing with the angels. But we come back again, dazzled and bewildered ; for we are prisoners in a very little cell, and too large a draught of heaven now would not be good for us. I dallied long about the brook and on the verge of the forest, seeing and dreaming ; and then I wandered on, now listening to the joyous song-gushes of the crazy-hearted little Bob-o-link ; now laughing at the antic red squirrel, as his tiny brick-colored banner whisked from fence to tree ; and now gathering handfuls of the pale sweet-scented wood-violets, which follow the first frail children of the spring. Then there were large banks of moss, of brown, and green, and gold, all richly wrought together, as by the fingers of bright lady-elves, and more elastic than the most gorgeous fabrics of the Persian looms, with now and then a little vine straggling over them, strung with crimson berries ; the sun breaking through the closely interlaced branches above in little gushes of light, which quivered as they fell, and vanished and came again, as coquettishly as the bright-throated humming-bird, which frolicked gracefully with the pink blossoms of the azalia, in the hollow beyond. These were interspersed with little patches of winter-green, tender and spicy, of which I of course secured a plentiful supply ; and clusters of the snowy monotropa appeared at the roots of

trees, clear and polished and pearl-like ; and green ferns grew beside old logs, half wreathed over with ivy — and everything there, from the golden moss-cup to the giant tree, looking up into heaven, shared my thoughts and love.

Then I went on, next stooping to pull from the dark loose soil the long slim roots of the wild sarsaparilla ; and close beside them I discovered the nest of a darling little ground bird, which flew away and came back again, fluttering about most pleadingly : and so I left the graceful innocent, without even taking a peep at the four speckled eggs, which probably constituted its treasure.

The sun was quite low when I drew near the Sachem's wood, an immense wilderness to the southeast of Alderbrook, better known by sportsmen than any one else. Some pokerish story of the Indian days first gave rise to the name ; and so there was a superstition connected with it which kept timid people (children, at least) aloof. Moreover, old Antoine committed his murder there ; and it was more than half suspected that some of Jake Gawsley's gold might be hidden among the jagged rocks and deep gulleys of the Sachem's wood. However that might be, the mysterious proverb that the "Sachem's wood could bring no good," had been quite sufficient to prevent my young feet from tempting the spirits of evil on the other side of the stump fence which walled it in. But I felt some inclination now to take a peep into the banned forest, and so, scaling the fantastical barrier as I best might, I sprang to a bank as mossy and as bright with the sunshine as any we had on the other side. The air was fresh and pure, and there was a scent of wild-flowers on it which made me feel quite safe ; for flowers always betray the presence of angels. So I wandered on indolently as before, now plucking a leaf, now watching dreamily the shadows which were fast chasing away the sunlight, until I began to suspect it quite time to return home. It was nearly twilight, and I had not seen the sun go down. A few steps further only, and then I would go ; but there was a pretty silvery tinkle just ahead, which might lead to the lurking

place of a troop of fairies. The sound proceeded from the self-same little stream which trips it over the rocks to the east of Strawberry-hill, and comes dancing and sparkling down to the brook at the foot. It was gurgling along quite gayly at the bottom of a chasm, so dark that, as I knelt on the crag above, and leaned over, it was some minutes before I could catch a glimpse of the silver-voiced musician. The ravine was exceedingly narrow, looking as though the Sachem (who was probably a giant) might have split it apart with an immense hatchet; but the feat was evidently performed a long time ago, for it was all mossed over, long wreaths of green flaunted from little clefts on either side, and the pretty blue-bell from the tip of its lithe stem nodded smilingly to its noisy neighbor among the pebbles. I was rising to go away, when a sound like the tread of some light animal made me pause. It came again, and then followed a scrambling noise and a rustle like the bending of twigs laden with foliage; and I looked carefully about me, for I might not be quite pleased with the company I should meet in the Sachem's wood. This gorge must be very nearly in a line with the haunted saw-mill, which is reported to be tenanted by the wandering spirit of old Jake Gawsely, and who knows but the miser himself may now and then come out at dew-fall to look after his concealed treasures. My view was partially obstructed by a wild gooseberry bush, and when I raised my head above it I saw, not the troubled spirit of a dead old man, but a beautiful child, standing on the point of a rock, and looking cautiously about her as though fearful of being observed. It was little Molly White, and I was about calling to her; when, as though satisfied with her scrutiny she swung herself from the rock, clinging by her little fingers to the jagged points, poised for a moment in the air, and then dropped on the platform below. Here she again looked about her, and I drew back my head; for I had had time for a second thought, and I knew that no trifling thing could bring the child to the banned forest alone. Beside she carried on her arm a basket evidently well-laden, which impeded

her progress very much, and a suspicion far from agreeable crept over me as I again leaned my head over the ledge. The child descended with the agility of a kitten: and when at last she reached the bottom, she looked earnestly up and down the ravine, starting now and then, stretching forward her little head, as though fearful that the moving shadows might deceive her. As soon as she became satisfied that she was not observed, she sent out a low clear sound like a bird-note, which was immediately answered by a suppressed whistle. She sprang forward and was met half-way by a man, who emerged from the shadow of the rock just beneath me.

“Where on earth have you been staying, Moll?” he exclaimed, half angrily. “I have fed on nothing but ground-nuts and beech leaves these two days, and—ha! I hope you have something palatable in your basket. Does your arm ache, chicky? This is a heavy load for such little hands to carry. But where have you been? I did n’t know but they had nabbed you for your good deeds, and meant to starve me out. Bless me, Moll, how you tremble!”

“Oh, I have been so frightened, Jemmy. Dick Holman suspects all about it—”

“Curse Dick Holman!”

“Some of the other men have told how I ran to you the night that the officers took them, and he thinks I know where you are now. He said they would hang me, Jemmy, if I would n’t tell—will they hang me?”

The beautiful face was upturned, with such sweet anxious meekness, that the well-nigh hardened brother seemed touched, and for a moment he did not reply.

“Will they hang me, Jemmy?”

“No, Molly, no! they will never harm a hair of your head. But let me tell you, chick, you must n’t listen to one word from that devil incarnate—he will be hiring you to betray me yet.”

“Dick Holman? Oh no! he can’t hire me. He took out a whole handful of dollars, but I would n’t look at them, and

he said he would give me a new frock and a pretty bonnet, like the village girls, but I didn't answer him a word. It was then he said—and he spoke dreadful, dreadful words, Jemmy—that he would have me hanged. Do you think he can? I am sure he will if he can. I was always afraid of him, he looks at me so out of the corner of his eye, and goes creeping about as lightly as a cat, so that one never knows when he is coming."

"Never fear, Moll, he can't hurt you," replied the brother, still swallowing down the huge slices of meat like a starved hound. "I only wish I had him again in the place he was when I fished him up from the bottom of the horse-pond—he would beg one while for daylight before he should see it."

"Oh, Jemmy—"

"Hang me if he would n't! That's what a man gets by being good-natured. Dick Holman always pocketed two-thirds of the money, and never run any danger."

"Jemmy! Jemmy!" exclaimed the child, in a tone of sorrowful reproach, "You told me you didn't do it! You told me you never took any money, and now—"

"And now I hav'n't told you anything different, little Miss sanctimony; so don't run away from me, and leave me to starve."

"But you ought to tell me the truth, Jemmy—you know it would n't make me care the less for you—though—Oh! it is a dreadful thing to be a thief!"

"Well, you are not a thief, nor—nor I either, so save your sermons and—you might have brought me a little brandy, Moll."

The child sat down on the mossed trunk of a fallen tree, and made no answer.

"Why did n't you come yesterday?"

"Dick Holman watched me."

"Blast him! The curses o' Heaven light—"

Truth does not require the oaths and imprecations of bad men to be written down, and if it did I could hardly give the words of poor Jem White; for there in the solemn woods,

amid the falling shadows, I will own that the hoarse voice of the miserable man inspired me with so much terror that I could scarcely hear him. But I saw the little girl rise slowly and sorrowfully from her seat.

“Jemmy, I cannot stay here, for I know you are a bad, wicked man, and I am afraid of you.”

“Afraid, Moll! ha, ha, ha! that’s a good one! you afraid. And you came over to the log-barn at midnight, when the officers were out, without flinching a hair. Afraid?”

“You told me then you did n’t do it, Jemmy, and I thought you did n’t. Oh, it is a dreadful thing to be a thief! Dreadful! dreadful!”

“But Molly, chick, you would n’t let them take me, and shut me up in a dark prison—State Prison—Jem White in State’s Prison! think on’t, Moll!”

The child sank down on the rocks and sobbed as though her little heart would break; while her brother worked more voraciously than ever at the contents of the basket.

“I’ll tell ’ee what, Moll,” he at last said, “if you could coax up father to take me home—can’t you? Nobody would ever mistrust him.”

“No, Jemmy; it was father who first made me believe you had not spoken truth to me. He said, too, last night, that if he could find you he would give you up himself, in the hope that it would do you good.”

“Good! A——sight of good it would do me! Cuss it, Moll—”

“Jemmy,” exclaimed the child, starting to her feet, and standing before him with more dignity than her beautiful bright face gave promise of, “Jemmy, I will not hear another bad word from you. What I have done for you may be wicked, but I could n’t help it. Mother told me to love you, when her lips against my cheek were cold; and I will bring you victuals and tell you if I hear you are in danger, but you shall not use those wicked words—I will not hear you.”

“Bless me, Moll! I have said nothing to make you take on so, and if you like it, you may go and tell Dick Holman

where I am, and get your smart frock and Sunday bonnet, to say your Scripture lessons in. I dare say they will tell you it's a fine thing to send your brother to State Prison—a mighty fine thing, Moll, and you will be a little wonder among 'em."

"You shan't swear, at any rate, Jemmy; for the great God, who sees everything, will be angry with you, and he will let them find where you are if you are so wicked. You know—"

"I know you are a good little child, Moll—too good for that matter—so cease your blubbering, chicky, and tell me how matters are going in the village, and whether Jesse Swift or Ned Sloman have confessed."

The child sat down and gave a circumstantial account of all that had occurred during the few past days, and then added, "They say that you will be taken before a week's end, Jemmy, for they all seem sure that you hav'n't got away."

"Aha! they don't know what a nice little sister I have for a jailer. But you must go now, Moll, for father will be missing you, and then we shall have a pretty how-de-do. Scramble back, chickey-pet, and mind that you keep a sharp look-out on Dick Holman. This is a jewel of a place, but he might track you to it when you had n't a thought of him. Come to-morrow, if you can, for the bread and meat will scarce serve me for breakfast, let alone the lunch that I must take, since I have nothing else to do, before sleeping. You calculated for your own little stomach when you put it up for me."

"I brought all we had, Jemmy, and I went without my own dinner and supper to make it more."

"Well, you are a nice child, Moll, and I won't do anything to bother you. Come to-morrow, and I won't worry your pretty ears with a word of swearing. You are a darling little jailer, and—there—good-night, Molly."

He pressed his lips to the bright cheek of the little girl, and held her for a moment in his arms, then set her on a platform

just by his head, and watched her difficult ascent till she again stood on the verge of the ravine.

“ Safe ! ” shouted little Molly White, almost gleefully, as she leaned for a moment over the chasm. She was answered by a whistle, and the pretty child clapped her hands, as though she now felt at liberty to be happy once more, and bounded away. She went only a few steps, however, and then returned, and kneeling once more on the twisted roots of a tall elm tree that grew upon the verge of the precipice, peered anxiously down the gorge. My eyes involuntarily turned in the same direction. It seemed to me at first as though the shadows were strangely busy ; then I saw them making regular strides up the ravine, and a faint sickly feeling crept over me, so that I drew back my head, and closed my eyes. When I looked again I saw distinctly the figures of three men, one a little in advance of the others, making their way up the dark gully of the Sachem’s woods. Would they pass by the hiding-place of Jem White, or had his hour come at last, and must that anxious little watcher at the foot of the elm-tree, look helplessly on a scene that would wring her young heart with agony. Bright Molly seemed suddenly to have made a discovery ; for she uttered a piercing shriek, which rang through the gray forest with startling wildness, and catching by the bough which had before assisted her descent, she attempted again to swing herself to the first rocky platform. But, in her fright, the little hand missed its grasp ; the spring was made, and the bright-eyed child was precipitated to the bottom of the gorge. Jemmy White had heard the warning shriek, and rushed out in time to see the fall of his sister and catch a glimpse of the traitor, Holman leading on the officers of justice, but a few rods from his lair. What would he do ? He was probably familiar with every secret lurking-place in that immense wilderness, and night was coming on, so that it might be no difficult thing for him to make his escape. At least his long limbs and hardy frame warranted him the victory in a race, for Dick Holman was a short, clumsily built man, and his companions would

soon weary of clambering over the rocks. Jemmy White's reflections seemed of the precise nature of mine; for, after throwing one glance over his shoulder and another up the ravine, he bounded forward, and sprang across the body of his sister, touching, as he went, her little quivering arm with his foot. Suddenly the man's bold face was blanched, he seemed to waver, and then casting another hurried glance behind him, he made an effort to go on, but his limbs refused their office; a heavy groan, replete with agony, came up from the depths of the gorge; and Jemmy White paused, cowering over the inanimate child as though the two had been alone in the forest. The men came up and laid their hands on his shoulders, but he did not look at them, nor in any way heed their presence; he only chafed the hands of the little girl, and kissed her forehead, and entreated her to open her eyes, for her own brother Jem was there, and it would break his heart if she should not speak to him. The two officers, with the delicacy which the heart teaches to the rudest of men, stood back; but Dick Holman still continued his grasp upon the shoulder of the criminal, as though to assure his companions that he understood this mummiery much better than they did. The scene lasted—how long I cannot say—it seemed to me ages. Finally one of the officers came forward with a coil of rope in his hand, and intimated his intention to bind the prisoner. Jemmy White rose from his crouching posture to his knees, and looked up as though vainly endeavoring to comprehend the movements of the men; then he lifted the precious burden at his feet to his bosom, and clasped his arms about her closely as though afraid she might be forced from him.

"I will go with you," he said, meekly; with a dead heart-ache weighing on every word, as it dropped painfully and slowly from his lips. "I will go with you; but don't bind me. I won't get away; I won't try. It don't matter what becomes of me, now I have killed little Molly. Stand off, Dick Holman! take your hand from my shoulder, and stand away! *You made me do it!* I should have been a

decent man, if you had kept away from me, and poor Molly — ay stand off! it may not be safe for you to come too near!”

“We had better bind him,” said one of the men, glancing at his companion for approbation.

“No, no; leave me my arms, for Molly’s sake, and walk close beside me, if you are afraid. I won’t try to run away. It’s of no use now — no use — no use!”

Jemmy White’s lips moved mechanically, still repeating the last words; and the officer crammed the coil of rope into his pocket again, and moved on beside the sobered prisoner notwithstanding the cautionary gestures and meaning glances of Dick Holman.

That night, the arrest of Jem White and the dreadful accident which had befallen his little sister, were the subjects of conversation at every fireside; and much softening of heart was there toward the wretched prisoner, when it was known that he owed his arrest to the humanity which was only stifled, not dead, within him.

When poor little Molly White opened her bright eyes again, she was in the cell of a prison; for it would have been death to the agonized brother to have her taken from him, and even honest Jacky, notwithstanding his stern, unwavering integrity, and his abhorrence of the slightest deviation from it, had plead earnestly for this indulgence. Besides, Molly White must be taken care of somewhere at the expense of the county, and there was no poor-house; so Jem’s prayer was granted.

When she awoke to consciousness, she looked earnestly into the face of her brother, who was leaning over her, bathing her temples as tenderly as a mother could have done; and then glanced upon the gloomy walls and scanty furniture of her sick chamber.

“Where are we? Did they find you, Jemmy?” she inquired — “Dick Holman and those other men?”

The tears rained over the bronzed cheeks of the prisoner in torrents; and the child wiped them away with her little

dimpled hands, whispering softly, "I am sorry I called you a bad man, Jemmy."

"Bad, Molly! Oh, I am very, very bad!" sobbed the repentant criminal.

"But you are sorry, Jemmy," and the little round arms were folded over the neck which they had often clasped most lovingly before; but never with such touching tenderness. "And so the angels love you dearly, for the good Bible says that they are gladder for one man who is sorry for being wicked, than for a great many men that never do wrong. The angels love you, Jemmy; and mother is an angel now."

"She used to love me, and beg me not to get into bad ways; but I almost broke her heart, sometimes, Molly!"

"Well, she loves you yet; and you are very sorry for what you have done; and so—we shall be happy, oh, *so* happy!"

The prisoner glanced about his cell, and his brow was contracted with pain.

"I know where we are, Jemmy, for I have looked in here before; and it is better, a great deal better, than hiding in the woods. I am glad they let me be with you; I am not afraid here, for you are good now, and just as sorry for being wicked as ever you can be. We will live here always, Jemmy, if they will let us; and then we shall always be good. Don't cry, Jemmy. I wish you would fix my head—a little nearer your cheek—there, so;—now kiss me and I shall go to sleep."

How different that sleep from the one I had admired a few days earlier! But the child was far happier now.

Perhaps the strong interest excited by the accident to little Molly might have operated in Jem White's favor quite as much as his own simple, unobtrusive penitence; but popular sympathy followed him to his cell, and remained by his side during the trial. So true and heartfelt was this sympathy, that there was a general elongation of countenance when he was condemned, and a universal, and, for a moment, uncontrollable burst of applause when he was recommended to

mercy. As some palliating circumstances came to light during the trial, it was not difficult to obtain a pardon for Jem White; and I am sure no one at Alderbrook regrets the exercise of clemency in his behalf. To be sure, his trial has been of only six months' duration; but he is so gentle and kind, and withal so sober, and industrious, and contented, that everybody places entire confidence in his reformation. Bold, bad Jem White has become strangely like his father; and the good old man goes about, calling on everybody (for honest Jacky knows that he has a friend in everybody at Alderbrook) to rejoice with him, for he is more blest than any other mortal; while his simple heart swells more than ever with gratitude to God and love to man. As for darling little Molly, she is one of those guileless creatures often doomed — nay, not doomed — so blessed, I should have said, as to live for the good of others. Her bright face has grown thin and pale with suffering, but there is a sweeter smile on it than ever; and when Jemmy carries her in his arms, as he does every Sabbath, to the village church, she tells him how glad she is for the accident which has crippled her, because it has given her such a dear resting-place. Little Molly will probably never be straight again — perhaps she never will walk — but she smiles at the prospect, and talks cheerfully of the wings which will be given her in heaven.

Dick Holman, alarmed by some rather hostile demonstrations on the part of Felix Graw and a few other determined spirits of the neighborhood, disappeared from among us on the day he was set at liberty, and has never since honored Alderbrook with his presence.

MY OLD PLAYMATE.

CHARLEY HILL was an old playmate of mine—a saucy, good-natured, mischief-doing, flower-loving, warm-hearted, gentle, brave little playmate—and many a tale might the green-mossed stones lying among the alder-roots on the border of the lazy brook, and the tall grass that waves on the hillside, tell of our young gambols. Oh! those rare, bright days—the days of my childhood! How I wish that I could make a compromise with the old fellow of the hour-glass, and save a handful of his sand from the end of my term, to glitter in the sunshine of the beginning—for myself do I most sincerely wish it; but more, much more, for thee, poor Charley Hill! Some people are born with a shadow on the brow, a shadow which refuses to be removed, though the wheel of life should roll forever in prosperity; yet I have known the sad gift to be accompanied by a spirit which mellowed and softened it, till the apparent curse proved a blessing. But my old playmate was not one of these. No cloud was on his face or his fortunes. The light centred in his gay heart shone from parted lip and beaming eye, and was scattered without stint on all who came near him. A frank, jovial boy was Charley Hill, in those play-days; with a ready hand, a ready smile, and a ready wit; to say nothing of the charmingest of all charming hand-sleds, and a very discriminating little fowling-piece, which he assured me never shot anything but crows. No boy at Alderbrook had so handsome a face as Charley—that everybody said; and no boy had so handsome a cap, (that bright purple velvet, with the two silken tassels dangling so gracefully from the apex,) nor so white a collar, nor such a “cunning” little jacket—though that everybody did *not* say. Little girls are much better initiated in such mysteries than older people.

I will not assert that my old playmate, Charley, was a perfectly faultless lad; for who but his own naughty self was the occasion of my travelling about two mortal hours, my hands tied fast to the schoolmistress' girdle, just because he lured me down to the brookside to angle for trout with a crooked pin, when stupid people thought I should have been poring over Webster's "elementary?" And who but that wicked little scapegrace of a Charley, with his winsome ways and generous little heart, led me to spoil my new white cambric apron as I did the first time I wore it? Who but Charley *could* have done it? I will tell the story to all who remember well when they were children; but those whose memories cannot look back through the crust upon the heart, will do well to turn away to something wiser. We had a grand tea-party at my baby-house under the old black cherry tree, and our dolls must have been surfeited with the luxuries spread before them. There was one thing in our feast, on which we prided ourselves not a little — a dish of pretty crimson balls, made of the wool that a dozen little fingers had busied themselves in picking from Debby Jones' red petticoat, nicely imbedded in a snowy pile of soap suds — an excellent substitute for strawberries and cream. Just before the party broke up, who should make his appearance but Charley Hill; but when called upon to admire our ingenuity, our climax of witty inventions, he manifested a very boy-like indifference, and said nothing but "pooh!" Charley might have argued the point a week, while we in defending it might have become so earnest as to eat our mock strawberries; but that contemptuous "*pooh!*" was too much. While the little girls, with disconcerted faces, were turning elsewhere for diversion, Charley took me aside confidentially. There were strawberries a plenty just over the brook; a thick spot — and oh, so thick! and Charley's eyes grew big and dark with the recollection.

If Fanny would just run over with him —

"But my mother, and my new apron!"

It would take only a minute, and I could put my apron out of the way — and oh, such a thick spot!

There was a wedding at the Maple Bush that evening—a quiet, cozy, family affair; and the pretty belle of the district, though quite as pretty and quite as mischievously attractive, was a belle no longer. Bright, witching Dolly Foster! what a dear little neighborhood blessing she had always been, with her sunny face and sunny heart and open hand! And what a charming little bride of a Madam Linkum she made! How everybody loved her! How the old ladies praised her docility and teachableness! and how the young ladies doted on her as a model of taste and socialness! Oh, Dolly Foster was the flower of the Maple Bush; but bewitching Mrs. Linkum was its gem—its lamp—its star.

NOT A POET.

I AM a little maiden,
 Who fain would touch the lyre
 But my poor fingers ever
 Bring discord from the wire.
 'T is strange I 'm not a poet ;
 There 's music in my heart ;
 Some mystery must linger
 About this magic art.

I 'm told that joyous spirits,
 Untouched by grief or care,
 In mystery so holy
 Are all too light to share.
 My heart is, very gladsome ;
 But there 's a corner deep,
 Where many a shadow nestles,
 And future sorrows sleep.

I hope they 'll not awaken
 As yet for many a year ;
 There 's not on earth a jewel,
 That 's worth one grief-born tear.
 Long may the harp be silent,
 If Sorrow's touch alone,
 Upon the chords descending,
 Has power to wake its tone.

I 'd never be a poet,
 My bounding heart to hush
 And lay down at the altar
 For Sorrow's foot to crush.

Ah, no ! I 'll gather sunshine
For coming evening's hours ;
And while the spring-time lingers,
I 'll garner up its flowers,
I fain would learn the music
Of those who dwell in heaven
For woe-tuned harp was never
To seraph fingers given.
But I will strive no longer
To waste my heart-felt mirth ;
I will mind me that the gifted
Are the stricken ones of earth.

TWO NIGHTS IN THE "NIEUW NEDERLANDTS."

It was on the night of the 25th of February, 1643, that a middle-aged man, with an honest, frank, sun-browned face and a powerful frame, sat and warmed himself by the kitchen fire in the Governor's house at Fort Amsterdam. He was singularly uneasy; every now and then clenching his fist and moving his nervous arm as in angry gesticulation; while his fine eye turned from one object to another with a kind of eager dread, and his naturally clear, open countenance was drawn into a scowl compounded of various strong emotions. He was alone, and bore himself much as though belonging to the household; for he certainly could not have been greatly inferior to its master in point of dignity. All within doors was perfectly silent—painfully so, it seemed to the stern watcher—and within, the heavy, monotonous tread of a sentinel, at a little distance, gave the only evidence that the pulse of the young city had not ceased its breathings. At last the man drew from his pocket a massive "*Nuremburg egg*," and held it up to the light.

"Twelve o'clock—five—almost ten minutes past! Thank God, if their hellish plan has miscarried!"

A long, loud, terrible shriek, as of a multitude of voices combining their agony, came up from the distance even as he spoke; and, dropping the watch upon the stone hearth, the listener sprang with an exclamation of horror to his feet.

"God forgive me, if I curse my race and nation! It is a deed worthy of the devil—and they call themselves men and Christians!"

He strode up and down the long kitchen, his brows knit and his hand on the hilt of his sword, muttering as he went,

“When was Ada Palmer here last?” and “Has little Susy May grown any?” and “Oh! has Charley Hill got home?”

To the last my mother gave a quiet *yes*. And was he as handsome as ever, and as agreeable, and as good?

She half shook her head, and sighed ominously.

“Is Charley sick?”

“No, quite well.”

“And has n't he come home to stay?”

“Probably.”

“What is the matter then?”

“Look! yonder is Ada Palmer just coming down the slope;” and away I flew to meet her.

We kept open doors that evening, and everybody seemed to know it—everybody but Charley Hill. He did not come; and I went to sleep wondering what change had come over my old play-mate. The next day I met him accidentally in the street; and I noted a pleased sparkle in his eye, and a flush on his cheek; but he extended his hand half hesitatingly, and there was a painful confusion in his manner which puzzled me. Why should the frank, noble-hearted Charley Hill blush and cast down his eyes, as though detected in a crime, at sight of an old friend? The next evening, I was invited to a social gathering at Deacon Palmer's. Charley Hill was not there, and I inquired the wherefore.

“Is it possible, Fanny! don't you know?”

“Know what?”

“Why, nobody invites Charley now.”

“Why?”

Ada shook her head, and compressed her lips with an expression of intense severity.

“Why, Ada?”

“For the best of reasons, poor miserable fellow that he is! He is not fit to associate with respectable people.”

“Tell me—has Charley done anything! what is the matter?”

“Matter enough to break his poor father's heart, and make

all the rest of the family miserable. He is shockingly dissipated."

It was the bursting of a thunderbolt. Poor Charley Hill!

That night I collected together, in one dream, all the frightful stories I had ever heard of vice, and degradation, and misery; and strewed them along narrow, filthy streets, where Charley Hill walked, as though quite at home. At last there was a blow given, a shriek, a stream of blood, a dead, heavy corse; and, all trembling with horror, I awoke. How thankful was I that my old playmate was not a murderer; and how I lay and arranged plan after plan for his redemption, plan after plan which shrivelled to a cobweb as soon as woven!

When morning came, I made inquiries and learned more of Charley Hill. His singular powers of fascination had led him into temptation to which the less gifted are seldom exposed. He was full of wit and vivacity; his natural gaiety and good humor were unbounded; and he was self-confident and unsuspecting. It was a long time before Charley Hill became at all aware that he was wasting himself; and then he quieted his conscience with the thought, "It is necessary *now*; when once I am home again all will be well." So he went on till he seemed to have lost the power of saving himself; and just at this critical time, perhaps not more than a fortnight too late, Judge —— first began to take note of the derelictions of his young charge. In the mean time a few reports had reached Alderbrook, and alarmed Squire Hill. He proceeded to the metropolis, received the whole weight of his friend's newly acquired knowledge, (much of it of course exaggerated,) before seeing his son, showered upon the culprit a torrent of expostulations, which the goadings of disappointment made very angry ones; and finally concluded to remove him at once from his companions to the quiet of Alderbrook. The last was the only wise thing done. Here Charley Hill might have been saved if but his own plan for "doing people good" had been carried out. His father was very angry, and used much severity; his mother and sister received him with

tears and chidings. The last would have won his heart, but the regret it occasioned was accompanied by a strong sense of degradation, which made him anxious to escape their presence. Their treatment of him was full of tenderness, but it was a kind of tenderness which showered humiliation on its object, and should not have been continued more than one day. If but one person had shown a cheerful confidence in him he might have been encouraged and strengthened. But his old friends stood aloof. True, they sometimes greeted him kindly, but there was something even in that very kindness which made him *feel* their knowledge of the taint that was on him. Is it strange, that, without sympathy, without companionship with the good, his pride daily wounded, and his self-respect daily diminishing, Charley Hill should become reckless of consequences, and indulge his socialness at the expense of higher qualities? Certainly my old playmate was made no better by being removed to Alderbrook. The vicious are everywhere, and Charley in his loneliness turned to them. This was the climax of his evil doing. He had been driven to it, true, but he should not have yielded to the force which even the good had turned against him. If he had stood firm for a couple of years, not merely unsupported, but against the overpowering weight of neglect which was thrown into the balance on the side of wrong — if he had borne well the severest of all severe trials for a sensitive nature, his first failure might have been forgiven and he restored to his former position among us. There are, doubtless, men who might have done it; but alas, how few! Charley Hill struggled a little; but, when he reached up his hand from the gulf into which he was falling, there was no one to take it. There were enough that *thought* themselves ready to help him; but they forgot that he was a brother, and poor Charley remembered the past and turned from them.

“It is a somewhat questionable experiment; and your plan you will find very difficult of execution.” So spake a careful mother, evincing a sensitive regard for the welfare of her own child; the only thing that could blind an eye usually so

discriminating, or momentarily steel a heart so full of charity.

“You are but a young girl, my Fanny.”

“I will talk only with young girls, then; but Charley and I were old friends, and he has a right to expect kindness of me.”

“Not a right, my child; he has forfeited that.”

I had some confused, indistinct notions of the peculiar rights of the erring, the consideration and attention which we owe each other on a sea so full of breakers, but I did not venture on advancing them, lest I should injure the cause of Charley Hill by opinions heterodox.

Days went by, and my old playmate had become a very frequent visiter at Underhill. He was received at Deacon Palmer's, also, and at several other houses in the village; and the effect was soon visible in his altered appearance. But all this was not done without opposition; and there were people in the village — good people — that had done much to reform the vicious, and were ready to do more — who bitterly denounced the course we were pursuing. It was not in accordance with their own plan. Charley Hill should have been obliged to give a pledge of reformation, and stand a trial; it was too much to receive him on trust. The most critical position which a man can occupy in this world, the most dangerous, is when he stands balancing on the barrier between vice and virtue. Vice woos, and virtue frowns. The bad beckon, and smile, and promise; while the good, who should have all the smiles and be able to present all the attractions that cluster so profusely around a life of purity, speak their warnings with severity, stand aloof, as though afraid of contamination, and scarce encourage a return. Not that men are so unforgiving to the erring. The sympathy for the self-degraded which has sprung up everywhere, proves that they are not. But it is a fashion of the day to encourage extremes. The lady who will take a drunkard from the gutter, and clothe and feed him, will severely censure her sister philanthropist for using a more delicate and less apparent influence to keep the thoughtless young wine-drinker from

falling into it. It matters but little whether smiles or tears are employed, if the good be accomplished. We tried smiles with Charley Hill. We scattered roses in his path, and won him many a step back, and tried to keep him there, but —

As I have before intimated, many good people felt outraged that Charley Hill should be treated as though he had never erred, and be received in some families at Alderbrook as formerly. He should be punished; he deserved a lesson; he ought to be taught that he could not sin without paying the penalty. There was plausibility in much that they said, else, alas! their reasonings would have had less weight with us. They contended that if society really had the power of reforming him, it was not *such* society. They intimated even that parents were exposing their children to contamination by this course. 'We were too young, they said, to do good to our playmate. Too young! Could those who were older understand the case so well as we; we who held the key to Charley Hill's nature, and were almost as familiar with every nook and cranny within his heart as our own? Poor Charley! we *could* have saved him; but "public opinion" was against us, and — we failed.

Door after door was shut against Charley Hill; door after door, till, alone again in the world, he turned from the happy firesides which had for a while stayed him in his course, and plunged headlong into the yawning vortex of dissipation. Before, he had stepped cautiously and hesitatingly; he had paused and looked behind him, and dallied with the flowers which grew on the brink of the precipice. But now he gave one desperate leap, and was gone forever. As Charley Hill's was not a gradual wandering away from the path of right, but a sudden mad plunge, so was his course short and his end tragic. But we will leave him to his rest on the spot where he once sat, beneath the elm tree close in the corner of the churchyard, to watch the burial of old Jake Gawsely. He dropped a tear there; a tear of pity for the friendless old man, who was hustled into his grave by the hands of those he had injured. Perhaps some watchful angel may have

caught that tear, and borne it up before him to the throne of the Eternal; and the gentle tribute may ere this have been laid back on his own earth-defiled spirit, to freshen and to purify it. A dark, dark fate was thine, poor Charley! woven by thine own fingers, true, but lacking the white and golden threads which those who once loved thee might have added; a dark, dark fate, which my pen refuses to record or my thoughts to dwell upon. Many virtues were thine, my old playmate; there was much in thee to love, much to pity, much to censure; God forgive thee! God forgive the mistaken philanthropists of Alderbrook!

OUR MAY.

“OUR MAY,” as everybody called May Loomis, was the merriest, blithesomest, busiest little creature that you ever saw—a perfect honey-gatherer without the sting—an April smile, with a cousin’s face for the contrasting cloud. It seemed impossible to bring a shade of seriousness over that joyous face; for although I have seen tears starting from her eyes, they were always checked by a smile, or if suffered to fall upon her face, they were lost in a profusion of roguish dimples.

Our May had a cousin, the cloud above mentioned, who rejoiced in the same appellation; but although everybody said that Miss May Loomis was a very excellent young lady, no one ever thought of placing the possessive before her name. Indeed, I do not think Miss May would have liked such a partnership concern, for she had a high opinion of her own dignity, and she thought it must be very painful to any woman of delicacy to be hailed by all she met as though under their especial protection. The good-natured laugh of the old farmers shocked her nerves, and the cordial grasp of their horny hands was quite too much for lady-endurance. Miss May was very often annoyed, when walking with her cousin, by the exclamation, “There goes our May!” from the lips of some poor washerwoman, or errand-boy; and then to see them fly across the street, as though on terms of the greatest intimacy! Why, it was preposterous. So presuming! But Miss May was still more annoyed by the excessive vulgarity of her thoughtless little cousin, who would often stop in the street to inquire after the health and prosperity of the offenders, and send some little message to the children at home. On such occasions the Cloud usually drew herself up to her utmost height, and to avoid the dis-

grace of such improper conduct, walked home alone, in the most dignified manner. But then Miss May's walk was always dignified, if walking by rule and compass constitutes dignity; and she was never known to do an *improper* thing in her life. She always carried her hands in one particular position, except when, for the sake of variety, she changed them to one other particular position; and her pocket-handkerchief, which she held between the thumb and finger of the left hand, was allowed to spread itself over the three remaining fingers in a very becoming manner. Her neck ribbon was always crossed upon her bosom, the two ends of precisely the same length; and her collar never had in it a wrinkle. There were two or three plaits in the waist of her dress, because somebody, that she considered undisputable authority, had said that plaits were graceful; but she carefully eschewed all extravagance, in the quantity, if not the quality, of the cloth she honored by wearing. Her hair (this was the climax of the young lady's nicety) was so carefully brushed and pomatumed, that it seemed one glossy convex surface, surmounted by a braid of—no one could have imagined what, but for the pale blue ribband that relieved the brown, and gave the curious examiner the idea that it might be of the same material as the head covering.

Miss May's nicety extended to everything about her. Her house-plants were prim and perpendicular, trimmed of every redundant leaf; and she was often heard to lament an opening blossom, because it would produce irregularity, by throwing the balance of ornament on one side of the plant. The Cloud was fond of exercising her skill in trimming trees in the shape of cones and other figures, while her cousin fostered luxuriance in their growth, and would rather hang on them a wilder wreath, or twist a limb awry, than to see the ornaments of her uncle's garden standing out stark and stiff, like the spokes of a wagon wheel. Yet the cousins never clashed; for the regularity of Miss May extended to her disposition and heart; and, having her own excellent rule of rectitude, she would as soon have been caught laughing

aloud, or romping in the court yard, or wearing a rumpled dress, as swerving from it in the least degree. On the other hand, our May was too careless and too light-hearted to be annoyed by her nice cousin's trifling peculiarities; and she never opposed her tastes, nor interrupted her in anything except a lecture on propriety. Miss May never spoke but in the gentlest voice, and the most unexceptionable words; but then she often felt it to be her duty to admonish her wild cousin of the folly of her doings, which admonitions our active little Hebe found peculiarly irksome. She, however soon invented a way of warding off these avalanches of good advice, quite worthy of her wit. When Miss May would enter the parlor with a grave look of reproof, and commence with the ominous words, "My dear cousin, I feel it my duty to expostulate—" the offender would interrupt her.

"Oh, wait a minute, May, deary, I have something to tell you. Mr. Melroy——"

This sentence was sometimes finished in one way, and sometimes in another; but Mr. Melroy was the magic word, and after making her fair monitress blush crimson, the little tormenter would glide out of the room and express her self-gratulation by a laugh as long and loud as it was musical.

Mr. Melroy was our village clergyman; a young bachelor of twenty-eight, and a general favorite with all classes of men. He was friendly and courteous with all, for he looked upon the whole human family as his kindred; and his heart never refused to the meanest beggar, the appellation of *brother*. His voice was full and melodious, but somewhat solemn; his countenance exhibited a dash of melancholy though so modified by Christian benevolence as to be peculiarly interesting; and his manner was correct and gentlemanly. The two cousins were members of Mr. Melroy's church; and their uncle, 'Squire Loomis, was his personal friend; so it was not at all to be wondered at that he became their frequent visiter. Neither is it a matter of wonder that our May, light-hearted, smiling, blithesome May, contrasted as she was with her grave companion, should almost escape

the young pastor's notice. Our May saw that Mr Melroy's attention was all directed to the Cloud; but she was not sorry, for it gave her an opportunity to watch his fine eyes, as they lighted up with the enthusiasm of his subject, and to catch the variety of expression which genius can throw upon the most serious face. Our May liked merriment, but she liked Mr. Melroy better; and she never ventured to breathe a word until she was sure he had quite finished. Then she would make some remark, so comical, that Mr. Melroy would be obliged to waste a smile upon her in spite of himself; and Miss May would quite forget the half hour's profitable conversation in planning a reproof.

Sometimes Mr. Melroy would walk with the young ladies, or rather, with the Cloud, for our May was constantly bounding from the path to pluck a flower or chase a butterfly. And yet she somehow never lost any part of the young clergyman's profitable conversation, for when they were alone she would ease her sedate cousin by distorting his beautiful sentiments and sadly misapplying his comparisons; and then she would steal away to poor blind Becky and glad her pious heart by a repetition of his pure teachings. Our May was certainly not without faults; but her young heart was a living, feeling, acting thing; and she had happily given it all, even its volatility, to the guidance of a safe Hand.

Both of the cousins had a class in the village Sabbath school, and Miss May was the secretary of two or three benevolent societies, of which our May was only a quiet, unobtrusive member. Some people wondered that the relative, and constant companion of such a *pattern-lady* as Miss May Loomis, should choose such a questionable way of exhibiting her charity, as to visit the poor in person, and administer to their wants, even when it called her away from the meetings of the society; but others fearlessly advocated their favorite's cause; while the sober-faced young clergyman said nothing. Before old Mr. Thompson left, Miss May used to tell the delinquent that she knew Mr. Thompson disapproved of such conduct; but she dared not mention Mr. Melroy's name, as it

was a signal which our May failed not to answer with an exceeding gay volley. The truth was, everybody said that Mr. Melroy did not call so often at 'Squire Loomis' for nothing and as Miss May was very far from being nothing, she was very naturally concluded to be the something that so attracted. When anybody asked home questions about this matter, our May laughed, and looked very knowing, while her cousin blushed, and looked very dignified. Thus matters went on for a long time, and thus they might have gone on, in spite of several old ladies, who endeavored to introduce variety by prophesying it, but for an occurrence in which our May most sadly overstepped the bounds of propriety.

It was on a fine afternoon, in the beginning of August, that the young pastor was seen leading the fair cousins beyond the little clump of houses which we dignified by the title of village. Miss May's step was as precise as ever; but our bright lady of the possessive pronoun, walked more as though she thought she could guide herself, and was seeking an opportunity to drop the gentleman's arm. Their walk was as usual, delightful to all; for Miss May was treated with the most scrupulous attention — Mr. Melroy found the air refreshing and the scenery beautiful, to say nothing of the valued society of the Cloud, and our May was always pleased. On this day she was even more frolicsome than usual; and, having accidentally broken a wreath of frail, beautiful flowers, which she had been weaving, Mr. Melroy so far unbent himself as to say he wished she had never linked a more enduring chain.

"What can he mean?" thought laughing May; but at that moment her attention was arrested by a field of haymakers, among whom she recognized familiar faces. The recognition was mutual; for instantly a young man called out "There's our May!" and the giddy girl, turning about with an arch smile, and shaking her finger at her companions, sprang lightly over the fence, and was soon in the midst of the haymakers. The young man, who at first recognized her, seized one of her hands, while a woman in a blue frock and

calico bonnet appropriated the other; and the whole party, men, women and children, gathered around the pretty hoyden, with a familiarity, which to Miss May was perfectly astounding. Our May stood but a moment in the centre of the group, when a dozen voices, pitched on every imaginable key, roared forth a boisterous laugh, not, however, quite drowning her own clear, ringing tones; and then, with a sort of mock courtesy, she was bounding away, when the young man again stopped her. Our May paused a moment as though undecided, while the young man stood before her, and by his earnest gestures seemed urging some affair of importance. Then a little girl was seen to leave the circle, and run until she came within hearing of the waiting couple, when she called out —

“Our May — Miss Loomis, I mean — says if you will excuse her, she will walk home alone, as she is n't quite ready now.”

Mr. Melroy looked at Miss May, and Miss May looked at Mr. Melroy, and then both looked at the offending cousin. She had gone a little aside from the haymakers, and was talking with the young man, and from their manner, it was evident that the conversation was intended for no other ear.

“We ought not to leave her,” said Mr. Melroy.

“We ought to leave her,” said Miss May, in a decided tone, and the gentleman complied.

It would be labor lost to follow home the astounded couple, as, for some reason, neither spoke until they entered Mr. Loomis' parlor; nor even then, for Miss May betook herself to her embroidery, and Mr. Melroy to the newspaper.

If our sober readers have not already shut the book, we would like to have them follow our May, our darling, bright, frolicsome, generous-hearted May; and learn the whole truth before they condemn her.

Joshua Miller, the owner of the hay-field, was a plain old farmer, that May had often seen in her uncle's *store*, and for whom, indeed, 'Squire Loomis entertained a very great respect. In leaving the store one day, he accidentally dropped his staff,

and our May, with the lightness of a sylph, sprang before him, picked it up, and respectfully, yet with one of her most sparkling glances and winning smiles, placed it in the old man's hand. Nothing can be more flattering to age than unexpected attention paid them by the young and happy; and father Miller never forgot the pretty, bright-faced girl, who "did not laugh at him because he was lame." When he came to the store afterwards, he always brought some fragrant delicious offering from the garden or the fields—fruits and flowers of his own gathering, and finally our May found it very pleasant to extend her walks to father Miller's farm-house, drink of the new milk, admire the cheese, talk of economy with the old man's children, and engage in a frolic with his grand-children. Her condescension pleased the good people, while her mingled mirthfulness, sweetness and good sense charmed them.

These were the haymakers she had seemed so happy to meet; and the young man who had urged her stay was Mr. Day, father Miller's son-in-law. But this was not an invitation to the farm-house. A family of Irish laborers had, within a few days, begged to be admitted into an old log building that stood on father Miller's farm, and the good old man, thinking that he might assist them by giving them employment, had readily consented. But the O'Neils had travelled a long, weary way, and been obliged sometimes to sleep upon the damp ground; so that they were scarcely settled before the mother and two of the children were seized with a violent fever. Mr. Day was anxious that our May should just look in upon the sufferers; and she, with that excessive sensitiveness which often accompanies true benevolence, chose rather to incur censure for foolish waywardness than to explain her conduct. It is often found that those who seem to possess the lightest and gayest hearts, have the warmest love nestling down among the flowers. These beautiful characters pass through the world unostentatiously, seldom recognized but by the eye of Omniscience, loved by the angels, and sometimes making themselves dear to some holy-hearted saint

near enough to heaven to see clearly the internal loveliness of the spirit.

Our May had still another motive for silence. She knew that if her cousin became aware of the situation of the family, she would call a meeting of the society, and the subject would be debated till assistance would come too late; and she thought that advice and sympathy, with the products of father Miller's farm, and the physician whom the contents of her own purse might place at her command, would be quite as useful to the O'Neils as the Society's money. And then another *feeling* (it could scarce be called a motive) influenced our May, when she so unceremoniously sent home her companions wondering at her eccentricity. Mr. Melroy had always seemed to consider her a thoughtless, giddy child; and when any benevolent plan was broached, he invariably turned to her cousin, as though he never dreamed of consulting her, or supposed it possible that she could be interested; and she felt a kind of pleasure in concealing from him that "lower depth," where dwelt the sacred qualities which too often but bubble on the surface. In saying that our May was influenced by these considerations, I do not mean to say that she thought them over, or that she would have been able to present them intelligibly; she acted from a momentary impulse, but the impelling principle was unconsciously made up of these motives.

"No," thought the sunny-hearted May, as she went tripping lightly homeward, after seeing the O'Neils comparatively comfortable, "No; however lightly he may esteem me, he shall never think that I parade my goodness before his eyes for the sake of attracting his admiration." Then our pretty May began to wonder what the sober Mr. Melroy meant about her "linking a stronger chain;" and she wondered on so absorbingly that she insensibly slackened her pace and almost forgot to enter when she reached her uncle's door.

The young clergyman was still in the parlor; and although Miss May commenced the usual "My dear cousin, I feel it my duty to expostulate—" and although the expostulation

was no pleasanter than ever to our May, she did not avail herself of the usual "Mr. Melroy—" but sat dumb, with a roguishly demure expression, unparalleled by anything but the sometimes exceedingly wise air of a mischievous kitten.

"I think," said Mr. Melroy, endeavoring to smile, after Miss May had three several times appealed to him for his opinion, "I think that Miss Loomis (he had never called her Miss Loomis before) must be allowed to be the exclusive judge of her own actions, since she chooses to conceal her motives from her friends."

"Some people act without motive," interrupted Miss May. Mr. Melroy shook his head rather dissentingly.

"Light minds are guided by impulse," pursued Miss May. Mr. Melroy looked more determinedly and severely than ever, but made no reply.

"Impulse," observed Miss May, with a wondrously wise look, "is a very dangerous guide—don't you think so, Mr. Melroy?"

"The impulse of a bad heart."

"All hearts are depraved," continued Miss May, meekly folding her white hands, and turning her eyes to the carpet.

"All *happy* hearts," interposed our May.

The young clergyman nodded assent; but it was evident that his thoughts were elsewhere.

"If cousin May *would* be but a little more sober-minded!" pursued the Cloud, after a proper pause.

Mr. Melroy glanced at the blushing, half-trembling May, and appeared disconcerted.

"I know she means no harm—she is so thoughtless—but don't you really think her exceedingly indiscreet, Mr. Melroy?"

"Excuse me, Miss Loomis," said the young clergyman, with a manner of excessive embarrassment. "I—I have no right to question the young lady's discretion; and if I attempted an opinion I might speak too unguardedly."

"So then you are obliged to put a guard upon your tongue, lest I should learn that you consider me a giddy, thoughtless,

imprudent, heartless girl;" said our May, with hasty earnestness; "but it is unnecessary, Mr. Melroy; I knew your opinion of me long ago."

"Then you know—" began the young pastor, and he looked still more confused.

"Then why not improve?" asked Miss May, in her very kindest tone.

"Because," answered May, the incorrigible, half recovering her gayety, "because my most excellent-cousin has goodness and discretion enough for both of us; or," she added glancing upward, with a sweetly sobered expression of countenance, "because my Father gave me a happy heart and too many causes for gratitude to admit of its learning the lesson of sadness."

Mr. Melroy was about to answer, but he was interrupted, by a knock at the door; and our village physician entered in great haste.

"I come," said he to our May, "from O'Neil's—the poor woman is worse, and I am afraid she will not hold out much longer. I advised them to send for a clergyman; but she says no one can pray for her like the sweet young lady, who visited her to-night. So, my dear, if you will just jump into my carriage your face will do more good than my medicine."

Our May snatched her bonnet, without speaking a word, or glancing at the astonished faces beside her; and she was half way to O'Neil's, before she knew that Mr. Melroy was by her side, and still held the hand by which he had assisted her into the carriage. For some reason, though a tremor crept from the heart into that pretty prisoned hand, our May did not think proper to withdraw it; and soon all selfish thoughts were dissipated by the scene of misery upon which they entered. Mrs. O'Neil was already dead; and the Millers, in whose hands the kind-hearted physician had left her, were endeavoring to silence the clamors of the children, and striving all they could to comfort O'Neil, who, with true Irish eloquence, was pouring out his lamentations over the corpse of his wife.

“An’ there ’s the swate leddy who spake the kind word to me,” said one of the noisy group, springing towards our May; “my mither said she was heaven’s own angel, sure.”

“Well, come to me,” said our May, “and I will speak to you more kind words; poor things! you need them sorely.”

The children gathered around the fair young girl, noisily at first; but, as she gradually gained their attention, their clamors ceased; and she at last made them consent to accompany father Miller to the farm-house where it was thought best for them to remain until after the funeral of their poor mother.

“And you will be very good and quiet,” said our May, as the noisy troop were preparing to leave the hut.

“Sure an’ we will,” answered a bright boy, “if it be only for the sake of ye’r own beautiful face, Miss.”

Mr. Melroy had succeeded in administering comfort to O’Neil, who at last consented to lie down and rest; and our May bent like the ministering angel that she was, over the sick couch of the two children, smoothing their pillows and bathing their temples.

“This is a wretched family,” observed Mr. Melroy, turning to Mr. Day.

“Ay, but it would have been more wretched still, if it had n’t been for our May. She came as willingly as the like of her would walk into her uncle’s parlor, the minute I made her know how much she was needed; and all these little comforts are of her ordering. She sent, too, for Dr. Houghton, and left her purse with me to pay him; but Dr. Houghton says he can’t take money from such an angel.”

“Is she always so?” asked Melroy, in a low tone.

“Always so! Bless your heart, don’t you know she’s always so, and you the minister! Why, she is doing good all the time; she’s kind to everybody; and no one can help loving her.”

“No one can help it,” answered Melroy, involuntarily, and glancing at our May, who was supporting the head of the

little sufferer on her hand, while she was directing Mrs. Day how to prepare the medicine.

After the sick children had been cared for, and it was ascertained that Mr. and Mrs. Day, with one of her sisters, would remain at O'Neil's during the night, Dr. Houghton, with Mr. Melroy and our May, took leave. The drive home was performed in silence; and young parson Melroy, after conducting our May to her uncle's door, pressed her hand, with a whispered "God bless you!" and turned away.

In less than a twelvemonth from the death of poor Mrs. O'Neil, very ominous preparations were going forward in the family mansion of 'Squire Loomis. They were ended, at last, by the introduction of our May to the pretty parsonage; and, although years have sobered her but slightly, though her happy heart has still "too many causes for gratitude to admit of its learning the lesson of sadness," and she still prefers to do good privately, her husband's is far from being the only heart or the only tongue to pronounce the "God bless you!"

THE WEAVER.

A WEAVER sat before his loom,
 The shuttle flinging fast,
 And to his web a thread of doom
 Was added at each cast.

His warp had been by angels spun;
 Bright was his weft and new,
 Unbraided from life's morning sun,
 Gemmed with life's morning dew.

And fresh-lipped, beautiful young flowers
 In tissue rich were spread,
 While the weaver told the joy-spiced hours
 By his pulse's bounding tread.

But o'er his brow a shadow crept,
 And on the fabric lay;
 The shuttle faltered as it swept
 Along its darkened way.

Gray was the faded thread it bore,
 Dimmed by the touch of thought;
 And tear-like stains were sprinkled o'er
 The richest broideries wrought.

Still kept the weaver weaving on,
 Though he wove a texture gray,
 Its tissued brilliance all had gone,
 The gold threads cankered lay.

And still, with gathering mildew, grew
 Yet duller every thread,
 And mingled some of coal-black hue,
 And some of bloody red.

For things most strange were woven in,
Corroding griefs and fears,—
And broken was the web and thin,
And it dripped with briny tears.

He longed to fling his toil aside,
But knew 't would be a sin ;
So the ceaseless shuttle still he plied,
Those life-cords weaving in.

And as he wove, and wept, and wove,
Fair tempters, stealing nigh,
With glozing words, to win him strove,
But he turned away his eye ;

He turned his aching eye to heaven,
And wearily wove on,
Till life's last faltering cast was given,
The fabric strange was done.

He flung it round his shoulders bowed,
And o'er his grizzled head,
And gathering close his trailing shroud
Lay down among the dead.

And next I marked his robe's wide folds
As they swept the fields of air,
Bright as the arc the sunlight moulds,
As angel pinions fair.

And there inwrought was each bright flower,
As when at first it sprung ;
The fairy work of morning's hour
In morning freshness hung.

And where a tear had left its stain
A snow-white lily lay,
And the leaden tracery of pain
Linked many a jewel's ray.

Wherever Grief's meek breath had swept
 There dwelt a rich perfume,
And bathed in silvery moonlight slept
 The sable work of gloom.

And then I prayed :--the strange web done,
 To my frail fingers given,
Be Sorrow's stain the deepest one
 To mar my robe in heaven.

SAVE THE ERRING!

THERE was bustle in the little dressing-room of young Ella Lane; a dodging about of lights, a constant tramping of a fat, good-natured serving-maid, a flitting of curious, smiling little girls, and a disarranging of drapery and furniture, not very often occurring in this quiet, tasteful corner. An arch-looking miss of twelve was standing before a basket of flowers, selecting the choicest, and studying carefully their arrangement, with parted lips and eyes demurely downcast; as though thinking of the time when the little fairy watching so intently by her side, would perform the same service for her. On the bed lay a light, fleecy dress of white, with silver cords and clusters of silver leaves, and sashes of a pale blue, and others of a still paler pink, and here and there a little wreath of flowers, or a small bunch of marabouts — in short, ornaments enough to crush one person, had their weight been at all proportioned to their bulk. Immediately opposite a small pier-glass, sat a girl of seventeen, in half undress, her full, round arms shaded only by a fold of linen at the shoulder, and her eye resting very complacently on the little foot placed somewhat ostentatiously upon an ottoman before her. And, indeed, that foot was a very dainty-looking thing, in its close-fitting slipper, altogether unequalled by anything but the finely curved and tapered ankle so fully revealed above it. Immediately behind the chair of the young lady, stood a fair, mild-looking matron; her slender fingers carefully thridding the masses of hair mantling the ivory neck and shoulders of her eldest daughter, preparatory to platting it into those long braids so well calculated to display the contour of a fine head. There was a smile upon the mother's lip, not like that dimpling at the corners of the mouth of the little bouquet-maker, but a pleased, gratified smile, and yet half-shadowed over by

a strange anxiety, that she seemed striving to conceal from her happy children. Sometimes her fingers paused in their graceful employment, and her eye rested vacantly wherever it chanced to fall; and then, with an effort, the listlessness passed, and the smile came back, though manifestly tempered by some heaviness clinging to the heart.

At last the young girl was arrayed; each braid in its place and a wreath of purple buds falling behind the ear; her simple dress floating about her slight figure like an airy cloud every fold arranged by a mother's careful fingers; her white kid gloves drawn upon her hands, and fan, bouquet and kerchief, all in readiness. The large, warm shawl had been carefully laid upon her shoulders, the mother's kiss was on her bright cheek, and a "don't stay late, dear," in her ear she had shaken her fan at the saucy Nelly, and pinched the cheek of Rosa, and was now toying with little Susy's fingers, when the head of the serving-maid was again thrust in at the door, to hasten the arrangements. Ella tripped gaily down stairs, but when she reached the bottom, she paused.

"I am sorry to go without you, mamma."

"I am sorry that you must, dear; but I hope you will find it very pleasant."

"It will be pleasant, I have no doubt; but, mamma, I am afraid that you are not quite well, or, perhaps," she whispered, "you have something to trouble you; if so, I should like very much to stay with you."

"No, dear; I am well, quite well, and—" Mrs. Lane did not say *happy*, for the falsehood died on her lip; but she smiled so cheerily, and her eye looked so clear and bright as it met her daughter's, that Ella took it for a negative.

"Ah! I see how it is, mamma; you are afraid my new frock is prettier than any of yours; and you don't mean to be outshone by little people. Do you know, I shall tell Mrs. Witman all about it?"

"I will let you tell anything that you choose, so that you do not show too much vanity; but don't stay late. Good night, darling."

“ Good-night, till sleeping-time, mamma.” And, with a light laugh, Ella Lane left her mother’s side and sprang into the carriage.

When Mrs. Lane turned from the door, the smile had entirely disappeared, and an expression of anxious solicitude occupied its place. While the joyous children went bounding on before her, she paused beneath the hall lamp, and pulling a scrap of paper from her bosom, read —

“ Do not go out to-night, dear mother ; I *must* see you. HE will not come in before eleven — I will be with you at ten.”

It was written in a hurried, irregular hand, and was without signature ; but it needed none.

“ My poor, poor boy ! ” murmured the now almost weeping mother, as she crushed the paper in her hand and laid it back upon her heart. “ It may be wrong to deceive HIM so : but how can a mother refuse to see the son she has carried in her arms and nursed upon her bosom ? Poor Robert ! ”

Ay, poor Robert, indeed ! the only son of one of the proudest and wealthiest citizens of New York, and yet without a shelter for his head !

Mr. Lane had lived a bachelor until the age of forty-two, when he married a beautiful girl of eighteen ; the mother whom we have already introduced to our readers. She was gentle and complying ; hence, the rigid sternness of his character, which so many years of loneliness had by no means tended to soften, seldom had an opportunity to exhibit itself. But the iron was all there, though buried for a time in the flowers which love had nursed into bloom above it. The eldest of their children was a boy ; a frank, heartsome, merry fellow — a lamb to those who would condescend to lead him by love ; but exhibiting, even in infancy, an indomitable will, that occasioned the young mother many an anxious foreboding. But as the boy grew toward manhood, a new and deeper cause for anxiety began to appear. To Robert’s gayety were added other qualities that made him a fascinating companion ; his society was constantly sought, first by the families in

which his parents were on terms of intimacy, and then by others, and still others, till Mrs. Lane began to tremble lest among her son's associates might be found some of exceptionable character. By degrees he spent fewer evenings at home, went out with her less frequently, and accounted for his absence less satisfactorily. Then she spoke to him upon the subject, and received his assurance that all was well, that she need not be troubled about his falling into bad company.

But she *was* troubled.

There was at evening a wild sparkle in the boy's eye, and an unnatural glow upon his cheek, that told of unhealthy excitement; but in the morning it was all gone, and his gaiety, sometimes his cheerfulness, fled with it. Oh! what sickness of heart can compare with that indefinable fear, that foreshadowing of evil, which will sometimes creep in between our trust and our love; while we dare not show to the object of it, much less to others, anything but a smiling lip and a serene brow. Mrs. Lane was anxious, but she confined her anxiety to her own bosom; not even whispering it to her husband, lest he should ridicule it on the one hand, or, on the other, exercise a severity which should lead to a collision. But matters grew worse and worse constantly; Robert was now seldom home till late at night, and then he came heated and flurried, and hastened away to bed, as though his mother's loving eye were a monitor he could not meet. She sought opportunities to warn him, as she had formerly done, but he feared and evaded them; and so several more weeks passed by—weeks of more importance than many a life-time. Finally Mrs. Lane became seriously alarmed, and consulted her husband.

“I have business with you to-night, Robert,” said Mr. Lane, pointedly, as the boy was going out after dinner, “and will see you in the library at nine o'clock.”

“I—I—have—an engagement, sir. If some other hour—”

“No other hour will do. You have no engagement that will be allowed to interfere with those I make for you.”

Robert was about to answer — perhaps angrily — when he caught a glimpse of his mother. Her face was of an ashy hue, and a large tear was trembling in her eye. He turned hastily away and hurried along the hall; but before he reached the street door, her hand was upon his arm, and she whispered in his ear, “Meet your father at nine, as he has bidden you, Robert; and do not — for my sake, for your mother’s sake, dear Robert — do not say anything to exasperate him.”

“Do not fear, mother,” he answered, in a subdued tone; then, as the door closed behind him, he muttered, “he will be exasperated enough with little saying, if his business is what I suspect. What a fool I have been — mad — mad! I wish I had told him at first, without waiting to be driven to it; but now — well, I will make one more attempt — desperate it must be — and then, if the worst comes, he will only punish *me*; that I can bear patiently, for I deserve it; but it would kill my poor mother — oh! he *must not* tell her!”

Mrs. Lane started nervously at every ring of the door-bell that evening; and when at nine she heard it, she could not forbear stepping into the hall to see who was admitted. It was her husband; and only waiting to inquire of the girl if Mr. Robert had yet come in, he passed on to the library. Mrs. Lane found it more difficult than ever to sustain conversation; she became abstracted, nervous; and when, at last, her few evening visitors departed, she was so manifestly relieved, that Ella inquired, in surprise, if anything had been said or done to annoy her. It was past ten, and Robert had not yet appeared. Finally the bell was pulled violently, and she hastened to the door herself. With livid lip and blood-shot eye, her son stepped to the threshold; and, starting at sight of her, he hurried away to the library, without giving her another glance. How slowly passed the moments to the waiting mother! How she longed to catch but a tone of those voices, both so loved; that she might know whether they sounded in confidence or anger! What Robert’s course had been she could not guess; but she knew that he would be

required to give a strict account of himself; and she dreaded the effect of her husband's well-known severity. A few minutes passed, (they seemed an age to her,) and then she heard the door of the library thrown open; and, a moment after, a quick, light step sounded upon the stairs. It was Robert's.

"You are not going out again, my son?" she inquired.

"Father will tell you why I go, dear mother," said the boy, pausing, and pressing her hand affectionately. "I must not wait to answer questions now." He passed on till he reached the door, then turning back, whispered, "Be at Mrs. Hinman's to-morrow evening, mother," and before she had time to ask a question or utter an exclamation of surprise, he had disappeared up the street.

But poor Mrs. Lane was soon made acquainted with the truth. Mr. Lane was somewhat vexed with himself for not perceiving his son's tendency to error before; and, like many another, he seemed resolved to make up in decision what he had lost by blindness. It was this which had occasioned his sharpness when he made the appointment, and he considered his dignity compromised when nine o'clock passed and his son seemed resolved on acting in open disobedience to his command. An hour's ruminating on the subject did not tend to soften his feelings; and when, at last, the-culprit appeared, he was in a mood for anything but mercy. He demanded peremptorily a full confession; and Robert gave it. He did not color, soften, nor extenuate; but boldly—too boldly, perhaps—declaring that he scorned falsehood, he told the whole. He had fallen into gay society, then into vicious; and he was not the one to occupy a minor position anywhere. Wit and wine seduced him; and in an evil hour he sat down to the gaming-table. He had played at first for a trivial stake, then more deeply, and to-night, in the hope of retrieving his bad fortune, he had plunged in almost past extrication. At any time Mr. Lane would have been shocked; now he was exasperated, and spoke bitterly. At first Robert did not retort, for he had come in resolved on confession and reformation; but finally repentance was drowned in anger, and he answered

as a son, particularly an erring son, should not. Then a few more words ensued, unreasonable on both sides; Mr. Lane asserting that debts so contracted were dishonest ones, and should not be paid; and Robert declaring that they *should* be paid, if he gamed his lifelong to win the money; till, finally, the old man's rage became uncontrollable. It was in obedience to his father's command that Robert left his home that night, with the order never to cross the threshold again.

For two or three weeks, Mrs. Lane, now and then, of an evening, met her son at the houses of her friends; and then he disappeared almost entirely. While she could meet him, and speak a few words, even in a gay party, and perceive that he regarded her with as much affection as ever, she continued strong in the hope of final reformation and reconciliation; but when, evening after evening, she carried a hoping heart abroad, and dragged home a disappointed one, imagination busied itself with a thousand horrors. Her first-born, her only son, the darling of her young heart, her pride in the first years of wedded life, he whom she had loved so fondly, and cherished so tenderly—to what vice, what suffering, might not he be exposed! Then she had no confidant, no friend to sympathize with or encourage her. Since the first disclosure, she had never mentioned Robert's name to her husband, and Ella knew only that some angry words had estranged her father and brother for a time; she was enviably ignorant of Robert's guilt and danger.

The evening on which our story commences, Mrs. Lane had intended to spend abroad with her daughter; but had been prevented by the receipt of the note above mentioned. Robert had never been home since he was commanded to leave it; and though anxious both about the cause and result, she could not but be rejoiced at the thought of seeing him again in her own private sitting-room. She had many things, too, to learn. She wished to know where he lived, how he supported himself, and what were his intentions for the future. And she wished to expostulate with and advise him;—in

short, her mother's heart told her that everything could be done in that one evening.

While Mrs. Lane walked up and down her little sitting-room, wishing that ten o'clock would come, her son entered his small, scantily furnished apartment in a decent boarding-house, and throwing himself upon the only chair within it, he covered his face with his hands. For a long time he sat in this position; then he arose, and taking down a pocket-pistol, examined it carefully, primed it, and laid it beneath his pillow. Immediately, however, he took it out, charged it heavily, and laying it on the table, folded his arms and gazed upon it, muttering, "It may be needed when I least expect it. I have one friend, at least, while this is by." After pacing two or three times across the narrow space between his bed-head and the little window at the foot, he opened the door of a small closet, and taking thence a cloak and muffler, carefully adjusted them; then slouching a broad-brimmed hat over his eyes, he hurried down the stairs into the street. Two or three times Robert Lane paused and reasoned with himself, before he reached his father's door; and even when his hand was extended to the bell-knob, he hesitated.

"I must see her, at any risk," he at last exclaimed, pulling lightly upon the cord.

The girl started when she opened the door, but gave no other token of recognition. Robert inquired for Mrs. Lane; and following after the girl, found himself in the back sitting-room, remembered but too, too fondly for his composure. As soon as the door closed behind him, he cast off his mufflings, and throwing himself upon a little ottoman at his mother's feet, leaned his forehead on her knees.

"Is it any new trouble, Robert?" she inquired, tenderly, and laying her hand gently on his head, "any new — *guilt*?" she whispered, bending her lips close to his ear, and placing the other arm over his neck.

"Tell your mother, Robert — tell her everything — she may help you — she will — oh, Robert! you know she will love you, and cling to you through it all!"

The boy raised his head, and now she saw, for the first time, the change that had come over him. His face was haggard, his eye sunk and bloodshot, that round, rosy cheek, which her lip had loved to meet, had grown pale and thin, and, in place of the gay, careless smile, had risen looks of anxiety and bitterness.

"I shall break your heart, mother," he said, sorrowfully, "and poor little Ella's, too. Oh! it is a dreadful thing to murder those one loves best. I never meant to do it—try to believe that, dear mother, whatever comes."

"I do believe it, Robert."

"Ah! you know only a small part yet; but I could not go away without seeing and telling you. I knew you would learn it from others, and I wanted to hear you say you could love me after all. I knew you would, but I wanted to hear you *say* it."

"I will, Robert, I will; but surely you have nothing worse to tell than I know already!"

The boy looked down; his lip quivered, and the large purple veins upon his forehead worked themselves into knots, and rose and fell as though ready to burst at every throb.

She passed her hand soothingly over them.

"Whatever it is, Robert, you are not before a harsh judge now. Tell it to your mother, my darling boy; perhaps she can assist, advise—she certainly can *love* you through all."

"Oh, mother! you must not speak so, or I can never tell you. If you talk like this—if you do not blame me, I shall almost wish I had gone away without seeing you. Oh! if I had only listened to you six months ago! but they flattered me, and I was foolish, I was wicked. But I thought of you all the time, mother—of you and Ella—and I promised myself, every night when I went to my pillow, that I would break away from the things that were entangling me, and become all that you desired. I was not conscious then of doing anything decidedly wrong; but I knew that my companions were not such as you would approve, and I knew—I could but know—that I was too much intoxicated by their

flatteries. At last I resorted to cards; I played very cautiously at first, and only to do as others did, then for larger sums, and again still larger; till finally it became my sole object to recover the moneys I had lost, and thus prevent the necessity of applying to my father for more. I still lost, and still went on, till finally the discovery, which, I believe, dear mother, all in kindness, you brought about, was made. Perhaps I was in the wrong, but, mother, it *did* seem to me dishonorable to refuse to pay those debts which —”

“Your father was angry, or he would not have refused. You tried his patience, Robert, and then, I fear, you were more bold than conciliatory.”

“I made one more attempt to better my fortunes that evening, and the time passed before I was aware of it; I promised — I told *them* — those scoffers, mother — that it was my last evening among them; I promised myself so, and repeated it to my father; and I would have kept my promise — *I would*. But you know how it turned. Then I was desperate.”

Mrs. Lane trembled, and passed her arm caressingly about his neck, as though to reässure him. “I met you several times after that, Robert, and you did not seem so very unhappy.”

“I was determined to have the money, mother, and I got it.”

“How, Robert?”

“Not honestly.”

The boy's voice was low and husky; and his hand, as it closed over his mother's while his forehead again rested on her knees, was of a death-like chilliness.

A faintness came over her, a horrid feeling went curdling round her heart, and she felt as though her breath was going away from her. But the cold hand was freezing about hers, the throbbing forehead rested on her knees, and every sob, as it burst forth uncontrolledly, fell like a crushing weight upon her bosom. It was the mother's pitying heart, that, subduing its own emotions, enabled her again to articulate, though in a low whisper, “*How, Robert?*”

“By forgery. No matter for the particulars — I could not

tell them now, and you could not hear. To-morrow all will be discovered, and I must escape. Such fear, such agony — oh, mother! what have I not endured? No punishment men can inflict will ever be half so heavy. I deserve it, though — all, and ten thousand times more. But I never meant it should come to this, mother; believe me, I never did. I meant to pay it before now, and I thought I could. I have won some money, but not half — scarce a tithe of what I ought to have, so there is nothing left but flight and disgrace. You do not answer me, mother; I knew I should break your heart, I knew —”

Mrs. Lane made a strong effort, and murmured brokenly, “To-morrow — to-morrow! Oh! my poor, ruined boy!”

“I know that after deeds cannot compensate, mother; but if a life of rectitude, if —” Robert paused suddenly and started to his feet. “I know that step, mother!”

“Hush, my son, hush!” Mrs. Lane had time for no more before her husband entered the apartment. A cloud instantly overspread his countenance.

“You here, sirrah! What business brings you to the home you have desecrated?”

“I came to see my mother, sir.”

“Nay,” interposed the lady, anticipating the storm that seemed gathering on her husband’s brow, “let the fault be mine. He is my own child, and I *must* see him — a little while — you cannot refuse to leave me a little while with my own boy.”

“It is the last time, then,” said Mr. Lane, sternly.

“The last time!” echoed Robert, in a tone of mocking bitterness.

“The last time!” whispered the white lips of the mother, as though she had but that moment comprehended it; and, as the door closed upon the retreating form of her husband, she slid to the floor, lightly and unresistingly. Robert did not attempt to call for assistance; but he raised her head to his bosom, and covered her pale face with his boyish tears.

“I have killed her! my poor, poor mother!” he sobbed.

“That *I* should be such a wretch! *I!* *her* son!—with all her care and with all her love! Oh! if they had but given me a coffin for a cradle! A grave *then* would have been a blessed thing; but it is too late now, too late!”

Mrs. Lane was awakened by the warm tears raining upon her face; and, starting up wildly, she entreated him to be gone. “Every moment is precious!” she exclaimed, gaspingly. “You may not make your escape if you do not go now. Oh, Robert! promise me—on your knees, before your mother, and in the sight of your God, promise, my poor boy, that you *will* forsake the ways of vice, that you *will* become an honorable and a useful man—promise this, Robert, and then go! Your mother, who has gloried, who has doted on you, entreats you to be gone from her forever!”

“I cannot go to-night, mother. I waited to see you, and so lost the opportunity; but there is no danger. It is too late to take a boat now. I shall go to some of the landings above when I leave here, and in the morning go aboard the first boat that passes.”

Again the mother required the promise of reformation; and it was given earnestly and solemnly. Then he again sat down on the ottoman at her feet; and, with one hand laid lovingly upon his head, and the other clasped in both of his, she spent an hour in soothing, counselling, and admonishing him. So deeply were both engaged, that neither the merry voice of Ella in the door-way, nor her step along the hall, reached them.

“Has my mother retired?” was her first inquiry.

“No, miss; she is in the back sitting-room,” and before the girl could add that she was engaged with a stranger, Ella had bounded to the door, and flung it wide open.

“Robert!—*you* here, Robert! If I had only known it, I should have been home long ago. So you are sorry you quarrelled with papa, and you have come back to be a good boy, and go out with me when I want a nice beau, and all that! Well, it *does* look natural to see you here.”

As the young girl spoke she cast hood and shawl upon the

floor; and, with one bared arm thrown carelessly over her brother's shoulder, she crouched at her mother's feet, looking into her eyes with an expression which seemed to say, "Now tell me all about it. You must have had strange doings this evening."

But neither Mrs. Lane nor Robert spoke. The boy only strained his sister convulsively to his heart; while the poor mother covered her own face with her hands to hide the tears, which, nevertheless, found their way between her jewelled fingers.

The eyes of the fair girl turned from one to another in amazement; then, pressing her lips to the cheek of her brother, she whispered,

"What is it, Robin? Has papa refused to let you come back? I will ask him; I will tell him you must come, and then you will, for he never refused me anything. Don't cry, mamma; I will go up stairs now, and have it settled. Papa cannot say no to me, of course, for I have on the very dress he selected himself, and he said I should be irresistible in it. I will remind him of that."

"Alas! my poor Ella!" sobbed Mrs. Lane, "this trouble is too great for you to settle. Our Robert has come home now for the last time — we part from him to-night forever."

"Forever!" and Ella's cheek turned as pale as the white glove which she raised to push back the curls from her forehead.

"Yes, *forever*," answered Robert, calmly, "I will tell you all about it, Ella. You seem not to know that it was something worse than a quarrel which lost me my home. I had contracted debts — improperly, wickedly — and my father refused to pay them. I obtained the money for the purpose, and now, Ella, I must escape or — or —"

"How did you get the money, Robert?"

The boy answered in a whisper.

"You!" exclaimed Ella, springing to her feet and speaking almost scornfully; "you, Robert Lane! *my* brother! Is it so, mamma? is my brother a villain, a forger, is he —"

“Hush, Ella, hush!” interrupted Mrs. Lane. “It is for those who have hard hearts to condemn — not for thee, my daughter. There will be insults enough heaped upon his poor head to-morrow — let him at least have love and pity here.”

“Pity! Whom did he pity or love when he deliberately—”

“Ella! Ella!” again interposed Mrs. Lane, almost sternly.

“Nay, mother,” said the boy, in a tone of touching mournfulness, “do not blame poor Ella. She does right to despise me. I have outraged her feelings, and disgraced her name. *She* deserves pity, and she will need it, when people point at her and say what her brother is. *I* have forfeited all claim even to that. Oh, mother! why did you not let me die in that last sickness? it would have saved a world of woe.”

Ella stood for a moment, her head erect, and her lip white and tremulous, while tears came crowding to her eyes, and her face worked with emotion; the next she threw herself into the arms of her brother.

“Forgive me, Robin! my own dear, darling brother! I *do* pity you! I *do* love you, and will forever! But, oh! it is a horrible thing to be a forger’s sister! I cannot forget that Robert, and I *must* say it, if it break your heart to hear me it is horrible! horrible!”

“It *is* horrible, Ella; I never thought to bring it upon you but —”

“Why are you here, Robert? Will they not find you, and drag you — oh, mamma! where shall we hide him? — what *can* we do?”

It was several minutes before Ella could be made to comprehend the absence of immediate danger; and then she insisted on hearing all the particulars of the crime, even though poor Robert appeared to be on the rack while giving them. She loved her brother dearly, and was distressed for him; but she thought too of herself, and the disgrace of her family; hers was not a mother’s meek, affectionate heart; a mother’s all-enduring, self-sacrificing nature. At last she started up eagerly.

“The disgrace may be avoided; papa will of course shield his own name; I will go to him directly.”

“But the sin, my child, the conscious degradation?” inquired Mrs. Lane, with reproof in her mild eye. “What will you do with that, Ella?”

“Poor Robert!” whispered the girl, again folding her white arms about him; “he is sorry for what he has done; and our kind Heavenly Father is more ready to forgive than we. You will never do such a wicked thing again, dear Robin, will you?”

Robert answered only by convulsive sobs, and Ella, too, sobbed for a few moments in company; then, suddenly breaking away from him, she hurried up the stairs. Along the hall she went, as fast as her trembling feet could carry her, and past the room in which she had been so happy while willing hands decorated her pretty person; but when she reached her father's door, she paused in dread. She could hear his heavy, monotonous tramp as he walked up and down the room; and, remembering his almost repulsive sternness, she dreaded meeting him. “If I had only known it before,” thought Ella, “all might have been avoided; but now it is almost too much to ask.” A fresh burst of tears had no tendency to calm her; and she could scarce support her trembling frame, when, repeating to herself, “he *must* be saved!” she gathered courage to open the door. The old man paused in his promenade, and fixed his troubled eye sternly on the intruder, while Ella rushed forward, and, twining her arms about him, buried her face in his bosom.

“Oh! I am *so* wretched!” she exclaimed, all her courage forsaking her on the instant; and then she sobbed, as Mr. Lane had never supposed *his* daughter could. But he did not attempt to quiet her; he only drew her closer to him, as though he would thus have shielded her from the wretchedness that was bursting her young heart. At last Ella broke forth, “Come down and see Robert, papa; come and save him. They will drag him away to prison for forgery, and you will be the father of a condemned criminal, and I his

sister. Oh! do not let him go away from us so, papa — come down and see him, and you *will* pity him — you cannot help it.”

“Forgery, Ella! he has not —”

“*He has!* and you must save him, papa, for your own sake for all our sakes.”

“Do you *know* this, Ella? It is not true — it is a miserable subterfuge to wheedle money from his mother — money to squander among the vile wretches whom he has preferred to us. No, send him back to his dissolute —”

“Is that the way to make him better, papa?” inquired Ella, raising her head and fixing her sparkling eye upon him resolutely. “You sent him back to them before; you shut him away from yourself and from mamma — you closed the door upon my only brother — there was none by to say, ‘take care, Robin,’ none to give him a smile but those who were leading him to ruin; and no wonder that they have made him what he is. Be careful, papa. Robert has committed a crime, a dreadful crime; but it was when *you*, who *should* have prevented it, had shut your heart against him, when we, who *might* have prevented it, were obliged to go abroad to see him, and then could give him no more than a few stolen words. It was not just to keep me in ignorance so long, for he is my own brother, and only one little year older than I; but I know all about it now, and if Robert is put in prison, I had almost as lief be in his place as yours.”

“Ella! Ella!”

“I should, papa. I know that one like you cannot do wrong without feeling remorse; and when you reflect that poor Robert might have been saved, if you had only had more patience with him, you will never sleep peacefully again.”

“Ella, my child,” said the old man, cowering in spite of himself, “what has come over you? Who has set you up to talk in this way to your father? I suppose I am to be answerable for this impertinence, too.”

“Oh, papa! you know this is not impertinence. I have a right to say it, for the love I bear my only brother; you know

that my own heart is all which has set me up to it, and your heart, dear papa, is saying the same thing. You *must* forgive Robert, and you *must* save him and us the disgrace of an exposure."

"I will avert the disgrace while I have the power, Ella, but that will not be long, if he goes on at this rate. Do you know the amount of money he asks?"

"He asks none — I ask for him the sum that you refused before."

"Ah! he has gained the victory, then. Well, tell him to enjoy his villanous triumph. Give him that, and say to him, that if he has any decency left he will drop a name which has never been stained but by him, and leave us to the little peace we may glean, after he has trampled our best feelings under foot."

"Thank you, papa; and may I not tell him you forgive him?"

"No!"

"That you pity him?"

"No!"

"May I not say that when he is reformed he may come back to us, and be received with open arms and hearts?"

"Say nothing but what I bid you, and go!"

Ella turned away with a sigh. She had scarcely closed the door when a deep, heavy groan broke upon her ear, and she paused. Another and another followed, so heart-rending, so agonized, that she grew faint with fear. For a moment her hand trembled upon the latch; and then she raised it, and, gliding up to her father, folded her arms about him, and pressed her lips to his.

"Forgive me, dear papa, forgive your own Ella her first unkind words. I was thinking only of poor Robert, and did not well know what I said. I am sorry — very sorry — cannot you forgive me, papa?"

"Yes, child, yes. Good-night, darling! — there, go!"

"And Robert?"

No answer.

“ You will feel better if you see him, papa.”

“ Go! go!”

Again Ella turned from the door and hurried down the stairs. Still the boy sat with his face in his mother's lap, and his arms twined about her waist. Both started at sight of her slight figure, dressed, as it was, for a different scene from this. The pale, anxious face, looking out from the rich masses of curls now disarranged and half drawn back behind her ear, appeared as though long years had passed over it in that one half hour. Poor Ella! it was a fearful ordeal for glad, buoyant seventeen.

“ There is the money, Robert,” she said, flinging the purse upon the table, “ and now you must go back with me and say to our father that you are sorry you have made him miserable.”

“ He will turn me from the door, Ella.”

“ And do you not deserve it?”

“ Ella!” interposed the tender mother.

“ I do; that and more. But perhaps he will think I come to mock him.”

“ Your manner and words will tell him for what you come. You have very nearly killed our poor father, Robert. I have seen his grey hairs to-night almost as low as the grave will lay them. I have seen him in such agony as none of us are capable of enduring. You ought to go to him, Robert—go on your knees, and, whatever he says to you, you will have no right to complain.”

Ella, child! Ella!” exclaimed Mrs. Lane. “ You have too much of your father's spirit—that is, too much for a woman. Beware how you ‘break the bruised reed.’”

“ Ella is right, mother,” said the boy, rising. “ I will go to him—I will tell him how wretched I have made myself; how I wish that I could take the whole load of wretchedness, and relieve those I love. I will promise him to look out some humble corner of the earth and hide myself in it, away from his sight forever. Perhaps he will bid me earn his confidence by years of rectitude—*perhaps* he will, but, if he does not,

Ella is right — whatever he says to me, if he curse me, I shall have no right to complain.”

“But *I* will complain, Robin!” exclaimed the girl, with a fresh burst of tears; “and wherever you go, I will go with you. Poor, dear papa! But he shall not separate us — we, who have sat upon his knee at the same time — his own darling children! I will never stay here while you are without a home, Robin.”

The excited girl clasped both hands over her brother’s arm and led the way up stairs; while the trembling mother followed, praying in her heart that the interview might terminate more favorably than her fears promised.

When they entered Mr. Lane’s room, the old man sat in his armed chair, leaning over a table, and resting his forehead upon his clasped hands. Books were scattered around, but they had evidently not been used that evening; there was a glass of water standing beside him, and his neck-cloth was loosened as though from faintness. Had his hair become greyer, and his vigorous frame bended within a few days? It certainly seemed so; and the heart of the erring boy was stricken at the sight. The sorrow that he had brought upon his mother and sister had been duly weighed; but his stern father had never been reckoned among the sufferers.

A loud, convulsive sob burst from his bosom, and he threw himself, without a word, at the old man’s feet. The mother drew near and joined her son; meanwhile, raising her pale face pleadingly to her husband’s; and Ella, first kissing her father’s hand, and bathing it with a shower of warm tears placed it on Robert’s head.

“You forgive him, papa — you forgive poor Robin? He shall never act wickedly again; and he is your only son.”

The old man strove to speak, but the words died in his throat; again he made a strong effort, but emotion overmastered him; and, sliding from his chair into the midst of the group, he extended his arms, enclosing all of them, and, bowing his head to the shoulder of his son, wept aloud.

“Stay with us, Robert!” he at last said; “we can none of

us live without you. Stay, and make yourself worthy of the love that forgives so much !”

Men never knew by what a very hair had once hung Robert Lane's welfare ; that a mere breath alone had stood between him and ignominy. Years after, when he was an honored and respected citizen, adorning his brilliant talents by virtues as rare as they were ennobling, no one knew why he should turn ever to the erring with encouraging words. The key-stone of his generous forbearance was buried in the hearts of three, and they all loved him. It was buried ; but yet a white-haired old man, who watched his course with an eagle-eye, and followed his footsteps dotingly, receiving always the most refined and deferential attention, might often have been heard muttering to himself, with proud and wondering affection, “ ‘ This my son was dead and is alive again ; he was lost and is found.’ ”

MY UNCLE STILLING.

"I WOULD N'T take the liberty to say it, but that I like you, Doctor," said Squire Boulter to my Uncle Stilling, "I would n't say it, but that I like you; but, really, to see a man of your talent wasting life in this way is enough to make the very stones cry out."

"I am never idle, Squire."

"Perhaps not; but you do such useless things, and so much for other people. A man ought to think a little of his own flesh and blood, now and then."

"I look well to the wants of my family, I am sure."

Squire Boulter shook his head.

"They never go hungry."

"Oh, of course not."

"Nor cold."

"I have n't charged you with being an unfeeling man, Doctor; I know you provide for your family comfortably — comfortably in one sense — though I think something beside food and clothing necessary to comfort; but remember the 'rainy day' — the 'rainy day,' Doctor."

"That will be quite sufficient when it comes. 'The morrow will take thought for the things of itself,' says the Scripture; and I do not wish to hasten, by premature care, the evil day."

"Ah, but Doctor, that is the sluggard's creed."

"The text I have given you?"

"Your application of it. Just use a little common sense, sharpened by your own observation. Supposing you should be taken dangerously ill — say to-morrow?"

"I have plenty of medicine."

"And be for six months helpless?"

"Mistress Stilling is an admirable nurse; as I believe you have had occasion to know."

G E N I U S .

THERE is a melancholy pleasure in turning over the records of genius, and familiarizing ourselves with the secret workings of those minds that have, from time to time, made memorable the ages in which they lived, and ennobled the several nations which gave them birth. But it is not the indulgence of this feeling which makes such a study peculiarly profitable to us: from these records we may learn much of the philosophy of the human mind in its most luxurious developments. Genius seems to be confined to no soil, no government, no age or nation, and no rank in society. When men lived in wandering tribes, and could boast no literature, the bright flame burned among them, although wild and often deadly its ray; and the foot of oppression, which crushes all else, has failed to extinguish it. Hence it has rashly been inferred that this peculiar gift, possessed by the favored few, may be perfected without any exertion on their part, and is subject to none of the rules which in all other cases govern intellect; but that, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, it must burst forth when and where it will, and be burned up in the blaze of its own glory, leaving but the halo of its former brightness upon the historic page. This inference, however, is alike erroneous and dangerous. Though genius be an unsought gift, a peculiar emanation from the Divine Mind, it was not originally intended as a glorious curse, to crush the spirit which it elevates. Perchance the pent-up stream within the soul *must* find an avenue; but he who bears the gift may choose that avenue,—may direct, control and divert; he may scatter the living waters on a thousand objects, or pour their whole force upon one; he may calm and purify them, by this means rendering them none the less deep, or he may allow

them to dash and foam until, however they sparkle, the dark sediments of vice and misery thus made to mingle, may be found in every gem.

Let us turn to the oft-quoted names of Byron and Burns — names that can scarcely be mentioned by the admirers of genius without a thrill of pain. To the poor ploughman on the banks of the Doon was sent the glorious talisman, and with it he unlocked the portals of nature, and read truths even in the flower overturned by his ploughshare, unseen by common eyes. But mark his veering course; think of his (comparatively) wasted energies. He could love the wild flowers in the braes and the sunlight on the banks of his “bonny Doon;” he could, at least at one time, smile at his lowly lot; and he ever contended against fortune with a strong and fearless hand. But while the polished society of Edinburgh owned his power, and he swayed the hearts of lads and lasses of his own degree at will, he could not control *himself*; and many of those light songs, which are now on gladsome lips, might, could we enter into the secrets of the poor bard, be but the sad way-marks of the aching heart, as it grew each day heavier till it sank into the grave. Burns, the light-hearted lover of his “Highland Mary,” and Burns, the care-worn exciseman, were very different persons; but neither outward circumstances nor the genius that characterized both alike, was the cause. The world has been blamed in his case; but the world, after it first noticed, could have done nothing to save. The poet, had he known his moral strength and cared to exert it, could have saved himself, as his superiority to many of the foibles and prejudices of human nature and his manly independence on many occasions evinced.

Byron, like his own archangel ruined guiding a fallen son of clay in his search after mysteries, has delved among hidden treasures and spread before us the richest gems of Helicon; but scarce one of these but is dark in its glory, and, although burning with all the fire of heaven-born poesy, sends forth a mingled and dangerous ray. But had a mother whispered her pious counsels in his ear in boyhood; had a friendly finger

“To poor Miller?”

“To *you*.”

“Well, he wants the farm, and I don’t.”

“You might get a tenant; and the profits, without any trouble to yourself, would take Harry through college.”

“And Miller?”

“He must look out for himself. Every man for himself, and success to the sharpest.”

“Success to the truest and the neediest, say I.”

“Well, with your two boys, I don’t see but you need the farm about as much as Miller; and though, to be sure, you don’t like to be praised, I wonder where’s the neighbor who would speak his name in the same day with yours, for goodness.”

“I should be a villain, though, to deprive him of his rights.”

“Well, that depends upon the way you view the matter.”

“There is but one way I should care to view it—a straightforward, honest way.”

“I hope you don’t think I would recommend anything dishonest, Doctor?”

“Um! there are different notions about things.”

“And your notions, let me tell you, are not business notions, at all.”

“But they would lead me to do as I would be done by.”

“Now, in this case, your squeamishness really leads you to do a wrong to your children. Miller’s farm is in fact your own property. You have the law on your side, and if you should carry your account into any court of justice—”

“Then I will go home and burn my accounts. God forbid that I should keep anything under my roof possessing the power to deprive an unfortunate man of his just rights.”

“There are but few men like you, Doctor.”

“There are not many who would act differently in this case, I trust.”

“Ah, well-a-day! If the world were all so—but it is n’t— it is n’t, my dear Doctor; and such men as you fare hard in it.”

"Doctor Stilling is a fool," said Squire Boulter to his gay lady wife, about an hour afterwards.

"I have always thought so," was the quiet response.

"Mad! stark mad!"

"And yet you have worried me to death about calling on his dowdy wife, and —"

"They are strange people, I acknowledge it; and yet I can't help liking them. If he *would* exercise a little common sense!"

"If there is a man on earth whom I perfectly detest, Maggy, it is Squire Boulter," said my Uncle Stilling, settling himself comfortably in his leather-cushioned chair, with a volume of Seneca in his hand, and a pipe between his lips.

"Detest! Why, I thought that you and the Squire were great friends. You always stand up for him, I am sure, when I just happen to mention any of his faults."

"Ay, Maggy; the Squire is a good neighbor—a very good neighbor—I will say that for him, any day; and a kind man, too, he is—sometimes; but his knavish spirit I do detest."

"Then you do think he is knavish," said my aunt, her bright little black eyes twinkling with a rather naughty kind of satisfaction. "When I said it, the day Mrs. Boulter flourished her elegant new cashmere, you thought I went quite too far, and laid it all to envy."

"Ah, Maggy, dear! and did n't I name the cause aright? But I will give thee a better one now. If a sight of Madam Boulter's finery could stir thee up to say severe things of her husband, what wouldst thou think, Maggy, of an attempt to make me just such another unprincipled villain?"

My aunt seemed much less shocked at the mention of the diabolical scheme than her good lord had anticipated; her only reply being, "Pretty hard names for a neighbor to make use of, Walter Stilling."

"Ay, they are hard names, Maggy; and really I must learn to think more before I speak; but still I am not sure

that they are undeserved. We all have our faults though and—well—yes—I am glad you checked me, Maggy. The Squire may be no worse than the rest of us, after all.”

“He is a very grasping man, though.”

“Very.”

“What does he want you to do?”

“Collect all that my patients owe me.”

“A very sensible thing,” remarked my Aunt Stilling.

“Well, there are the Shepards—”

“Oh, the Shepards are poor—they can’t pay.”

“I might take the cow.”

“The cow! the cow! How came such a villanous idea as that to enter your head, Walter Stilling?”

“Squire Boulter put it there.”

“Oh! ah—yes, I dare say; that is the way his wife flourishes in so much finery, by distressing the poor. Thank Heaven, somebody that I could name, has n’t her conscience to keep her awake o’ nights.”

“Then I hope somebody that I could name, finds a comfortable woollen shawl a very comely thing, dear Maggy.”

“There are more people than the Shepards who owe you,” said my Aunt Stilling, emphatically.

“Yes, little Amelia Strong.”

“Pooh, Doctor! you are only making fun now. Squire Boulter himself would n’t be mean enough to take a friendless school-mistress’ wages away from her, because, poor thing, she chanced to fall sick.”

“She managed to swallow an immense quantity of my costliest kind of medicine.”

“Pooh!”

“And we had to get an extra help on her account.”

“Oh, Betsey Loud needed the wages, and I was glad to find work for her.”

“Then you fell sick watching over her, and had that long severe fever.”

“I might have had it any way. But I hope you don’t expect, Doctor, that poor Amelia Strong’s money can pay for my sickness.”

“ Well, then, there are the Lambs.”

“ Oh, darling little Effie died; all your medicine could n't save her, and they are broken-hearted about it.”

“ They are well able to pay.”

“ Yes, but somehow folks never think of paying you. I do wonder some at the Lambs, though. I should suppose they would say something about it — you were with them so night and day.”

“ I might send in my bill.”

“ I would n't do it, Doctor; no, no, better lose it a dozen times over. The poor child is dead, and never will cost money or trouble more. Let the Lambs pay, if they choose; but I never would ask them — never.”

“ Well, there are the Derbyshires.”

“ Ah, they have a hard enough task to get along, without our making it worse.”

“ And the Jilsons.”

“ A family of poor helpless women, all the time sick. We should be kind to the ‘ widows and fatherless,’ Walter.”

“ Then there are the Millers; I have heavy demands on them. I bought a couple of notes, to prevent some hard-hearted people from distressing them, when they were all down with the epidemic; and these, with my own bills, aided by a little politic manœuvring, give me such an advantage, that I might possess myself of a deed of their little farm, without difficulty.”

“ Ah, but you never had a thought of doing it, I am sure, Walter; and Kitty in a consumption, and Allan such a cripple? No, no; you never would touch the farm of the Millers, not you.”

“ Squire Boulter thinks I am a fool for not doing it.”

“ Squire Boulter is a scoundrel, then.”

“ Who uses hard names now, Maggy?”

“ He *is* a scoundrel; and his ill-gotten wealth will come to no good, I am sure. I would walk the streets barefoot, before I would flaunt out as Mrs. Boulter does.”

“ And your bare feet would look quite as well as her

French kid slippers on this muddy morning," said my Uncle Stilling, throwing a glance through the window, as the veritable lady was passing.

"Ah, yes! there she goes! See how she minces and —"

"Ah, Maggy, Maggy! think of that matter of a conscience thou hast mentioned. And after thou hast proved thyself the happier woman of the two, think how wicked it is to rail against the unfortunate."

"But her airs *are* provoking — as though her finery and grand house should set her up above her neighbors!"

"Do her airs make her more agreeable to her friends?"

"Oh, no!"

"To anybody?"

"No, indeed!"

"Then thou shouldst pity her, my good Maggy; for she labors very hard for nought."

"She has more enemies than any woman I know."

"Ah, then she is doubly unfortunate — enemies without and enemies within. Poor Mistress Boulter!"

"You would wish her great fiery eye anywhere but on you, if she should hear you say, 'Poor Mrs. Boulter!' It would be full enough of wrath to burn your eyelashes."

"Then she shall not hear me say it; but I will pity her, notwithstanding. Go we back to my bills, Maggy. What say you to the Remmingtons?"

"Pshaw! you are fooling, Doctor"

"And the Bells?"

"Our own cousins."

"Second cousins."

"Well, we will go to them when we have cooked our last potato."

"Bravo, Meg! you are almost a philosopher. I like to near you talk so bravely of the last potato. But here is one more family on my list — the Wilsons."

"Throw your old account-book into the fire, Doctor. I verily believe there is not a family in all Cedarville so able to pay as we are to lose it."

“Right, right, my girl! and not a family in all the state, in the whole country, happier than we in our plain, homely independence. Why, we always have enough; our house is better than a palace, since our doors are strong enough to shut contentment in; and then our brave beautiful boys—who so rich as we, Maggy?”

The sparkling eyes of my Aunt Stilling became strangely soft and dewy; and there was a grateful expression on her placid face, which convinced her husband that the demon of envy was expelled, at least for a season.

I think a jury of twelve honest, world-wise men, selected from any rank or class in the land, would have coincided with the opinion of Squire Boulter, that my Uncle Stilling was a great spendthrift of that inner wealth called talent. He was a wise man, and ingenious in many things, and deeply versed both in books and men; yet he never had made himself rich in this world's goods, and had now no higher honors than the hearts of all the people about Cedarville. My Uncle Stilling loved well enough the pleasant things that brighten men's pathways; but he loved honor and truth and kindness and goodness better. His heart warmed toward every human being; every man was his brother. The poor, a young brother whom he was bound to watch over, soothe, aid and protect. But my Uncle Stilling did not confine his kindness to any single class. The poor and unfortunate were more peculiarly his friends—these called forth all the deep-seated tenderness of his nature; but the rich, too, the gay and glad-some, had their share of the gentle, fresh-hearted old man's sympathy. The young were his companions; and not a child in all the country round but sprang to his arms as to those of a beloved parent.

My Uncle Stilling was not indolent, and yet he was usually considered a great time-waster. No matter how urgent his business or how great a matter was at stake if it concerned himself only, the sick claimed always his most assiduous attention. If his hand could best administer the cool-

ing draught, this was the nearest, the immediate duty ; if his kind voice had a soothing or cheering power, it belonged to his patients as much as his medicine did ; and the opposite scale, with the loss or gain of a few dollars thrown into it, kicked the beam. It would have done so with the estate of a millionaire. In truth, though all loved the good Doctor, and were scarce willing to believe he had a fault, there were many who used to say with Squire Boulter, that it was a great pity he should know so little of the worth of money. Sometimes my aunt thought it a pity, too ; for, though she shared deeply in his kindness of heart, she had but a small portion of his philosophical indifference to the fruits of an indulgence in it. The fine dress and fine furniture of her neighbors dazzled her benevolent eyes ; and she could scarce see why she must deny herself of luxuries which, according to universal consent, were within her reach. So my aunt would think the matter over, (a very dangerous practice, by the way, when the thinking is all on one side of the question,) and, as she thought, grow dignified, then stern, then awfully severe ; and, fully clad in such dark mental clouds, step into the presence of her good easy spouse to pour the concentrated storm on his devoted head. But my aunt was really a charitable personage ; and, though she wanted to "have her pie and eat it" both at once, though she wanted to "buy the hobby-horse and keep the money," she was always duly horrified at the idea of indulging her vanity at the expense of her benevolence. And very well did my Uncle Stilling know the love-moulded key which unlocked her sympathetic heart. When she began with a biting word, (known to be caustic only by the emphatically dignified "*Walter Stilling*,") she usually ended with a tear of sympathy for some sufferer, or a glow of gratitude on account of her own blessings.

My uncle had yet other ways of wasting his time than over his patients. He was a great naturalist ; not a shell or pebble escaped his notice ; not a plant could spring up in the field but my Uncle Stilling's eye watched it with a parental interest. The different bird-notes which made the woodland glad

were all as familiar to him as the voices of his children; he knew the little green blade which peeped earliest from the mould in the spring time, and the leaves which latest yielded to the kiss of the ice-lipped frost-spirit; and he knew the pattern and material of every little nest which was hidden away beneath the summer foliage. Whole days would he spend (waste, his neighbors said) wandering over field or woodland; returning at dew-fall with a fresh outlay of dew upon his own heart, and calling his little family about him to rejoice over the prize he had discovered. And *such* a prize! A handful of weeds — a pocket-handkerchief of mosses — a dozen petrifications — a forsaken bird's nest — all these were precious things in the eyes of my Uncle Stilling. Roger Acton's wondrous pot of money, even when the eager eyes of the half-crazed expectant first lighted on it, was incapable of producing such a joyous heart-bound as the discovery of a new floral treasure communicated to my good uncle. It was an electricity passing up through the mysteriously linked chain of God's works, from the beautiful in matter to the beautiful in spirit. My uncle's nature was like the woodland flower, with the dew and perfume as fresh upon it as when its unfolding petals first looked out upon the sunlight. And when the pure blooming counterpart was found, his feet moved almost as blithely as those of wild Harry himself; and Harry, and little Will, and pretty Susy, soon caught the infection; knowing first by my uncle's eyes, and afterwards by putting his own estimate on his treasures, when to be glad. As for my Aunt Stilling, she could not exactly see the use of bringing all these things in to litter up the house, but she did not really like to say as much; for, kind, gentle soul that she was, it did her heart good to see her husband and children happy. Not that it was a rare sight by any means; but my Aunt Stilling knew, by peeping into other houses what a comfortless guest she might introduce at her fire-side.

Still another way of wasting time had my Uncle Stilling. He knew very well that he was neither poet nor painter; but here was scarce a pretty eye in the country round that he

had not written verses to, and scarce a house but could show some specimen of his handiwork with the pencil. His verses praised the bright eye and the handsome lip right gallantly; but they always reminded the fair possessor of those charms of more enduring and still lovelier beauties. His verses were pure and vigorous, rich with good sense, though sometimes rather deficient in poetic fancies; and each bore to the particular individual which had called out the effusion an especial and pointed heart-lesson. Had any of his young friends been guilty of a wrong, my Uncle Stilling administered his gentle reproof in rhyme; and thus gilded over, the bitter pill, which might otherwise have been cast away, became quite palatable. His paintings were usually holyday presents. When Christmas came he was the Santa Claus of at least five square miles; and on New Year's day his capacious and well crammed saddle-bags were quite innocent of physic. Moreover, he knew the precise age of every young person in the neighborhood; and he never neglected to honor in his simple way the anniversary of a birth-day. His pictures were like his verses — illustrations of some every-day truth which young people are apt to forget; and always carefully adapted to the taste and character of those to whom they were presented. My uncle knew that there was now and then a person of his parish (Parson Adams was not half as much the shepherd of his flock as was the pious, simple-souled Doctor) who did not set a very high value on either his verses or his pictures, and for these he had other and more acceptable gifts. Bouquets of flowers, with a slip of paper around each, telling the language; books carefully marked by his pencil; and, on great occasions, glass cases of birds, stuffed and arranged by his own fingers. There is even now a singularly pure moral atmosphere pervading Cedarville; and it is not difficult to believe that the heart-warm breath of my Uncle Stilling still animates the natures which were early moulded by his simple, plain, but high-minded precepts, aided by acts quite as guileless and unselfish. Blessings on the single-hearted and the good! A high intellect is a gift from God — a pure heart is his dwelling place.

Twenty years had passed, not without leaving some traces; for however noiseless the tread of the grey-beard, his footsteps are always discernible on our frail sands. He had, however, trodden very lightly over Cedarville, and had been particularly gentle with my Uncle Stilling. The old man still lived in his little white cottage with the green blinds and latticed portico; and his good dame, as good and benevolent and careful of his comfort as ever, was still by his side. The grape-vine porch was rather more luxuriantly covered with the dark, rich foliage, but otherwise it looked the same as twenty years before. The white rose-bushes climbed to the eaves as they had done in former times; the lilacs bordered the path from the gate to the door-way; and the holly-hocks and purple mallows bloomed in neat rows along the garden patch. The squash-vines still crept about among the hills of sweet corn; the peas and beans budded and blossomed and yielded up their produce down by the meadow fence; the melon-patch had not moved an inch from its old place in the corner; and the long, narrow beds of beets, carrots, parsnips and onions, still exhibited their even, carefully weeded rows, in the foreground. Directly beneath my Aunt Stilling's window were the self-same treasures that had occupied that distinguished position twenty years previous — the sage, thyme, rue, camomile, worm-wood, celery, caraway, and various other trifles, cultivated by her own hand. The currant-bushes, too, were the same; and if those two cherry-trees adorning the grass-plot, where my aunt still spread her linen to bleach, were not the identical ones to which wild Harry owed so many tumbles in his babyhood, they were strangely like them. But wild Harry was now a man, with a frolicsome counterpart of himself to tumble from cherry-trees and keep grand-mama tremulous with alarms, which had gathered peculiar strength with the dignity of a new title. My Uncle Stilling was no richer than ever; but he was just as comfortable, and just as contented, and just as happy. His wishes with regard to his children were all gratified, and particularly so in the case of his darling Willy; who, according to universal con-

sent, was a "bright and shining light" in Cedarville. The young clergyman had taken the place of Parson Adams, on his demise; and his flock lost nothing by having the virtues of my Uncle Stilling — gentleness, simplicity, contentment, benevolence, trust and love — engrafted on the piety which looks to be of doubtful origin when these are kept in the background. If pride be a sin, then was my Uncle Stilling more sinful with his white hairs on than he had been in all his life before. He was proud, indeed, of his noble, high-minded, half-sainted boy. Did any one speak kindly of him — and that was an every-day thing — the old man's still sunny eyes began to draw up moisture from the heart; and words of warm praise were always rewarded by a gush of grateful tears. Every Sabbath, when he walked down the church aisle and saw the faces of the congregation kindling with love as they gathered around the sacred desk to greet their young pastor, his heart and eyes overflowed together, and he was wont to say in the words of one as guileless and as enthusiastic as himself, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." My Uncle Stilling was proud of his eldest son, too; but it was a different kind of pride. Harry had gone abroad from him and had made separate interests, (although the love-link between them was still stronger than in most hearts,) and won much applause among men. The old man was not indifferent to these honors, for he knew that they were the reward of his son's virtues; but he valued the virtues themselves much higher. The sight of Harry and his young wife and their beautiful children, (a snow-drop and an oak in miniature,) made my uncle's heart swell with proud softness; but it was on Willy that the more than womanly tenderness of his strangely gifted nature was lavished most unsparingly. Nor must sweet Susy be forgotten, for she was my Aunt Stilling's "staff and comfort." Susy could not, of course, be spared from the village, though the little white cottage was scarce grand enough for the wife of its greatest lawyer. So there was a handsome house built at the farther end of the garden; and when young Mrs. Eastman did not dine

with mamma Stilling, why, dear mamma must make one, and the good Doctor another, and darling brother Willy another, at the board of the lawyer's lady. Few men are so blessed in age as my Uncle Stilling, for very few have so spent their prime. He was now reaping the harvest that he had sown in other days, and it was truly a golden one to his heart.

Directly opposite the little white cottage was a large, showy mansion, erected by Squire Boulter when his coffers were fullest. The fine garden was now all overrun with weeds, and the pleasant summer-house had quite gone to decay. Only a few flowers of the most enduring kind remained, and they were fast yielding to the rank weeds. The choice fruit trees stood dead and blackened, their leafless limbs all covered with mould; and the shrubbery was broken down and neglected. A pitiful sight was that once handsome garden, and no less pitiful the neglected house. The wide gravel-walk leading to it had grown into a narrow foot-path; the shade-trees were unpruned, and long dead vines clung to their trunks and swung to and fro in the air; the marble door-stone was broken and mossed over on the outer edges; and the shutters above hung in shattered remnants, some on a single hinge. Here, all alone, dwelt Squire Boulter. His wife had long since gone to her final rest; and his son, whose future welfare had been the one engrossing thought of other days, had strangely repaid his care. Edmund Boulter had been the playmate of Harry Stilling, and was then esteemed a bright, active lad, who would, in all probability, take some decided part in the world, either for good or evil. Every indulgence of a certain character had been shown him in his childhood, but it was not the kind of indulgence which leaves a soft impress. Squire Boulter had believed that nothing could be done without money; and his son adopted a still more dangerous faith — no pleasure was worth enjoying that money did not purchase. The effect of this belief need not now be traced out; it requires but a look to the right or left to see it all; for Edmund Boulter's was no untrodden path.

He was an only child; and, of course, knew before he had counted a dozen summers, that he was heir to wealth considered in Cedarville immeasurable. And so, slowly and by degrees, as the years went by, came the old story of ruined intellect and ruined heart — a godlike image desecrated. By the time Edmund Boulter was a man, more tears had been shed over him than ever wetted the pillow of the dead; and he had become to the Squire a constant living heart-ache. And now the old man endeavored to teach, by severity, lessons which should have been melted into the pliant heart before selfishness had spread above it the impenetrable crust that now shut it firmly in. Alternate sternness and lavish indulgence only increased the evil; and finally, the unhappy father resolved to try a desperate experiment, and shake off his son entirely for the present.

“You are a strong, able-bodied man,” said Squire Boulter, “and you have a good profession; this,” putting a paper into his hand, “is all I shall give you. You are henceforth to depend entirely on your own resources.”

Edmund did not for a moment believe his father in earnest, so he accepted the check, laughingly, and launched out into new extravagances. But he soon learned his mistake. Then he pleaded and threatened by turns; but the old man was inexorable.

“After all that I have done for you!” he would say, bitterly. “If I had been the careless father that Doctor Stilling has, it might better be borne; but now —— out of my presence, ingrate!”

Edmund Boulter went away, and for years was not heard of, except perhaps by his father. What his life was during this time may be guessed; for the old man’s eye grew every day heavier, and the furrows in his cheek deeper; but he did not relent.

Early one bright morning, just as the first heaven-messengers were giving their color to the gems which clustered about every leaf and grass-blade, my Uncle Stilling sat by the win-

dow, carefully conning a book which had been brought home the evening before by his darling Willy. As he raised his eyes from the page, they fell upon something without, which at once riveted his attention. He looked earnestly for a while; pulled off his spectacles, and then looked again; took another pair from his pocket, carefully wiped the glasses; adjusted them as carefully, and then leaned out of the window with unusual interest. Suddenly his head was drawn back.

“Maggy! Maggy!” My uncle’s cheek was pale, and his voice husky. “Maggy!—quick!—here!”

My aunt came — an old, old woman, quite gray, a wrinkle on her forehead, the most placid of smiles on her lip, her form slightly bended, but with the step of a girl.

“What is that, Maggy?”

“Where?”

“There, in — in —”

“I don’t see.”

“Bless your heart! in the Squire’s yard, on — on the big horse-chestnut.”

My aunt looked a moment, and a strange, alarmed expression came over her face.

“What is it, Maggy?”

“I — I don’t — know, Walter.”

The words were gasped out rather than spoken.

“Do you think — there, don’t be frightened — don’t be frightened, child — perhaps — perhaps it’s nothing. I’ll just step over —”

“No, no, Walter! you’re an old man — let Willy go — such sights —”

My aunt was interrupted by a violent ringing at the door, and a cry of alarm from the street.

No, no! Such sights were not befitting eyes like thine, my dear, old, gentle-hearted uncle! Suspended by the neck from the horse-chestnut, dead, quite dead, hung the daring, dissolute Edmund Boulter; and prostrate beside his own door-stone, his white hairs flecked with the blood which was

oozing from his lips and nostrils, lay the inanimate form of the stricken father.

“He has murdered the old man, and then hung himself,” was the first exclamation.

But this was a hasty judgment. Edmund Boulter was not guilty of parricide by violent means, whatever a nicer judge might decide with regard to invisible weapons.

A wondering, awe-stricken multitude followed the suicide to his grave; while my good Uncle Stilling strove to quiet the ravings of the miserable parent. The son had returned to the village the evening before, and endeavored to gain admittance at the door of his father; but he was peremptorily refused.

“I will haunt you forever, for this!” were the last words that Squire Boulter heard, accompanied by an oath which made him shudder. They had troubled his dreams in the night-time, and once he thought he heard them again. He listened. There was a noise as of strangulation, accompanied by a wild, horrid laugh, that was yet more a yell of anguish. He threw up the sash, and for a moment thought there was an unusual commotion among the leaves of the horse-chestnut. Then all was still. The moon looked down peacefully, the stars shone out in sweetness, and not a footstep or a feathered thing was astir. Squire Boulter went back again to his pillow, but his stern resolution began to melt. In the morning he rose early, and went out to seek his son, resolving to try once more the effect of kindness. It was too late. The wretched man had seized recklessly upon Eternity, and Time had receded from him.

“It is of no use — no use, Doctor,” said Squire Boulter in one of his lucid moments, “my son is carried to a dishonored grave, while yours stands up in the desk and points the moral. Is that the Almighty’s justice?”

“God has a clearer eye than we have,” was the soft response of my uncle.

“If I had been as neglectful as you, Doctor — if I had beer

such a father as you have — but I would have bartered my soul to Satan, for that boy's good."

"Better have bent the knee to God, my poor neighbor," murmured my Uncle Stilling, softly.

There was a reproach in the words, but not in the tone or manner; for my uncle's sympathetic nature was all melted into tears. He was not the avenging angel to wound even by truth an already bruised and bleeding heart. Squire Boulter had walked blindfold all his life; and the light now would have been a "consuming fire to him." My Uncle Stilling had endeavored to remove the bandage when all were happy; but now his whole study was to ease the racking pain of a woe-laden heart. And he partially succeeded — only partially. The wound was incurable, and the barbed arrow rankled and cankered in the old man's bosom, till another grave was opened, and the gentle young pastor prayed above it; and the sod lay upon the breast of Squire Boulter.

“NICKIE BEN.”

WE have a lawyer at Alderbrook — three of them, indeed — but one we have worth talking about, one who has been talked about — one who has been blown upon, if not by “the breath of fame,” by that gossiping approach to it which is fame’s stage-coach — one, in short, who deserves a historian. Now, do not “think you see him,” dear reader, before I begin; and so place before your mind’s eye a little, spare, cunning, smooth-tongued fox of an attorney, whom it will be my bounden duty to demolish.

“A face like a wedge, made to force its way through the world, eyes like black beans a-boiling in milk, and a step like a cat’s —”

Not a bit of it. Oh, no! you do *not* see *our* lawyer.

Benjamin Nichols, or “Nickie Ben,” as he has been irreverently re-christened by some wag, with the consent, of everybody, has a voice — oh, *such* a voice! the north wind is an infant’s whisper to it — stands very nearly six feet in his stockings, and is of dimensions never scoffed at. In good sooth, that brawny arm might have wielded the genuine old Scottish claymore by the side of Robert Bruce, and other worthies of the times that were, and never have been ashamed of the muscles in it. Nickie Ben, however, was reserved for more elegant diversions than hewing off men’s heads, and slicing down their shoulders; and he rewarded fate for her flattering favors to himself by entering with great zest into the spirit which governs the modern world. In place of such boisterous cries as “A Bruce! A Bruce!” “A Richard! A Richard!” or “Beau-seant!” he slipped his fingers quietly to the bottom of his eel-skin purse, laid his thumb against the pillars, and his forefinger against the kingly head upon the

sixpences there; while his eye twinkled, and his features worked in a way fully to prove his loyalty to that little piece of coin, and his determination to die, if need be, in the service of *the family*.

Nickie Ben's boyhood was none of the easiest. He never laid his head on a pillow of down, poor boy! nor had a softer covering than a heavy patch-work quilt, stuffed with cotton; indeed, it used to be shrewdly suspected by some inquisitive neighbors, that even the quilt was sometimes lacking, and that young Nickie might have rolled up his day-wearables to rest his head upon. However that might be, the Widow Nichols managed to keep up appearances to the level of humble respectability; and, though she and her daughter Betsy and her son Ben might all have breakfasted on a smaller allowance than would have served Squire Risdell for lunch, not an intimation to that effect ever crossed the lips of one of the family. Nothing about them bespoke the meagre fare, except the meagre frame; the preponderance of bone and sinew over flesh and quick blood. If you would see the really *suffering* poor, do not go to the wretched hovel where famine dwells confessedly, and poverty draws the outlines of its own gaunt figure on lintel and casement; but turn to those who are ashamed to say they *want*; whose brows knit while their lips smile; who, wearing the pinched look, find their cares increased by laboring always for its concealment. There is poverty unmitigated — unmitigated by the hope of human sympathy; a thing, however, which galls oftener than it soothes.

I do not know that the Widow Nichols belonged entirely to the above mentioned class — indeed, I rather think that if she did, she maintained the character on a particularly small scale; she was seldom pinched in her allowance of eatables more than enough to give her a good appetite, and never laid claim to anything higher than respectable, industrious independence. The good widow was a genuine *worker*; and, as industrious, clever women usually have some little foible, she could not be expected to be exempt. It was, accordingly

reported at Alderbrook, that, during the lifetime of the elder Benny, (who, by the way, was a remarkably "shiftless man") this "crown to her husband" was, to all intents and purposes, the head of the family; and, in her love of rule, not unfrequently drove from the door with such weapons as the broom and poker, the *head* which she should have graced. But old Benny was "gathered to his fathers," and the sceptre remained undisputed in the hands of the widow. And now, indeed, she wielded it to good purpose.

Betsy was older than young Ben, old enough, indeed, to "do a deal of work;" and it was soon decided in the mind of the widow that the daughter should sacrifice herself to the son's advancement. To be sure, Betsy was a girl after the mother's own heart, industrious and pains-taking; and Ben was rather inclined to saunter in his father's footsteps; but the widow was of the opinion that the bent twig might be braced and straightened; and, after all, it must be owned that a son may be "the making of a family," while the daughter only holds the candle to him. Ben's education was the thing to be accomplished; and Betsy and Betsy's mother heeded neither aching eyes nor aching fingers while earning, stitch by stitch, the scanty pittance which was to make the son and brother great. Ben was indolent, but he was grateful-*ish*; and when he thought of the two busy needles, the scanty board and hard bed at Alderbrook, he would have had more than human selfishness to neglect his studies and waste his time. Ben did not, however, believe that gratitude precluded yawning, and as the difference between *skimming over* a book and *diving into* it had never been made quite clear to his perceptions, he may be forgiven for preferring the first method, which, I have been told, is much in vogue now, since accomplished scholars are no longer the fashion. Ben *skimmed* successfully at college; and brought away a degree and the pre-nomen of Nickie. By this time there was one needle less at Alberbrook. Poor Betsy had finished her work, worn herself out with labor; and the widow was alone.

It is doubtful whether Nickie Ben would have made much

use of his lore but for the pushing that was still kept up by the widow; but with her own single hand she put him in the way of a profession, and pushed him through into the very bar. I say *she* did it, and I say correctly; for, although Nickie Ben was beginning to imitate her shrewdness and energy, he never would have performed the feat of his own accord. Of Nickie Ben's legal knowledge I say nothing; for what can women know of such things? but I have heard that he was not very long in obtaining practice. He had a peculiar gift at pettifogging, (a very essential qualification in such out-o'-the-way places as Alderbrook,) and great professional *acumen*, for he snuffed *a case* in every fresh breeze that visited him; and kindly pointed out to his neighbors insults and abuses which they would never have seen but by the help of his superior discernment. No quarrel was so small but he found room to thrust in a finger; no matter so contemptible but the salt of the law, applied by Nickie Ben, preserved and dignified it into something, to stay on men's memories; and no coin was so trifling but our lawyer esteemed it worth a full hour's bickering. His pillow was now as hard, and his dinner as light as in boyhood; but it was no longer from necessity. Ben was economical. Some said he was mean, penurious; men spoke of him with a curling lip, and not a single woman knew him. But what was all this to Nickie Ben? He was effectually aroused from his boyish indolence, and he was determined to be rich — *rich* — RICH! The word had been dinned in his ear by his mother until he knew all the changes that could possibly be rung upon it; and no slavery was too abject to be made a stepping-stone to the golden throne which he saw in the far-off future. Not that Ben Nichols "sold his soul to Mammon;" he sacrificed his manliness and independence to — *public opinion*. You do not see how it is, dear reader. I will show you.

Years went by, and our lawyer became "*Auld* Nickie Ben;" though his head had a less weight of time upon it than his appearance indicated. But he was as plodding, as careful, as penurious as ever. Everybody said that he was a

confirmed bachelor; and everybody sneered at him as a detestable miser. Yet do not think for a moment that Nickie was a thin, cadaverous man, with a face the color of his gold and shoulders graced with a consumptive curve—he was anything but that. I think, however, I have before mentioned his physical capabilities.

Every morning before the sun was up, in summer and winter, rain and sunshine, our lawyer might have been seen, by any early riser, out taking his habitual exercise. He always walked up a green lane, about a mile west of the village whence he proceeded along the border of the woods, over the top of Strawberry Hill, and down into the ravine beyond until he reached the toll-gate at the foot of the hill on the east. The remainder of his walk was on the side of the road back to Alderbrook. By this means Nickie Ben made himself visible in the course of the morning to all the villagers who chose to look at him; and many were the impertinent little misses whose giddy eyes took the measure of his short-waisted coat, and feasted their love of fun on his heavy boots with their clumsy shape, and the iron nails in their heels, and mimicked his gait, and talked mockingly of the piles of pennies in his coffers. Everybody despised Ben Nichols; and yet he had never, like many an *honorable man*, defrauded the widow of her dues, or been a canker on the orphan's birth-right; he had never taken a penny that was not justly his own; but he had never given away, or wasted or bartered without due consideration, even the hundredth part of the smallest coin current.

The little brown cottage occupied by the widow and her son was never visited by the villagers; for the old lady had no interests in common with them; her "boy" was the centre of all her thoughts, wishes and affections, and his doings their circumference. But she did not dote as other mothers do. She did not offer his head a resting place when he came home wearied, and endeavor, by presenting pleasant subjects, to divert his mind from the toils and cares of the day; but she inquired after his clients, what business had come to him since

the morning, how the matters of yesterday were adjusted, and how much money they had brought him. Sometimes a vague suspicion entered the mind of poor Nickie Ben that he was not living to the best purpose; that there was something other men enjoyed which he did not; sometimes he even *felt* the dog-like treatment which he received at the hands of his fellows; but then, with a hard drawn breath, he would repeat to himself, "hereafter — hereafter!" and go on his way perseveringly. Thus, year in, year out, Benjamin Nichols breathed his proportion of air, and filled his proportion of space, until he reached "life's meridian height," and travelled the distance of five years on the downward slope; and then, all of a sudden, "a change came o'er the spirit of his" selfishness. The widow was alarmed, and interposed her maternal authority — then reasoning — then entreaty; but it was useless. The sceptre had passed from her hand — her reign was at an end.

One day the village was thrown into great amazement by the report that Mrs. Nichols and her son had taken seats in the eastern stage-coach; for the old lady had not been out of Alderbrook within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and the lawyer never moved but at a business call. The matter was a nine days' wonder, and scarcely grew stale afterward. Two, three, and four weeks passed, and, finally, late of a Saturday night, the stage brought back the unusual travellers. The news soon spread through the village, coupled with rumors of a wondrous metamorphose. Indeed, it was reported that the widow and her son could scarcely be recognized by those who had been accustomed to seeing them every day.

All Sunday morning, not an eye in church but was prone to wander to the pew where sat the Nicholises — they could not help it; who could blame them? The enormous bonnet, of a rusty black, that the old lady had worn ever since the day of her daughter's funeral; the scant, old-fashioned gown, with its gored skirt, waist of a finger's length, and sleeves nearly meeting in the back; and the thin shawl, embroidered all over with darns, and always bearing the print of the

smoothing-iron, were displaced by articles richer than any shopkeeper in Alderbrook would venture to purchase. Everybody was amazed; almost everybody felt inclined to smile; a great many touched their neighbors on the arm, and indicated by some slight gesture the direction that the eye should take; and a few of the least reverent in the congregation whispered, "Bless me! how young the Widow Nichols looks!" And they had reason, for the old lady seemed to have taken a new lease of life. Brussels laces and fashionable bonnets *will* meddle with Time's pencil, though they cannot stay his scythe. But the widow attracted a very small share of attention in comparison with her son. Everything about him was new. The cut of his coat had changed his figure completely, and the inward hilarity consequent upon emancipation from the slavery of penny counting, had changed his face so that he was really handsome. But there was another thing which aided the transformation of the face not a little. The short, coarse hair, standing out from his head like the quills of a porcupine, had been turned by some magic into luxuriant curls, smooth and glossy and black as the wing of a raven, straying back from his forehead as though too much at home there to think of a better resting place. Those beautiful curls! Why, there was not a young beau in the village who would have ventured to show his head beside them. And, really, Nickie Ben was a fine-looking man—quite the gentleman—with nothing exceptionable about him, from kid gloves to French boots—even the tie of his cravat was *comme il faut*. We watched him—Ada Palmer and I—after the services were over, as he tucked his mother under his arm, *not* very gently, and strode, with even more than his usual swing, down the street.

"He has not been to a walking school," whispered Ada.

The gait was pretty much all that was left to prove Nickie Ben's identity.

"They stop at the 'Sheaf and Sickle,'" continued Ada, still looking after them. "It would be wonderful if they have gone into the extravagance of taking rooms there."

Wonderful, indeed, but it was none the less true. The little brown house was quite too small for the metamorphosed lawyer; and though the old lady groaned a little, and talked of ruin, she submitted with a much better grace than could have been expected. And now it somehow happened that two or three neighbors looked in upon her; and, though the widow talked a great deal of her son, and seemed to forget that there was anybody else worth caring for in the world, they bore with the foible very patiently. As for the son himself, he began to evince a strong tendency to socialness, and even managed to obtain an introduction to several ladies of the village, persons who had grown up around him entirely unobserved before.

One bright morning Ada Palmer and I were out with our baskets, despite the little night jewellers that had left a string of diamonds on every grass blade; and it chanced to be precisely the hour that the lawyer was in the habit of crossing Strawberry Hill. I will not assert that we were ignorant of this peculiar habit of his, nor that our glances were *all* directed to the knoll spotted over with crimson, while he passed along the edge of the woods; these are irrelevant matters. But it chanced that the bachelor lawyer, after walking over the top of the fence, like an emperor, came, with his swinging arms and swinging person, and long, hasty strides, to the very part of the hill where we were demurely engaged in picking berries, like two sensible, industrious girls, and—Did you ever see a glowing sunlight bursting from the edges of a black storm cloud? Then you may have some faint notion of the magical effect of a smile on such a face as Nickie Ben's. Who could resist it? Not Ada Palmer or her friend Fanny. I much doubt if the lawyer had ever been smiled upon before, or had ever heard a voice softer than his mother's, for his face was full of a pleased, bashful wonder. We had supposed, when placing ourselves in Nickie Ben's path, that if his new humor should lead him to look at us, he would consider us little children, with whom he might frolic if he chose, and for a frolic we were fully prepared. But not so—what had he to do

with children's play?—that is, real, genuine care-for-nought play. Life had been a sober, earnest term to him thus far; and now he was as sober and earnest in looking for pleasure as he ever had been in looking for money. Now he was a *rich man*, he could *pay* for his enjoyments; and should he stoop to pick up those which the beggar might possess? Of course all these thoughts did not pass through the lawyer's mind while crossing Strawberry Hill. They did not *pass through*, because they remained there all the time; they had resolved themselves into ever-present *feelings*; and he had no disposition to be anything but *in earnest*. We did not altogether understand this, however; and when the lawyer doffed his hat, and smiled, and in his best tones bade us a good-morning, though we smiled in return, and bowed, and said "good morning," too, the embarrassment was all on our side.

"How stupid!" exclaimed Ada, as soon as he was out of hearing.

"Who? we or Nickie Ben?"

"Both, I think. Here we have lost a morning nap, got our dresses draggled with dew, and turned the laugh of everybody against us, (for nobody will ever believe we came for strawberries,) just for the sake of hearing a stupid old Jew of a fellow, who ought to have had that new wig of his when we were in our cradles, remind us that we are *young ladies*. Come, Fan, we may as well go home and take a dish of coffee upon it."

"With a dozen berries each?"

"We will hide the baskets in the grass, and say we came out for the benefit of the dew to brighten our complexions. But I will never laugh again about Nickie Ben, not even his walk and his bow. *We* are the simpletons."

Ada and I did not go to Strawberry Hill again in the morning; and in a few days, I began to observe that her belle-ship took a deal of extra pains to avoid, without downright incivility, meeting the lawyer in the street. Next, it was rumored throughout the village that Nickie Ben had

called at Deacon Palmer's; next, that he was in the habit of calling frequently; and, finally, that he, as often as twice a week, spent an entire evening there. But I chanced to be in possession of a secret of which the villagers were ignorant. I suppose it is a well-known fact that country people cannot be "not at home," with impunity, like dwellers in the town; so Nickie Ben's tremendous knock was always a signal for Ada's slipping through the back door, and bounding across the clover-field to Underhill. It was a disagreeable state of things, very; and Ada declared that she would never return a bachelor's smile again, till she had first asked his *intentions*. But the lawyer was on the shady side of forty, and he had now no time to lose in chasing the butterfly caprices of a spoiled belle; so he decided on a single bold stroke.

The two evenings formerly spent with good Deacon Palmer (and very often whole days and nights) were now devoted to the study of architecture; and he could talk of nothing (Nickie Ben had really become a conversationist) but Grecian cottages, beautiful country residences, and such like subjects to make rustics stare, from morning to dew-fall. And Nickie Ben was not one to talk in vain. A fine meadow on the west of Alderbrook, without a stone upon it, and so smooth and even that a Yankee would have invented a machine for mowing it at a single slice without grazing earth, was finally selected and purchased of its owner. And now came parties of workmen and loads of lumber, and the beautiful meadow was turned into a scene of wild confusion. But it was a confusion that had the elements of order in it; for soon there arose in the centre of the green a most graceful structure, which hands a plenty were employed in adorning. No fault could be found with it; it was simple and convenient and exquisitely beautiful; and well it might be, for Nickie Ben's purse had *paid* for the taste which planned, as well as the labor which reared it. And the lawyer rubbed his hands right gleefully when people praised his cottage, and blessed—*himself* that he was rich. The cottage was finally finished, and then more than one head was employed in furnishing it. Marble, and rose-

wood, and mahogany, and Brussels, and Turkey, and crimson damask, and chandeliers, and other words belonging to the vocabulary of luxury, were now very common on the lips of Nickie Ben; and, after talking for a proper time, he set out, with a *paid friend* at his elbow, for New York. By this time gossiping neighbors began to measure, mentally and with their tongues, the depth of his purse, venturing surmises concerning its exhaustion; but they had forgotten the quiet little streams which keep the ocean full, and the lawyer had good reason to smile at their surmises. Nickie Ben's next extravagance was a carriage—a “splendid affair”—with all the belongings necessary and unnecessary, by no means omitting the “gentleman” to hold the ribbons. This last was a master stroke of policy; and, by the way, O ye half-despairing, half-hoping lovers, take the advice of one who has a right to know the heel of Achilles in a woman's heart, and, when everything else fails, *set up a carriage*. It was really provoking to see the lawyer whirl through the streets, his fine blood-horses prancing, his harness glittering, and his carriage sweeping the air with such conscious, indisputable superiority, with nobody younger and fairer than the widow by his side; it was tantalizing, and many a pretty belle-was heard to acknowledge that if she were Ada Palmer it would be very tempting. To be sure the fine carriage in our muddy uneven streets looked a little like a Canary bird in a quagmire; but that was something that the elderly people could appreciate better than we; and the carriage gained the lawyer more respect from those whose respect he valued just now most, than even his rare cottage with its luxurious furniture.

Do you now see how Nickie Ben sacrificed his manliness and independence to *public opinion*?

And Ada?

Oh! Ada laughed, and jumped into her father's big hay wagon, and rode wherever she chose; and so the laugh of the whole village was on her side. Alas! poor Nickie Ben!—Alas!—no, I recall the sympathy. What has a man with plenty of money in his purse, and a head rife with plans for

enjoying it, to do with sighing? The rich lawyer was not discouraged; he was only disappointed; and his most painful feeling was regret for the loss of time. He immediately installed the widow mistress of the new cottage; procured an array of servants, probably in order to gratify her love of rule; and then, stepping into his carriage, he turned his horses' head eastward. In a few weeks he returned in high spirits; and, though he bowed to everybody, and smiled, and appeared more social than ever, nobody, not even Ada Palmer, crossed the street to avoid meeting him.

Spring came in trippingly, full of playful freaks and sweet caprices; and before many buds had opened, the lawyer's carriage had whirled him away from Alderbrook. We were on the *qui vive*. Who was to be mistress of the beautiful cottage? how looked she? was she old or young? pretty or plain? Of course she would be *purse proud*, for who would marry Nickie Ben but for his money?—and she would be vulgar and showy—and nobody would like her—*that* was certain. But the satisfactory certainty did not silence curiosity.

It was Sunday morning, and every lid was up in Alderbrook; for the lawyer had returned with his bride.

“Now for velvets, and ribbons, and laces,” whispered Ada Palmer, though in a place where she should not have whispered, as she caught a glimpse of Nickie Ben's carriage from the window.

The next moment every eye in the church was turned to the door, and the lawyer opened it and entered. *That* his bride! or had the little white violet nestled in the moss by the brook-side, stolen a pulse from the grass, and a form from the guardians that bend over it in the night-time? Where had Nickie Ben found that pure, living dew-drop? and how came it in his possession? The sweet bride opened her innocent blue eyes as she entered; and then immediately the long lashes drooped over them, and rested meekly on the dainty pillow below, and, with a startled, timid look, she instinctively drew a little nearer her husband. It would have

required an Amazon to meet the stare of that surprised congregation. And she was a simple, lovely creature, just emerged from childhood; a yet unfolded bud, that the breeze had never kissed, nor the sun rifled of a single sweet. Had money bought this treasure? It was hard to think it, and yet—we did.

The next day the whole village called upon the gentle girl that our despised lawyer had given a home among us. It was late in the day when Ada Palmer and myself followed the fashion set us, and proceeded to the cottage. The bride was evidently wearied with the tedious ceremonies to which she had been subjected, and had flung herself on a sofa to rest. There was something like vexation, with a slight dash of merriment in it, on her countenance, when more visitors were announced; and we saw it in a moment, and saw, too, how infinitely amusing to one as young as ourselves, must have been the day's grave formalities. I do not think we smiled, at least more than was proper; we certainly spoke as the deacon himself might have spoken; but somehow, (and I shall always put implicit faith in Mesmerism therefor,) the lady became aware of the presence of sympathy and appreciation, and her pretty, childish face grew bright with its expression of frank pleasure. Not a word had been spoken but strictly ceremonial ones; not a tell-tale muscle moved; but there was a shining out of the heart upon the face, and we all comprehended the delicate pantomime. So we drew up our chairs, forming a close group, and—"where is ever the use" of confining the tongue after one has used a more expressive language?—we were friends and confidants past recall, and we were children enough to trust each other as wiser people never trust. We talked of Alderbrook, and the people in it, and made plans for the summer, and laughed and chattered on till the twilight grew very gray; and then we begged of our new acquaintance not to send for lights, and threatened to go away if she did, and spoke and acted in all respects like privileged friends. So she sat down by us again; and the pensiveness of the hour mellowed our gayety

into something no less happy, but a little holier. And then sweet Mrs. Nichols told us something of herself. She was an orphan, not yet out of mourning; and that was why she wore no bridal ornaments. She talked of her mother—how she had faded day by day; and how she had laid her thin hand lovingly upon the forehead of her only child, and talked to her of the dark, dark future, when there would be a coffin and a heap of earth between them two; and as she talked and wept, we wept, too, as though the loss had been our own. Then she told of a kind man who came to them, and how generously he acted, and how nobly promised; and how she had loved him from the first moment, though it was a long time before she dreamed of becoming his wife. And then she smiled, and blushed, and looked half-frightened, as though doubting if she had not said too much. But we told her we were glad that Mr. Nichols had been so kind; and that was touching the right chord. Oh! *so* kind! we could know nothing about it. Her poor mother had blessed him with her last breath, and had said that he was certainly sent of God. She did not know that the world contained such good people before; he had done everything for her; and now he had brought her to such a sweet home—it was fit for a princess. She could never thank him enough, and (blushing again) love him enough; all she could do would be to watch carefully that no trouble came to him which she could charm away, and to study his wishes always—but that would be no return; could we think of anything she could do more? There was a well-known step on the stair, and the face of the pretty young wife lighted up with animation; so we pressed her bright lips, like old friends, and promising to “come again to-morrow,” turned away.

It was very late that night before Ada and I parted; for the gentle, guileless stranger had grown quite to our hearts, and we talked over her prospects with doubt and trembling. But there was no need. Love had been dew and sunshine to the delicate plant; and now the very consciousness on the part of Benjamin Nichols that he could not understand nor fully

appreciate her, only made him worship her the more. He had sought her to please himself; he was interested by her gentle sweetness, and her gratitude touched a chord in his bosom that had never before been stirred; it reached below the encrusting selfishness of a life-time. He had never loved anything before, and now his love became idolatry. All this was so new and strange that he seemed to himself a fresh-hearted boy, just beginning the world; just learning the alphabet of life, such as God intended we should have it; and he turned to his unsuspecting teacher with new devotion every hour. Ah! what a feeling of self-respect came with the certainty that *she*, at least, preferred himself to his riches; that, were he a beggar, she would be the same; and how trivial appeared his possessions, in comparison with the pearl that he had at first sought only to adorn them.

The moral? Nay, reader mine, you had no promise of that. It is scarcely fair to attempt to turn a lady's boudoir into a laboratory. I have a little garden — a very little one; and I will gather you bouquets from it of such flowers as I can cultivate, begging you kindly to fling aside the weeds, and forgive the oversight of their admission. But I am only a florist, and have no skill in the arts of chemical analysis and combination. Accept, then, my simple offering of flowers, since these perishable things are all I have, and fling them into your own alembic. Though their life pass with my own summer, I would fain hope that some heart may thus extract a perfume that will lie upon it when the florist and her humble labors are alike forgotten.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

OH, whither have they fled —
 Those spirits kind and warm,
 Which, numbered with the dead,
 Have nobly braved the storm;
 And gained a port at last,
 A port of peace and rest,
 Where, earthly perils past,
 Their happy souls are blest?

In some bright-beaming star,
 Do they weave the pencilled rays,
 Which, streaming from afar,
 Upon our vision blaze?
 Or is the flickering light,
 Which the varying twilight brings,
 As it glimmers on our sight,
 But the waving of their wings?

Perchance along the sky,
 The far-off azure dome,
 They wing them free and high,
 In their lofty spirit-home;
 And the cooling zephyr's wing,
 As it fans the brow of care,
 In its voiceless whispering,
 May a message from them bear.

I have read a page that tells,
 Of a home *beyond* the sky;
 Where the ransomed spirit dwells,
 With the God of love on high.

There, their crowns of living light,
They cast down at his feet,
To seek this lower night,
And the child of sorrow greet.

Low, where dark shadows fall
On the heart and on the brain,
Where earthly pleasures pall,
And the bosom throbs with pain ;
There, with kindly lingering stay,
On their ministry of love,
They smooth the thorny way,
And point to rest above.

THE YOUNG DREAM.

HAVE you seen Miss Follansbe, the elegant Miss Catharine Follansbe, belle and beauty? You must have met her at some of the gay watering-places; for she has frequented the most fashionable during the season. A genuine star is she, not of the first magnitude, perhaps, though requiring but the reputation of being an heiress, and a little less personal dignity and haughty reserve, to rank above the most brilliant. She has shone at Washington, too, during two or three gay winters; and it has been whispered among the young lady's most intimate friends, that more than one coronet has been at her disposal, to say nothing of the honors of senators, and purses of millionaires. How that may be I know not, but I do know all about Miss Follansbe's first lover.

Ten years ago the radiant belle was only little Katy Follansbe, or "Lily Katy," as she was generally called — I suppose on account of the pure transparency of that white skin of hers, and the slender gracefulness of her fragile little figure, looking for all the world like a drooping osier branch, or that most spiritual of flowering things, the lily of the valley. You will not believe that the proud, queenly Miss Follansbe was ever such a pale, shy creature, all nature, all simplicity and untaught grace; and, indeed, there is but little, save that sweet, childish mouth, to prove Lily Katy and the self-possessed belle identical.

Ten years ago Squire Follansbe was not, as now, "one of the first families" in Peltonville, and Lily Katy bounded into her fourteenth summer singing cheerily, "My face is my fortune," and verily believing (if she thought anything about it) that no other fortune was necessary. Foolish Katy! Squire Follansbe had a growing family to care for, and no means of

procuring the wherewithal for their maintenance, but his own fruitful brain, seconded by a most economical and matter-of-fact helpmate. The squire was one of those all-enduring all-hoping beings, an office-seeker; and while golden visions of futurity were knotting up his brain into strange devices, it not unfrequently happened that his purse hugged its last sixpence, and the bare walls of his empty larder sent a chill to the heart of his good lady. There were bills, too. One bright spring morning Lily Katy crept away to her own room with incomprehensible misgivings at seeing her school bill presented. Thither the mother soon followed, and a long confidential communication ensued. Lily Katy had never felt so important in her life as on that morning, for she had been entrusted with weighty secrets; and, if she did not grow six inches taller, in those two hours, she was certainly a year older. It is strange how lightly men will throw that shadow called thoughtfulness on a young face, that, but for the spirit's joyance, would be a blank without; for it changes the whole current of life, and implants in the awakened heart the seed of all its misery, and its sweetest bliss. And a word, a glance will sometimes touch the hidden spring, which, being once opened, will flow on forever. Lily Katy sprang from her couch that morning a child, a careless, buoyant, beautiful child; and she sat down at the dinner-table a woman; a very little woman, it is true, and so girlish in her pretty ways, that it would have required a close observer to note the change, but yet changed *forever*. Something, however, in her appearance seemed to attract the attention of the squire; for he paused several times in the discussion of his cutlet, to look at her strangely serious face; and at last inquired if his pretty darling was quite well. Little did he dream that the child had been diving her pretty head to the bottom of his affairs deeper than he ever ventured to look himself, and had come up with a care lodged in every dimple.

In a fortnight from that time Lily Katy was duly installed sole sovereign of the sixteen square feet enclosed within the walls of a district school-house, some three or four miles from

Peltonville; and, of course, she was no longer a child. She was very small, and very young, and there were many wise shakes of the head when she first assumed her responsibilities; but soon all acknowledged that she was so "pretty-spoken," and so discreet withal, that she was fully competent to take charge of her dozen and a half abecedarians. And she was a miracle of a little teacher. The fat, shy ragamuffins that gathered around her knee advanced surprisingly in their primitive lore; and Lily Katy soon became the pet of the whole district. The Chifferings, living in the large, white house, with three butternuts and a black cherry-tree in front; the Beltons, a more intellectual but less wealthy family, occupying the low, brown house at the foot of the hill; and the Thompsons, a respectable family of widowed women-folks, on the cross road around the corner, all took her into especial favor. It was at the Chifferings', however, that Katy made her home; because they had a roomy house, roomy hearts, and three bouncing, good-natured daughters, (the two sons, of course, had no influence in the case,) who would have served the little school-mistress on their knees, if a glance of her sweet blue eyes had but bidden them.

Before many weeks passed Katy had become a mighty queen, with every family within two miles of her *seat of government* for dutiful subjects. But this was not all; her fame had spread into the neighboring districts.

One night, on returning from school, Katy observed a horse tied to one of the butternuts in front of Mr. Chiffering's, cropping the fresh grass very lazily, as though it were no new thing to him, and only resorted to by way of killing time. "So-ho!" thought the little lady, "company!" and then she smoothed the folds of her dress, and peeped over her shoulder to see that the flaxen ringlets were doing no discredit to their dainty resting-place; for there was something about the sleek steed and his belongings that spoke well for his master. "So-ho!" repeated the lady, with an arch smile, bending her slight figure a very little, and peering away up among the apple-trees. "So-ho! master dandy! you are not usually on

such intimate terms with the Chifferings, I dare say." And there, sure enough, under the shadow of the old farmer's favorite "graft," his heel kicking the turf most unmercifully, stood a slender, girlish-looking youth, almost as white as herself, in earnest conference with the two broad-shouldered young Chifferings. But Katy had no more time for observation. She had just become visible to the inmates of the house, and she now found herself forcibly seized upon by her three friends, and borne away to the privacy of an upper bedroom; while all together proceeded to unfold an exceedingly rich budget of news. The pretty youth in the orchard was Arthur Truesdail, son of old Farmer Truesdail, of Crow Hill; but his errand was the important matter. There was a beautiful piece of woodland within his father's domain, and this was destined to be the scene of a grand pic-nic, to which all the young people for six miles round would be invited. Arthur was a college boy, just come home to spend his summer vacation, and, of course, (in spite of beaver and broadcloth,) the *belle* of the neighborhood. And very *belle*-like, indeed, looked the girlish youth, there beneath the apple-trees; with the bright curls peeping from beneath his cap of purple velvet, and his white hand coquetting with Robert Chiffering's awkward mastiff. There was a roguish twinkle in the eye of Lily Katy, as she watched him from the window; but it was the only expression she gave to any opinion she might have formed of the delicate youth on whom her friends were expending their eloquence.

"And it is all got up for your sake," was the concluding point of Miss Amanda Chiffering's discourse; "they want to get acquainted with you."

However bright Lily Katy's eyes might be, and however freely she might use them, she was neither vanity nor amusement-proof; and while her little heart went pit-a-pat at thought of the honor done her, her head was nearly turned with its anticipatory delight. She, however, smoothed down her features enough to go through the formality of an introduction to the blue-eyed collegian, when Robert Chiffering

brought him in to tea ; but smiles were constantly gathering on her face, and her little fingers were most grievously afflicted with a tremor, that seemed to have its origin in her dancing eyes.

How happy was Lily Katy when she went to her pillow that night ! and how she wished that everybody could know what a fine thing it is to be a school-mistress !

The day for the pic-nic came at last, though never a dame in Christendom watched "boiling pot" as those hours were watched. The day came, and it was a glorious one — a tithe too hot, may-be, but it would be only the more delightful in the woods, with the breezes wandering about, cooling themselves on the fresh leaves, and the silver-voiced brook sending up its healthful breath with its music, to add to the attractions of the sylvan dining-room.

The "big team" — the springless wagon and span of fat plough-horses — stood before Farmer Chiffering's door, and Katy's foot was resting on the round of the old kitchen chair, that was wont to perform the office of carriage-steps, when Arthur Truesdail's *buggy* came whisking around the corner. There was a short, embarrassed conference ; and then, notwithstanding a deal of amusingly sly hesitation on her part, Katy was transferred from the lumber-wagon to a more honored seat at the left hand of the fair-haired college youth.

Oh ! how Lily Katy was envied that morning ! how simple-hearted, blush-colored damsels longed for just wisdom enough to be school-mistresses ! and how Arthur, and Arthur's new frock coat, and Arthur's fine turn-out were admired and readmired ! But Katy was not the only object of envy. It was certainly no small honor to sit at the right hand of the pretty school-mistress ; and there was a provoking consciousness in the manner of young Truesdail, which invited rather than deprecated envy. Ah ! Katy *was* beautiful ! The folds of jaconet hung about her lily-o'-the-valley figure like snow wreaths ; and her small straw hat, with the bright cluster of opening rose-buds resting against its crown, just peeped over the flaxen curls enough to catch a glimpse of her sunny eyes,

without overshadowing them in the least. And then that most bewitchingly little hand, and the still more bewitchingly little foot, neatly cased in glove and gaiter! Arthur Truesdail had a very charming vision of a horseback ride every time he ventured to look down at the little, bird-like looking thing peeping from beneath the envious hem; and all for the sake of the half-minute that he might take that wicked brain-turner of a foot into his palm, while lifting its owner to the saddle. As the buggy rolled up to the front door of an immense red farm-house, that, but for its size, would certainly have been lost in the luxurious wilderness of lilac-bushes, and roses, and hollyhocks surrounding it, a young man broke from a bevy of red-cheeked girls that stood smiling in the doorway, and hurried to the gate to welcome Lily Katy.

The school-mistress had only time to hear, "My brother Philip," and to smile and shake her curls toward a very serious-looking face, before she was lifted to the ground and led away to the group awaiting her; "my brother Philip" being left to care for the horse, while the collegian devoted himself to his pretty lady.

"I wonder what makes him so melancholy-like this gay morning," thought Katy, as her eye turned for a moment on Philip Truesdail; and when he returned and joined the company that was to proceed across the fields to the woods, she again looked into his serious face with wonder. It was strange; and Katy, being too young to believe seriousness quite compatible with happiness, began to feel very kindly toward him, and to shape her sentiments and fashion her words with a glance of thought toward him, whatever direction her eye might chance to take the while. And Philip seemed to appreciate her efforts; for he began to smile, and his blue eye grew beautifully dark while looking forth an answer to her bright words. It may be that Arthur appreciated them too, for he placed himself close beside her, and devoted himself to her so exclusively as to appropriate every word and glance.

"You must distribute your attentions a little," Katy heard

the elder brother whisper to her cavalier, "or you will offend everybody."

"Confound everybody!" was the answer; "I will speak to those I like, and leave the distributing to you. You can play the devoted to one as well as another, Phil; but this little lady likes me, and I like her, and we shall have it all our own way."

Saucy enough was the smile that flitted across Lily Katy's face at the confident tone of the young collegian; and a world of arch malice sparkled in her eyes when they again fell upon him. Arthur Truesdail paid dearly for that one speech; but, as his complacency evaporated, his gayety rose; and so the party should have given Lily Katy a vote of thanks.

And "my brother Philip?" Why, he very nearly forgot his own cautionary advice, and scarcely lost sight of Katy through the day. Once, the school-mistress found herself beside him, away in the depths of the woods, with her feet resting on a rich carpet of golden moss; the flashy brook singing and chattering about nothing close before them, and the busy trees nodding and whispering above her head, as though they knew a great deal more than they chose to tell. She found herself there, but how she came there was the question; and why she stood, and stood so contentedly, when she knew that her host should be "distributing his attentions."

Philip Truesdail was nearly ten years older than his brother, and no match for him in any respect, if the family or family's friends were allowed to be the judges. There was a womanly tenderness in his large blue eyes, but they received an entirely different expression from the coal-black fringes shading them; so that only those on whom they had rested in compassion or affection, read anything there but good-natured indifference. His hair, too, was black; and his complexion, except a narrow strip belting the top of the forehead, was of a deep tan color, enriched by the healthful blood that had been denied his brother's pale, girlish cheek. There was something in the manner of the serious young farmer

so studiously watchful of her comfort and convenience, so entirely unselfish in its devotion, that irresistibly attracted the little lady; and his language seemed to her chosen from the books which she read and loved the best. That was the reason why she did not propose returning to the rest of the party, when she found they had wandered so much farther than she had intended, and that was the reason that, when she heard approaching footsteps, she almost unconsciously led the way farther on; for voices always assume a different tone when they speak to more than one listener. Her quick eye, too, had read at a glance enough to interest her sympathies irrevocably on the side of Philip. During the ten minutes that she had spent in the house, she saw that his position in the family was by no means commensurate with his merits; and this discovery performed almost as great wonders for the unpretending farmer, as the recital of his sufferings and "hair-breadth 'scapes" did for the Moor, Othello. Then he was so old, and so brotherly! Alas for Lily Katy!

The day went like a sweet dream to the simple-hearted girl; and when night came, she had much, very much, to *remember*, but only a little to *tell*.

Katy went early to her school-house the next morning, for the noisy gayety of the Chifferings seemed of a sudden distasteful to her; and she longed for the stillness of some kind of solitude. She was half-way there, when a horse bounded from before the door, and dashed up the hill at a furious rate. Could Katy have been right? or was there a vision of yesterday yet in her eye? She thought the rider was Philip Truesdail. Wondering, and doubting, and guessing, and asserting within her own mind, the little school-mistress tripped onward, all the time watching the spot where the horseman disappeared against the sky. She reached the door, and laid her hand upon the latch, her eye still resting upon the top of the hill, and there she stood, with her head leaned against the door-post, and her hands crossed on her bosom, until linsey-woolsey, bare feet, and dinner-baskets peering in sight, reminded her that dreaming was not her

whole business. Lily Katy's task, however, looked dull to her that morning; her little people missed their accustomed smile; and she dropped herself into her big chair, with a half-formed determination of betaking herself, with her troop of noisy tyroes, to green walls and blue roof—a second Plato. But what was that lying upon her desk? Surely none of her embryo philosophers could make up such a bouquet! There were bright young rose-buds, the slender green arms in which they had so long nestled still clasped about them, as though loath to give them up to an untried world, or striving to shield them from such robbers as the sun and the breezes; and pansies, with their purple eyes full of sweet, loving thought; and the magic daisy, spreading abroad its tell-tale petals, as though asking to be inquired of;—the dark, glossy green of the myrtle threw into beautiful relief the snowy bells of the lily, her own cognominal; and many a delicate flowering thing peeped from beneath a sheltering leaf, or sat in state upon its own slender stem, like a queen upon her throne.

Lily Katy took up the beautiful mystery very carefully, and turned it over in her hands, and thrust the tips of her taper fingers beneath the leaves, to discover all they concealed, and wondered and guessed within herself, her lips all the time parted with a surprised smile, and a radiant light breaking from her blue eyes and spreading itself over her face. But why did her cheek crimson and her bosom palpitate? She was thinking over the Thompsons, and the Beltons, and her other friends, but was it that she believed her gift came from them? Ah, no! Lily Katy made a great wonder of the matter, even to herself; but there was something whispering her all the time the whole and exact truth. In peering among the stems, she found a slip of paper, with the words "FOR THE LOVELY 'LILY'" written upon it, in a round, fair hand, that Katy would have been delighted to transfer to her copy-books, and that she put carefully away between the leaves of her little morocco-covered Testament.

"The lovely Lily" said not a word to the Chifferings of her mysterious bouquet; but it could not have been because

she set too light a value on it; for never lingered life in flowers so long as in those.

That pic-nic party was the beginning of a—friendship. Days and weeks passed away, and Philip Truesdail and the pretty school-mistress, were to each other, as people said, “like brother and sister.” And they said, too, that it was very kind of Phil to give so much of his time to Lily Katy, since his more showy brother had taken such a violent fancy to romping Nell Chiffering; though, to be sure, he could not make up for the loss of Arthur.

In large towns people are annoyed by conventionalism; in villages by gossip; but if you would be entirely free, if you would act on all occasions precisely as you please, leave all “settlements,” and go out where it is at least a good half mile from hearth-stone to hearth-stone. Phil Truesdail drove over to the school-house as often as he listed, and took Katy into his buggy, and nobody said a word about it, except “what a good young man is Phil.” Sometimes he came on horse-back, (the buggy being appropriated by his brother Arthur,) and then they sat in the school-house together, and read volumes of poetry, and perhaps talked poetry, until the moon came out; and then those moonlight walks! Nobody said a word about them, however. Certainly it was very kind in Philip Truesdail to devote himself so exclusively to Lily Katy; for his presence saved the poor school-mistress many a wearisome hour. Oh, yes! kind, very—to himself. To him, this was a strangely sweet intercourse; he seemed to be living and moving in one of those bewitching dreams that had haunted him since boyhood. Perhaps there never was a man who had reached his five-and-twentieth summer, preserving the singleness of heart, the simplicity of character, and the guileless purity that marked this friend of Lily Katy. Born with an eye for seeing and a heart for feeling, he had exercised both within the precincts of “Crow Hill;” and so every plant was known and loved, every pebble had a familiar look to him, every ripple, every murmuring breeze, and every sweet feathered thing, spoke a language that he could per-

fectly understand. He gathered lessons of philosophy from the field, and poetry from the woodland; then he read of them in books, his own heart being the crucible in which the metal was tried, and appropriating only the pure gold. He found his companions and friends where he guided the plough and wielded the sickle; and it was seldom that he mingled with human beings, for there was something in their rude tones that jarred upon the refined harmony of his spirit. But there was no discord in the voice or sentiments of Lily Katy; for she had just begun life, and her nature was full of the romance of its morning. The chivalrous devotion of Philip Truesdail had a witchery about it, that, young as she was, she more than half suspected would one day be lost; and it was this single grain of worldly wisdom, mingling with the enthusiasm of girlish fourteen, that induced Lily Katy to shut her eyes resolutely upon everything tending to break the charm. But yet, good and gentle as Katy was, there was a single vein of coquetry (innocent, pleasing coquetry to anybody but Philip Truesdail) about her, which originated many a shadow.

Katy was in the garden at Crow Hill, (for old Farmer Truesdail had daughters whom the school-mistress sometimes visited,) and Philip, as usual, was beside her. He had platted a wreath, and she stood smilingly, like a pet lamb, while he adjusted it among her light, silken curls; but when he picked, in a marked manner, a rose-bud, and, touching it to his lips, was about adding it to the fragrant tiara, she shook it gayly from her head and placed her foot upon it.

“Nay, nay, cousin Phil,” (Katy always used the convenient prefix,) “you will spoil my head-dress with these heavy additions; and I dare say you have made me look like a fright now—hav’n’t you?”

Katy did not note the expression—half of chagrin, half of involuntary pain—with which her companion turned to another topic; and neither did he note her hand soon after creeping down among the grass, to recover the rejected symbol of what had never been spoken

Speedily passed the summer; the mellow autumn opened, and Philip Truesdail was no more the declared lover of his Lily than on the first day they met. But his tongue could have said little in comparison with what the fair maiden had been told a thousand times, in more eloquent language. And she understood it all, and thought it then sufficient. What need was there that Katy should grow wiser?

They met for the last time on such terms—the pretty school-mistress and her adopted cousin.

“And you will go back to your gay village, and forget this place that you have made such a heaven to me, and perhaps laugh at the rude farmer that has dared to—to call you cousin, Katy.”

Lily Katy shook her head.

“You will take the light from my heart, Katy, when you go away; and there will be no melodious sound for my ear, because your voice will be making music for others; and no sight to charm my eye, because your eye will be away, and cannot look on to give it its coloring. Oh, Katy! I shall be doubly lonely when you are gone!”

There was a dewiness in the young girl’s eye, as she turned it upon the murmurer.

“You will have the woods, cousin Philip, and the brook that we have sat beside, and the lilies that you planted in the corner of the garden, because, you said, they were like me, and the rose-bushes that I helped you to trim, and the room where we have read so many beautiful things together, and all the places where we have been—you will have them all. You should not complain, cousin Philip.”

“And would you take any of them from me—would you have them yours, if you could, dear Katy?”

“Perhaps—perhaps—um!” and Katy looked up as mischievously as her quivering lip would let her.

“I would give you one for a remembrancer, if you could take it away, but it would be a hard thing for me to spare more.”

“And I do not need the remembrancer, Cousin Philip;

my memory never requires jogging where my friends are concerned. But let us change the subject,—we are getting mopish.”

“It is our last evening, dear Katy—I have never troubled you by talking about myself much, but now—”

And do not now, Phil—pray don’t.”

“Is it such a very disagreeable subject, then?”

“No, no! it is too—I mean it is of course interesting, but—there will be time for all that, cousin when you come to Peltonville.”

“And *may* I come, Katy?” inquired the young man with a kindling eye, and holding back his breath to catch the answer.

“May you!” returned the little lady, laughing; “you do not suppose we are so inhospitable as to shut the door upon our cousins. But maybe you will not wish to come, and in that case I shall not urge you—eh, Cousin Phil?”

“God bless you, Katy! If I could only know that we shall meet as we part now!”

A shadow passed over the clear young brow of Lily Katy; it must have been a foreboding of evil, for she replied almost mournfully

“People never meet as they part, Philip; and for one, I wish there was no such thing as parting.”

The young man’s eye brightened.

“And would you be content at—where you have spent the summer, dear Katy?”

“I could not find a better place.”

“And in such company?”

“Company makes places—nay, Cousin Phil, do not thank me too warmly I have had a variety of company, you know.”

The young man turned away with an air of disappointment.

“Come back, Philip, come back, and take that curl out of your lip; and, since you are bent on making me say silly things first hear me. The company of my good cousin,

Philip Truesdail, is all that would keep me from Peltonville. Are you satisfied?"

The young man seized the small hand that was raised to urge his return, and pressed it hastily to his lips, then dropped it by her side, and stood back a moment to look into her crimsoned face; finally, advancing resolutely, he bent his lips to her ear, and whispered the few heart-warm words that came to them involuntarily.

"I am a little girl, only a little girl—you must not talk to me so, Cousin Phil," stammered Katy; "when I am older—"

"Will you love me then, dear Katy?"

"I—I do not know. Don't get angry again, Philip! don't! I love you now—with all my heart—and will forever and ever. Now make the most of that, and let go my hand, for I must go into the house this very minute."

Young Truesdail would have been better pleased had the little lady spoken less pettishly; and he resigned the hand, and turned homeward, with an air that made Lily Katy exceedingly sorry for what she began now to consider her folly. She looked it all in her sweet, childish face, as she placed her hand gently within his, and whispered, "I will stay as long as you wish, Philip."

The face of the young farmer lighted up with joy; for the first time, he drew the simple girl to his heart; for the first time, their lips met, and then they sat down on the mossed bank together, and spent two golden hours as hours were never spent by them before. When the moon went down, hand in hand they proceeded homeward, and parted on the door-stone of the Chifferings, with vows of everlasting changelessness.

Lily Katy awoke next morning with a confused recollection of mingled pleasure and mortification, for which she could not at first account. But in the next moment a crimson blush overspread her face; and she nestled down, and closed her eyes feigning sleep, for the sake of being left to her own thoughts. That she was happy could not be denied; but with her sense of happiness came the mortifying suspicion

that she had been won too easily. So there she lay, her pretty face half buried in the pillow, and the other half covered by her small hand, and revolved in her mind every word that had been uttered on the previous evening, until she satisfied herself that she had acted a very unmaidenly part; and, moreover, that Philip Truesdail ought to be punished for leading her into such folly. How dignified she would be when she next met him!

During this summer, so important to Lily Katy, Mr. Follansbe's *devotion to his country* had been rewarded by the gift of the office of county clerk; and it was thought that his salary, united with his lady's economy, would be sufficient for the support of his family. But the accession of *the needful* was nothing in comparison with the accession of consequence. Now the Follansbes were invited everywhere, and everybody was proud of their acquaintance; and Lily Katy was too beautiful not to receive a due share of this newly awakened homage. But did the little belle forget her farmer lover? Not she. Not a buggy-wagon stopped at her father's door but her heart fluttered like a newly caged bird; but it was a fortnight, a long, long fortnight, before the right buggy made its appearance. Katy saw it from an upper window, and clapped her little hands with delight. In a moment she was called down, but she must needs wait to dissipate the tell-tale blushes, and send the smiles back from her face to her heart; and she must not tremble, not in the least, for she had resolved on behaving with a great deal of propriety this time.

While Katy stood before her glass smoothing down her features to a proper degree of demureness, Philip Truesdail sat bolt upright in the room below, almost dreading to hear the well-known sound of her foot; wondering how he could have been so foolish as to stake his happiness on such a desperate throw, and resolving to tell the child at once that he considered her in no wise bound by words which her generosity might have prompted her to utter at a moment when she had no time for thought.

With such reflections on either side, is it strange that they

met coldly? that misunderstanding followed misunderstanding? that Katy was unreasonably exacting, though every word she uttered warred against her heart? and that Philip Truesdail was generous and self-denying, as he had always been, and disdained to follow up any advantage which he might have gained on that memorable moonlight evening? Five minutes of entire confidence on both sides would have set all right; but a word unspoken often causes a life-estrangement. And so, is it strange that Philip Truesdail and Lily Katy parted that night forever?

“Forever—forever!” sobbed the poor girl, as she flung herself on the sofa, even before the echo of her light, merry laugh had died on the air.

It was years before that mocking laugh died in the ears of Philip Truesdail.

“Forever—forever!” repeated Lily Katy, and then she promised herself that it would not be so; he would come back—she knew Philip Truesdail too well to believe he would leave her to such misery—he was so kind, so considerate, so true-hearted, and so forgiving—then a fresh burst of tears interrupted her comforting reflections.

The next morning, Lily Katy could not forbear telling her mother how miserable she was; but all the consolation she received was commendation for the good sense both evinced in parting so amicably. And so Katy had her trials to bear all alone. How she watched for that little buggy till the snow came! and then, how she sat by the window, and looked along the road, and wondered if she should know Philip Truesdail from the top of the hill in his winter dress. But no Philip Truesdail came, and spring found Lily Katy still watching. By this time, the fragile child had shot up into a tall, womanly looking maiden, and there were but few that called her Lily Katy now. It would have required a very superb lily to bear any resemblance to the blooming, beautiful Catharine Follansbe. But the lady's heart went back, like the dove to its resting place; and, though fast entering on her belle-ship, she would have given worlds, had

worlds been in her gift, to have lived over again her fourteenth summer. Still, however, she be'ieved that Philip Truesdail would return; but return he never did.

Years passed, and Mr. Follansbe rose from a county officeholder to the state legislature, and from a legislator to a representative; and simple Lily Katy was merged in the elegant and fashionable Miss Follansbe. And was Philip Truesdail remembered still? Perhaps. Those soft blue eyes flashed now with pride and spirit, the delicate lip curled sometimes with scorn, and the beautifully curved neck arched itself like that of a tropical bird conscious of its own matchless charms; even the voice, with its smooth, measured cadences, sounded not like the low, warbling tones of Lily Katy; and, in place of simplicity and artless sentiment, came words of wit and sometimes of wisdom. Did this elegant creature, delicate and fastidious as she was, ever give a thought to the sober-faced farmer jogging after his plough behind the red farmhouse on Crow Hill? and was that the reason why she turned so coldly from her crowd of suitors, and called herself still heart-whole? No. She never thought of the rude farmer, earning his bread by the sweat of his brow; but there was away in her heart of hearts an ideal image that always stole away the point from any arrow that the winged god might send thither. This image was originally that of Philip Truesdail; but she had so renewed and moulded it over, that it now bore no resemblance to its former self. Who could have believed that the gay, *heartless* Miss Follansbe was cherishing a deathless affection? Who would believe that half the world are doing so, even while they laugh at truth and faith?

Miss Follansbe was entering on her four-and-twentieth spring when she went to spend the green season at her old home of Peltonville. Her smile was eagerly courted, and a nod, even, was considered worth a deal of scrambling; but still people had their remarks to make. The milliner, the grocer, and the tavern-keeper's wife, all said she had grown shamefully aristocratic; and old Mrs. Hudson winked her

little black eyes very meaningly, as she intimated to everybody that she had seen the time when the Follansbes were no better than their neighbors. But the proud lady minded none of these things. The deeper the murmurs, the more cause she gave for murmuring. She had been at Peltonville but a few weeks, when she began to feel an earnest desire to visit the scene of her first and only school-teaching. She had not seen it since the bright autumn day on which she left—and why? *She* could have told why; but no one else would have dreamed it. Now she would see if the little sacred spots she had cherished in memory were the same; and so she went. She recollected perfectly well that the old school-house was small and dirty, and of a weather-painted brown; but she could scarce believe it could have been *so* small, and *so* dirty, and *so* brown, ten years before. As for the children, she was confident that she had never watched over and loved such ill-looking ragamuffins as they were. And certainly there could have been no resemblance between the awkward, narrow-browed, square-shouldered country girl, with the shrill tenor voice, that occupied the chair, and her former self. But the dingle behind the school-house! the dear old woods that pictured themselves on her inward eye just as she had left them!—ah! change had been there. Not a tree was standing. Was it a tear that trembled on the dark lashes of Miss Follansbe? If so, it stood there but a moment, though she did not smile till she had left the school-house behind the hill. The young Chifferings were married, and the old people lived with their eldest son; the Beltons had moved away, and the Thompsons were dead, except an old woman that went out sewing by the day. Miss Follansbe went on, and without any settled purpose she directed the driver to Crow Hill. Perhaps she would go past—perhaps she would call. She had heard that the old people were dead, and the place was in the possession of Philip Truesdail and one unmarried sister. The lady's heart beat most unmercifully against her boddice, as the red farm-house hove in sight; and she allowed her carriage to go a quarter of a mile beyond before she could muster courage to give the necessary

order. Then the horses' heads were turned, and, in a moment she alighted at the door where she had first seen Philip Truesdail. But little change had been there; and slowly she walked up the narrow path between the rose-bushes, and tried to imagine herself Lily Katy, in the first freshness of beautiful girlhood. Lightly, and almost timidly, she tapped at the door, then more heavily, and then she substituted her parasol for her knuckles; but no answer came. Raising the latch, she stepped over the threshold, and found herself in the well-remembered parlor. There, nothing was changed, not even the position of a chair. The mantel-clock was ticking as of yore, and the old-fashioned vases stood on either side of it with just such flowers in them as she had first received from Philip Truesdail. He had, of course, arranged them that morning, and Miss Follansbe blushed to find herself appropriating one of the prettiest; but with a tremor in her fingers, she fastened it in her boddice. She took a book from the table. It was the same she had read with him many a time, and there were traces of her own pencil on it, and, between the leaves, for a mark, a bit of riband that she recollected clipping one evening from her breast-knot. What would not the elegant lady have given to be simple Lily Katy once more. Oh, how many a heart-ache is wrapped up in the refinements of fashionable society, and the flippant follies of worldly wisdom!

Satisfied that no one was in the house, Miss Follansbe proceeded to the garden. How came back every word that had been spoken there!—every look, every light pressure of the hand; much that she did not rightly receive at the time, and much more that she did not rightly comprehend. And Miss Follansbe wished that she had been born in that neighborhood, and never “looked beyond the visual line that girt it round.” But still her lip remained firm and her eye unmoistened till she came to the little cluster of lilies, carefully weeded and that morning watered, that Philip Truesdail had planted there because they looked like her, while she stood by, and laughingly tried to lift the spade that seemed such a toy in his hands. Then her calmness gave way, her dignity all was

gone ; and Miss Follansbe leaned against the cherry-tree, by which she stood, and wept as she had scarce done since childhood. A rustling of the leaves startled her, and she wiped the traces of tears from her face, and turned with her usual self-possessed air to the intruder. A dark-complexioned woman, with her hair blown over her face, and a basket of cowslips on her arm, stood among the shrubbery, shading her eyes with her large, bony hand, and peering earnestly down into the garden. This should not have been the sister of Philip Truesdail, but Miss Follansbe recognized her as such immediately, and half of her touching recollections were dissipated. The lady introduced herself at once, and then *such* chattering, and *such* wondering ! Miss Truesdail insisted on blowing the horn to call her brother from the field ; and, though the lady said nay, she said it so faintly that the signal was given. It would be saying too much for Miss Follansbe's self-control not to own that her heart bounded, and her color went and came like a bashful school-girl's at the prospect of meeting her early lover, face to face, after the lapse of ten years. And when Miss Truesdail exclaimed, "There he comes !" it was some minutes before she ventured to turn her eyes in the direction designated. But when she did ! Miss Follansbe could scarce credit the evidence of her senses ; she *could not* suppress a smile. With an old torn straw hat in one hand, and the other supporting a hoe upon the shoulder of his striped frock, his figure stooping, and his eye fixed upon the ground, walked the man that Miss Truesdail had called her brother. He might have been mistaken for her father, and she was anything but youthful. Miss Follansbe thought of the flowers in the parlor, and the carefully trimmed shrubbery, and tried to argue herself into receiving her old lover as what he really was, rather than as what he appeared. He started when he heard the lady's name, and a quick flush passed over his face ; but it was gone in a moment, and he sat down at a respectful distance, and conversed calmly and sensibly, without apparently once remembering that they had ever met before. And a stranger would have thought they never had, till Miss Truesdail made mention of the fact.

‘You would n’t have known Miss Follansbe, Philip?’

The man looked up.

“She is very much changed.”

“There is n’t much left like Lily Katy,” pursued the spinster, unconscious of the recollections she was awakening.

Her auditors were both silent.

“But Philip is quite the same — some people never do change — I don’t see as he is altered in the least from what he was ten years ago — do you, Miss Follansbe?”

“Not in the least,” echoed Miss Follansbe, with a demure look, which might be attributed either to the command she had obtained over the muscles of her face, or to a strange absence of mind.

There was a proud flash in Philip Truesdail’s eye, as he turned it for the first time full on the metamorphosed schoolmistress.

“Nay, lady,” he answered, “even your system, the rules that govern you in the gay world, require not this sacrifice of truth. Say that I *am* changed. Why should I not be, as well as yourself? My shoulders are bent, my hair is grizzled, my features are sharp, and there are wrinkles on my forehead; but that is not all — I am changed more than that, and from this hour more than ever. But these are trifling things to you, Miss Follansbe.”

It was strange with what ease Philip Truesdail turned to other subjects, and with what fluency he conversed, preventing the possibility of his sister’s introducing topics more personal. In a half hour Miss Follansbe was handed into her carriage by the bachelor farmer; and, while she leaned her head on her hand, and mused over the strange inconsistency of her own character, Philip Truesdail went whistling back to his labor. Neither was happy and neither was sad; both were in a state of discomfort. They had been awakened from a long cherished dream, and the last spark of romance was extinguished in the bosoms of both.

And so Miss Follansbe went back to the world again; and Philip Truesdail to his plough and his flowers, and his simplicity.

THE BANK NOTE.

“A PINK barége, with tucks — or a flounce — no! I like tucks better; let me think — how many? Half a dozen little ones look fixed up; one deep one, doubling the whole skirt, is very suitable for mamma, but it would be rather too heavy, too dignified for me; then two of moderate size — oh! they are so common! Never mind! Madam Dufraneau shall decide that matter. But I will have the dress, at any rate, and it shall be pink — just the palest and most delicate in the world — but pink it shall be, because of my dark eyes and hair, and fair complexion.”

So soliloquized pretty Rosa Warner, a good-natured, thoughtless miss, of some thirteen summers, whose only troublous reflection was occasioned by the distance of bright sixteen, when her mother had promised she should be allowed to abolish short dresses, and gather up her jetty curls into a comb. And this would, indeed, be quite an era in the life of the little lady; — for she had no small pretensions to beauty, and was, moreover, the only child of a very wealthy father and a very fashionable mother. Oh! what visions she had of the future!

“Yes, I will have the pink barége,” repeated Miss Rosa; and taking another peep at the mirror, to see that her dress would fully bear the scrutiny of her mother’s critical eye, she tripped gayly down stairs, reached the landing with a light bound, and then, smoothing her features and her hair at the same time, placed her hand very demurely on the knob of the breakfast-room door. Her mother was there before her, and Rosa heard her say, as she entered, “I have no occasion for employing a stranger.”

These words were addressed to a pale, thin girl, who stood just inside the door, with her head bent down, and the fingers of her ungloved hand trembling on the back of a chair before her.

"Perhaps," returned the girl, half hesitatingly, "perhaps those you employ need work less than I."

"I doubt it," returned Mrs. Warner; "a seamstress always needs work, and those whom I have tried, and know to be deserving, I esteem it my duty to give the preference to. There is sewing enough to be done, and no one who can use the needle skilfully need long go begging for work."

A sensation as of choking seemed struggling in the throat of the girl, and her fingers now clutched convulsively at the chair.

"I hope you may succeed in obtaining employment," observed Mrs. Warner, consolingly; "but really—"

"If you would but try me, lady!" sobbed the girl. "We are very poor—God knows if we shall starve!" she murmured, "and my poor, poor mother!"

Mrs. Warner did not hear the last words, for Rosa, notwithstanding her habitual fear of her mother, had glided up to her, and whispered "that Mary Jones could not come for a week, at least, and Alice Weaver was really to be married in a fortnight." This information induced Mrs. Warner to look again at the girl who stood trembling before her.

"Your name I think you gave as Ellen Vaughn?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you live on S—— street?"

"We live there now."

"Can you make dresses?"

"Not well; I should not like to try."

"What can you do?"

"Almost every kind of needle-work—fancy and plain."

"Embroidery?" asked Mrs. Warner, with an incredulous smile.

"Yes, ma'am."

"And can you do nothing with dresses?"

"Not nice ones."

"Could you put together a morning gown after it was fitted?"

"Oh yes!"

“And make school-dresses for my daughter?”

“I have done it for others.”

“For whom have you worked?”

“For no one in New York, lady. We left a country village, a few weeks ago, thinking we should do better here; but it was all a mistake. There is a great deal of work in the city, I dare say, but there are so many hands to do it. Oh! I am very sorry we came!” sighed Ellen Vaughn, shaking her head slowly.

“It is a common mistake,” observed Mrs. Warner; “people seldom ‘let well alone.’”

The girl opened her lips as though to reply, but was checked by a “second thought.” Mrs. Warner seemed considering the subject a moment, and finally she decided. “I will employ you to-day, at least. Rosa, show Miss Vaughn to the back sitting-room, and give her the skirt of your muslin dress; I will see her before that is done.”

Rosa obeyed; and the girl, turning back and hesitating for a moment, as though there had been something more she would have asked if she dared, slowly followed.

Mrs. Warner, as we have before said, was a very fashionable lady; yet she possessed more real feeling, more heart and soul, if one could only find the way to it, than would serve a whole clique of the ordinary stamp of fashionables. But there was one marked peculiarity about Mrs. Warner's *feeling*; it was not only capricious, but it would not be led. She was quick and ardent if left to her own impulses, but where others felt the most deeply, she manifested a strange obtuseness; and when she had reason to believe that people thought she ought to be affected, she was cold and calm as a winter moonlight. Yet but few persons could have had the hardihood to say that Mrs. Warner was whimsical. She was so evidently governed, even in her eccentricities, by high moral principle; there was so much that was noble and generous in her nature; and her personal presence was so imposing, that, between her pride and her finer qualities, she was generally too much feared and loved to be considered

a proper subject for the dissecting knife of gossips. Mrs Warner owed her entire amount of peculiarities to a strong will that had never been checked, and a full consciousness of her own powers, both natural and social, slightly modified by conventionalism, and rendered fitful by occasional visitations of worldly wisdom. A more impulsive creature than she was in childhood never existed; but, on mingling with the world, it had been her misfortune to meet with imposition oftener than gratitude. It was thus that she had learned a kind of suspicion, which frequently made her unjust; and it was not unusual for her to say and do things worthy of the most iron-hearted. In her family she was kind, but authoritative; and neither Rosa, nor the two cousins dwelling under the roof with her, thought it by any means a minor matter to encounter her frown. And, if truth must be told, it was no pleasant thought to Mr. Warner that he had incurred his lady's displeasure. To be sure she was no virago; she never raised her voice high, nor did she ever murmur or chide him. These are the resorts of weakness. But there was something in the fiery flash of that big black eye, in the curl of the short upper lip, in the deliberate straightening up of the fine Grecian figure—and the biting sarcasm of the single sentence, (she never deigned to utter more,) dropping with such bitterness from lips that could smile most sweetly, which any man would gladly avoid.

Rosa Warner accompanied the seamstress to the room designated, without speaking a word; for her gayety felt itself rebuked in the presence of sorrow, and the easy, merry-hearted child grew timid and thoughtful. She took with a very gentle hand the girl's bonnet, and selected the easiest chair, and brought an ottoman for her feet; and then she adjusted the shutters with unusual care, and looked about to see that the room was pleasant as well as comfortable, before she brought the work as directed by her mother.

"You will find the sewing very light, Miss Vaughn," she said, kindly, on presenting it, "and you need make no haste; it will be a good many days before I need the dress." And,

without waiting a reply, she slipped out of the room, and made her way down to the breakfast table.

"Poor girl!" thought Rosa Warner, as she went, "she must be very unhappy. Her eyes look as though she had cried a week. I never could bear tears, they make a simpleton of me. Dear! dear! how I should hate to be a sewing girl, particularly for mamma; her eyes would scare me into doing everything wrong. What fine eyes mamma has, though! I hope mine will be like them; they are almost as dark now, but they cannot flash so. I think mamma would make a better queen than Victoria. Cousin Will called her a complete Zenobia. That I should let Will know what a fool I am! I declare, there is no use at all in studying history at school — one never knows anything about it."

Rosa had proceeded so far in her soliloquy, when the thought of the pink barége entered her giddy little head, and immediately every other thought left it. She even forgot to say good morning to her father and cousins; a neglect of proper etiquette for which she was duly reprovèd.

Mrs. Warner was not in a very good humor this morning; a state of feeling to which the information that had induced her to engage the seamstress contributed not a little; for it annoyed her exceedingly to find that Mary Jones and Alice Weaver had presumed to exhibit so much independence. What right had Mary Jones to engage work of other people until quite sure that Mrs. Warner did not want her, when she owed the ability to obtain work at all, to that lady's influence? And what right had Alice Weaver to be married, just as she had learned to support herself handsomely? She would without doubt, tie herself to some miserable fellow who could not take care of himself, and then would come the old story of a suffering family. It *was* vexatious that people whom Mrs. Warner had obliged, would not submit themselves entirely to her guidance; consent to become automata in her hands, and find their happiness in the pursuits which she decided ought to make them happy. It was this perverseness, which would now and then exhibit itself, in spite of the

general empire enjoyed by Mrs. Warner, that had this morning vexed and annoyed her; and a great share of this vexation was likely to fall on the head of the new seamstress, for the reason that the old ones had, in the lady's view of the subject, exhibited a strange lack of gratitude. In short, Mrs. Warner had donned a new fit of worldly wisdom, and poor Ellen Vaughn, would, probably, suffer from it.

Full of the pink barége, as soon as breakfast was over, Rosa had a long, and confidential communication with her father. He was not difficult of persuasion; and, though he rallied her a little on her extravagance, and *played off* for the sake of listening to her pretty arguments, he at last put the money into her hand, and referred her to her mother. This was much the most delicate part of the negotiation; for, though Rosa was seldom denied a gratification of this character, and felt now pretty confident as to the result, yet she stood too much in awe of her mother to feel much pleasure in asking a favor. Notwithstanding, when the favor was granted, she always wondered that she ever could have hesitated. Now, however, she was as much astonished by a prompt negative, as her lady mother was at her vanity and presumption; and she put the money back into her father's hand with a sigh, which went to the good man's heart. Rosa did not pay much attention to Ellen Vaughn that day, for she was sure that no trials could equal her own; and she was quite disgusted that any one who had not missed the chance of having a pink barége frock, should presume to be miserable. As evening drew near, however, a morning twilight began gradually to soften down the shadows on the face of Miss Rosa, and she did at last emerge from the clouds sufficiently to bestow one thought on poor Ellen Vaughn. It was as she stood by the door, bonnet in hand, fingers fidgiting with the latch, and the toe of her well worn shoe digging into the carpet.

“You may come again in the morning, if you wish,” said Mrs. Warner, “as early as eight, recollect, and if you do as well as you have to-day—”

The lady checked herself before the promise of patronage was made; for, visions of the ungrateful Mary Jones and Alice Weaver passed before her mind's eye, and recalled, in a trice, all her worldly wisdom.

"Please, madam," stammered Ellen Vaughn, after waiting a little for the conclusion of the sentence; and then she rattled the door-latch, and dug her toe into the carpet more incustriously than ever.

At another time Mrs. Warner would have encouraged the poor girl to speak on, but now she was in one of her unreasonably severe moods; so she only fixed her black eye (intensely and burningly black it was) on her in silence. Ellen quailed under it; and, as she did so, the short upper lip began to curl; for Mrs. Warner is not the first individual who has mistaken confusion of manner, arising from timidity or trouble, for the evidence of conscious guiltiness. The poor girl seemed ready to sink to the floor, from excess of agitation; but at last, making a desperate effort, she faltered out, "if you would only let me take the work home, lady!"

"Take it home?"

"My mother is sick, and —"

"*Very* sick?"

"I hope not dangerously — indeed, I do not know —"

"You have no physician, then?"

"No, lady, the poor cannot always —"

"The poor will receive the kindness they merit; this is not a country where the poor will be allowed to suffer, unless they bring suffering on themselves."

"Ah! lady —" began Ellen Vaughn, but Mrs. Warner's eye rested on her with such a look of cold inquiry, that she could not finish.

"Have you sisters, Miss Vaughn?"

"Two little girls — the eldest only seven."

"Are you afraid to leave your mother with them?"

"N — n — o! it is not so pleasant for her —"

"But it is better for her, and for you too. Here you have

a pleasant room, and nothing to disturb you ; but if you were there, you would have your attention constantly distracted."

" Oh ! I *would* do as much ! I am sure I could have —"

" Nobody can do two things at a time, and do them both well ; and I should not dare trust my work with you under such circumstances ;" and Mrs. Warner turned away, as though she considered the matter decided. Ellen Vaughn waited for a moment, as though unwilling to let the subject drop, and Rosa longed to interfere in her favor ; but neither had the courage to speak, and so the young girl turned lingeringly from the door.

" I do not like that girl's face," observed Mrs. Warner ; " she has a downcast look, and a sly, hesitating manner, that shows she has something to conceal. Give me a frank, open countenance ; there is always hope for such people."

Rosa wanted to say that a downcast heart, might be the occasion of a downcast look ; but she knew that her mother considered her physiognomical observations (as indeed who does not ?) infallible ; and she obeyed the dictates of prudence.

In the morning, Ellen Vaughn again made her appearance, but paler and sadder even than on the day previous ; and this day Rosa lingered pityingly around her, longing to ask the cause of her sadness, but restrained, in part by timidity, in part by delicacy.

" If she would only tell, perhaps *I* could do something for her," thought the sympathizing child ; but to ask her to tell, required more courage than good-natured little Rosa Warner could muster.

" That girl will worry my life away," exclaimed Mrs. Warner, in positive ill-humor, after Ellen Vaughn had completed her second day. " Her whining and teasing are too much to bear !"

Rosa and her two cousins dropped book and pencil and looked up inquiringly.

" She insists on having her pay every evening, and her stammering and whining are really provoking."

“Would it be inconvenient to pay her every evening, mamma?” Rosa ventured to inquire.

“Inconvenient! why it would be a positive injury to her. She would spend the money, as such people always do, as fast as she got it.”

The heart, with the fresh, pure dew of its morning upon it, is much wiser than any head; and simple, artless Rosa Warner, in the sight of angels, was this evening far nearer the “hid treasure” than was her shrewd, honored lady mother. But Rosa could not gather courage to say to her mother, that Ellen Vaughn might *need* the money as fast as she earned it, or faster; that her stammering was occasioned by timidity, which none better than Mrs. Warner could inspire; and that in reality she had a right to demand her honest wages when she chose. No! No! Rosa would sooner have encountered a fiery dragon than the glance of those black eyes, after she had presumed to intimate that there was a bare possibility of her mother’s having come to a hasty conclusion. So Rosa was silent; but she resolved in secret to win the confidence of the poor seamstress the next day.

There was a haggard look, and a harassed, almost wild expression, on the countenance of Ellen Vaughn, when she took her seat in the little sitting-room in the morning, which Mrs. Warner herself observed. The lady even condescended, notwithstanding her firmly fixed opinion of the young girl’s unworthiness, to make some kind inquiries; but there is a spirit, even in the gentlest natures, which will not be pressed too far, and the feelings of resentment swelling in the bosom of poor Ellen Vaughn, were more in accordance with her partial views of Mrs. Warner’s injustice, than with her meek, forbearing, uncomplaining disposition. She answered her questions in cold monosyllables, and, raising her work that her employer might not note the misery that *would* make itself visible in her face, she plied her needle with nervous earnestness. As for Rosa, she stood aghast at such a display of ill-nature in one who had so warmly enlisted her sympathies; and she revolved the subject in her mind all day, com

ing to the conclusion at night, which she had seldom doubted — that her mother was always right. But, notwithstanding all this, her heart yet pleaded strongly in favor of poor Ellen Vaughn.

Thus passed another day, and Rosa had as yet made no advances towards gaining the confidence of the seamstress. About the hour, however, when the latter usually took her leave, a bright thought somehow found its way into the usually unthinking head of the little lady. She suddenly remembered that it was the most common thing in the world to inquire for the sick, and this might lead to a full revelation of all she wished to know; and, moreover, it occurred to her that if Miss Vaughn should acknowledge herself to be really in want, it would require but one of her own irresistible smiles to induce the cook to supply her with a basket of good things every evening. Full of these thoughts, so rational as scarcely to feel at home in that careless little head, Miss Rosa cast aside the worsteds that she had been assorting, and tripped away to the back sitting-room. Her step was as light as a fairy's; and though she had hummed the fragment of a tune at first starting, it ceased as soon as she left the parlor, and she reached the back sitting-room without having attracted the attention of its occupant. The door was ajar, and Rosa paused, like the unpractised little girl that she was, to consider what she should say. She did not intend to be a spy upon the seamstress, but it was perfectly natural that she should turn her eyes towards the crevice in the door; and as she did so, they fell upon the shadow of a person who seemed to be standing by her mother's escritoir. The person herself (for it was the shadow of a woman) was invisible; but Rosa thought at once of the seamstress, and at the same time she recollected seeing her mother with a bank note between her fingers while writing a letter, an hour previous. She had noted, too, even then, a strange look in the face of Ellen Vaughn, that showed she also saw it; and had observed her turn away her head after a single glance, and press her palms heavily on her eye-lids, with an exhibition of feeling which

she could in no wise interpret. Then Mrs. Warner was called suddenly away, and Ellen Vaughn turned her back upon the escritoir, and applied herself to her needle as though she had no thought disconnected from the unfinished garment in her hand. All these recollections came crowding upon the mind of the little girl, with a bewildering power. She attempted to move, but her feet seemed fastened to the floor; to turn her head, but her eyes would fix themselves on that shadow. Rosa would not have believed, an hour before, that anything short of imminent danger to herself could frighten her so. But now the moving of the shadow sent her heart fluttering into her throat; and when Ellen Vaughn immediately after stepped across her line of vision, and disappeared on the other side, she could scarcely suppress a scream. Should she tell her mother? But what had she to tell? She had seen only a shadow, and if it were Ellen Vaughn's, she might have been looking at a book or adjusting her hair at the mirror. Her mother's escritoir was not the only thing in that part of the room. So reasoned Rosa, meanwhile drawing back into the shadow of an opened door beyond, though her trembling limbs could scarce support her weight, and the beatings of her heart sounded to her frightened ear like the heavy strokes of a muffled bell. She had scarce gained this concealment, when the sitting-room door was pushed open cautiously; the ashen face of the seamstress peered forth, and her perturbed eye wandered up and down the hall with a quick, startled glance, as though she was afraid that the stairs and tables would find mouths to witness against her. One white, shaking hand, clutched the bosom of her dress, as though determined to defend her terrible secret, and the other was pressed against her haggard forehead, while two or three successive shivers passed over her whole frame. She trembled and reeled from side to side as she passed along the hall, starting at every sound, and turning with a scared look to gaze at each shadow that lay across her way, until she reached the door. Then, casting one hasty glance around her, she slipped through the opening

and closed it with a nervous quickness. Rosa noted all this; and, if she had been the guilty one, she could not have trembled more, or turned paler. Lightly she glided forth from her place of concealment, and hurried to her mother's escritoir. The half-written letter was there, and the pen, with the ink scarcely dried upon it, but the bank note had disappeared. What a faint, horrible feeling, crept to the heart of Rosa Warner! Not that she never heard of a theft before, but she had never been in the immediate vicinity of one—never *seen* it committed. Should she go to her mother now, and have the girl arrested in the public street, with that pale face and shaking hand to evidence against her? Immediately rose before her the agonized look of poor Ellen Vaughn; and then she thought of her, dragged away to prison, while perhaps the sick mother and the two little sisters of whom she had spoken were starving. True, it was right that the crime should be exposed, but *she* could not do it. She should never sleep again, if she allowed her hand to unseal the vial so full of misery. An older than herself must hold the balance that was to mete out justice; the tear-gem of mercy was a fitter ornament for one so young to wear. Rosa did not think these thoughts in these words, but the result was strikingly like; and yet, though she fully persuaded herself that no one need know what she had seen, her heart was heavy with its secret. These considerations had occupied scarce a moment, and now another project entered her head. She would know what Ellen Vaughn did with that money, and be governed in her conduct toward her entirely by that. Tying on a little straw bonnet, enveloping her figure in a sombre shawl, and drawing a green veil over her face, she passed hurriedly through the nail and followed the seamstress over the pavement. Ellen had disappeared; but Rosa knew the first corner, and she almost ran until she obtained a glimpse of the rusty black bonnet and faded dress. Ellen Vaughn had entirely lost her usual free step and air; there was a stoop in her figure, and a crouching, hesitating manner of moving, which showed the crime had written itself on her conscience, and was heaping

up the infamy within, which men might soon pour upon her head. She crept along stealthily, close by the railing, and Rosa could see, from the little distance she kept, the hand clutching the dress as it had done at first; and she could see, too, that it trembled but little less than it had done in the house. At another time, Rosa Warner would not have ventured on those dark, filthy back streets alone, but now, she did not once think of the strangeness of her situation, or the danger of being unable to find her way back again. The twilight was deepening, but she kept her eye on the moving figure before her, and her thoughts could not be on herself. At length the seamstress reached a large old wooden building, in a ruinous condition, the crazy shutters mostly hanging by one hinge, the windows stuffed with mouldy clothes, the clapboards loose upon the wall, and the whole structure settling to one side, and seeming as though a puff of wind might level it. As the girl set her foot upon the broken stairs, a boy, some dozen years of age, glided from beneath them, and laid his hand upon her arm, whispering, "Wait a minute Nelly!—Hush! don't speak loud—they will hear us."

"Who?" inquired the girl, casting a glance of horror over her shoulder, as though capable of but a single thought.

"Mother and the children. Come this way, Nelly; I *must* tell you. I hav'n't earned a penny to-day—not a single one. Nobody would trust a bundle with such a looking boy as I; and nobody had a valise to carry, or a horse to hold—nobody, because we were starving, Nelly."

"John!"

"It may be that this is murmuring—sinful murmuring, as mother would say, but I cannot help it. The little girls have been crying with hunger for the last hour, and mother is worse, ten times worse—she will die, Nelly, and all for the want of a little money to pay a doctor. Oh! what will become of us?"

"I—I—have got ——" Ellen Vaughn began; but the words seemed to choke her, and she remained silent.

"But I hav'n't told you all, Nelly; mother has said strange things to-day; she has not been in her right mind, and when

I was gone, she frightened the little girls so that they left her alone."

Poor Ellen clasped her hands and looked upward; but, immediately, an expression of mingled fear and shame passed over her countenance, and she covered her face with her spread palms, saying, in a low, hoarse whisper, "We *must* do something for her, John."

"We can't—we cannot! Oh, Nelly! that money should buy health, and life! How can it be right?"

"We will have a doctor for mother."

"No! we can't! that is what I wanted to tell you. I have been everywhere—everywhere that I could find a '*Dr.*' on the sign-plate, and Nelly, not one of them will come—no one of them will stir from his door to save our mother's life."

"They must, for — for — I — have — got —" Ellen gasped for breath, and again stopped; while the brother, too much engaged with his own tale to heed her broken words, proceeded—"After that, I went into a store—there was a dollar—a large silver dollar, lying upon the counter, right in my way, and nobody saw me—"

"John!" shrieked the poor girl, staggering heavily against the wall.

"No! no! Nelly—I did n't take it! There were bad thoughts came into my mind; but I remembered you and mother—I knew that mother would rather die than be saved so; and I knew that you, Nelly, would never use *such* money; and I could not tell you a lie. No! no! I did n't take the money; but I don't think any better thought than that kept me from it. I am sure I should have done it, only I knew it would break your heart."

A loud, convulsive sob burst from the bosom of the poor girl, and her frame shook violently.

"Don't mind it now, Nelly, don't! The doctors made me mad, or I should never have felt so. But you need n't be afraid I shall be tempted again—oh no! not even for the sake of mother and the little girls."

Oh! how willingly would Ellen Vaughn have made her

mother's shroud with her own hands, and lain down to die with those she loved, so that it could have been done in honor and innocence. There is no misery like that which eats into the still lingering traces of God's image, and degrades us before ourselves.

"Don't cry, Nelly! don't!" exclaimed the boy, putting his arms about her neck, soothingly. "I shall have better luck to-morrow, I dare say; and all will come out right in the end. Mother said last night that it is all for our good — God is trying us to make us better; and, though I don't think so much about such things as I ought, I always feel as though nothing very bad could happen to us, when she lays her hand on my head — just as she used to on the ocean, Nelly — and talks of our Heavenly Father's knowing all about us, and taking care of us. Don't cry, Nelly, I shall be a man in a few years and then I can support us all. You shall not live in a garret then, Nelly." And the boy, as he spoke, straightened his arm, and set down his foot firmly, as though he longed for the strong frame that might wrestle with his wayward destiny.

One shiver passed over the sister, and made her teeth chatter momentarily, and then she dropped her hands from her face, and turning away her head, she drew the note from her bosom, and pushed it into the boy's hand. "I ought not to cry, John, for I have that which we most need. No doctor will refuse you now, and you can get bread for the children too."

"Five dollars, Nelly!" and the boy's face brightened up with joy.

"Go as soon as you can, John! the children are crying with hunger, and mother worse — worse! God will forgive me," she murmured.

"But, Nelly, Mrs. Warner has not given you all this for three days' work, has she?"

"No matter, now — no matter — don't ask me anything about it — *I might* tell a lie!"

"No, no! but you don't want to tell the truth. I see how it is — Mrs. Warner has given you this for being good and

faithful, and you don't love to boast of your own goodness — just like you, Nelly.”

“Go! go!” gasped the poor girl; and as the brother sprang from her side, and bounded joyfully along the pavement, she turned her face to the wall and wept, and wrung her hands in utter abandonment. Rosa Warner longed to step forward and comfort her, but this was neither the time nor place; and she stood back, awe-stricken, until the girl brushing away her tears, and trying to call up a look of cheerfulness, began to mount the stairs. Then the child, for the first time reminded of her own situation, drew her veil more closely about her face, and, without giving one look to the gloomy piles around her, or the star-lighted sky above, turned back and fled like a frightened fawn homeward.

Rosa was by no means sure of her way, for she had noted nothing when she came but Ellen Vaughn. We never know our own resources till necessity moulds them into a spade, and puts it into our hands, bidding us work. Rosa Warner, the timid, delicate, thoughtless child, that had scarce ever been allowed to use her own judgment, even in the selection of a riband for her hair, lost in the dark of evening, in a spot given up to wretchedness, if not to vice! But Rosa was scarce alarmed: her mind was preoccupied. Now and then she paused at a corner, in embarrassment; then she would renew her speed, and press onward, taking care to observe a course which she knew led into a more familiar part of the city. By this means, she avoided losing herself among obscure turns and windings, and, although she was taking a long way home, she was soon convinced of the wisdom of her plan, by finding herself on well known ground. As soon as Rosa Warner reached home, she proceeded to the parlor, and was delighted to find her father alone.

“You recollect that pink barége, papa?” she said, crossing her hands on his shoulder.

“Yes, I have cause; it spoiled my daughter's face for a whole day.”

“Because I had set my heart on it, and was so disap-

pointed. But no matter about it, now ; I want to ask you something else, papa. Would you give me the money that it would cost — would you give me five dollars, if you knew that I would put it to a good use ?”

“ I could not know, my daughter, that you would put it to a good use, without being told what you proposed doing with it. Misses with short frocks,” he added, tapping her chin playfully, “ are no good judges in these matters.” Tears came into the little girl’s eyes, and they were not unobserved by the father. He put his arm about her and drew her to his knee.

“ How now, Rosa ? have you such a very hard father that you cannot tell him your little secrets ? Now I have so much confidence in your discretion, that I promise you the money beforehand, and you must have enough confidence in my desire to gratify you, to tell me all about your little project — it is a nice one, I dare say.”

“ It may not be, papa — perhaps it is wrong, but —”

“ Then tell me, and I will help you judge.”

Rosa hesitated. She had full confidence in her father’s generosity and goodness of heart ; but then she knew that he was strict in the administration of justice, and there was a crime in the way, which she could not but look upon with abhorrence. How much more severely then, might her father, not seeing the palliating circumstances as she could see them, judge of the matter.

“ Indeed, papa, there is something that I do not feel at liberty to tell even to you ; if it concerned myself I would — you know I always have done so ; but this —”

“ I am sorry people should burden my little girl with their secrets.”

“ Nobody has. All I know is partly by accident, partly my own — fault. But papa, allow me to tell you a little, and do not ask me to speak plainer. Five dollars,” — and Rosa now spoke quick and fervidly, while her eye avoided her father’s, her cheek flushed, and her lip quivered — “ five dollars will save a poor, sick family from misery, from disgrace.

Perhaps they are not worthy — I do not know — but they need it — they are suffering — will you give it to me, papa ?”

Closely closed the arms about the excited daughter, and the father's voice was not quite clear, as he inquired, “ why not go to your mother, Rosa ? ”

“ I cannot — there are good reasons why I cannot. May I have the money, papa ? ”

“ These secrets are bad things, my dear, but — I will trust you.”

“ No ! do *not* trust me ! ” exclaimed the child, vehemently. “ What I do may be wrong — I am afraid it is. Do not *trust* me — think nothing about it either way — forget, dear papa, what you have given me this money.”

The father shook his head doubtingly, but at the same time he drew forth the note and put it into her hand.

“ One more favor, papa ; may this be a secret between us two ? ”

“ Rosa, I do not approve of these secrets — honest people never have them. Your mysteries do not please me at all ; and, I cannot encourage or tolerate them — they begin with his, and with this they must end.”

“ They shall, papa ; but, if you knew all, you would not *blame* me, at least.”

“ I do not blame you, my dear ; I do not doubt your motives ; but I must not allow you to contract bad habits. Manœuvring to do good is manœuvring still ; and, where so much machinery is necessary, the end seldom justifies the means. It takes an old head to carry a secret, a very old one — mine is less black than it was once ; but it is not old enough to be so burdened yet. And yours — why these pretty ringlets are a strange wig for one knowing in the ways of the world, — they should not cover a brain given to plotting and conjuring.”

“ Papa, you mistake me, altogether ; I have not looked for a secret, but it came to me ; and now I do what seems to me best. I shall never be deceitful, I know I never shall. If

every mystery vexes me like this, I am sure I shall avoid another."

"So be it, my child."

"Thank you, dear papa," and leaving a kiss on both cheeks, Rosa slid from her father's knee, and left the apartment. Gaining the hall, she paused a moment, for there were voices in the back sitting-room, and she caught a word or two that told her the note had been missed.

What was to be done now? The last moment spent with her father had ruined her plan; and now that the discovery had been made, of what use was the note she had obtained to replace the lost one? The frank acknowledgment of the existence of a secret, that had succeeded so well with her father, would be entirely useless here; for Mrs. Warner would never rest until the whole was thoroughly investigated. Rosa was about giving up all, and going back to the parlor, when the thought of poor Ellen Vaughn, the confiding brother, the sick mother, and the hungry little girls, came freshly into her mind, and she resolved to make one more effort. Reaching the door, she again paused; for she felt her limbs shake, and knew by the chill which passed over her frame, that she must be very pale. She stood for a moment striving for composure, and then pushed open the door. The moment she entered, one of her cousins glided up to her, and, with consternation depicted on her face, whispered, "What think you, Rosa, aunt has lost a five dollar note."

"She left it in an unsafe place," observed Miss Rosa, with well-feigned carelessness, and elevating the note above her head.

"Rosa Warner!" exclaimed the lady, sternly, and with one of her withering glances, "where learned you to practise tricks on your mother? Go to your room!"

Rosa turned without a word, and bursting into tears before she reached the hall, hurried up the stairs and threw herself, sobbing, on her own bed. Her *ruse* had succeeded well, but she had incurred the anger of her mother, and her conscience told her that she deserved it all, and more. "I *am* deceit-

ful!" she repeated to herself more than a dozen times that night, and over and over she resolved to confess the whole the very next morning. But when morning really came, it brought quite a different state of feeling. Mrs. Warner seemed to have forgotten the affair of the last evening; and Rosa, persuaded that she had saved the poor girl from ruin, did not regret the means she had taken to accomplish it. She felt some flutterings of heart when eight o'clock drew near; and started every time the door-bell rang, glancing from the window to see if she could get a glimpse of the black bonnet; but eight passed, and nine came and passed, and no seamstress appeared. Mrs. Warner grew impatient; for though not pleased with Ellen Vaughn's face, she was obliged to own that in the use of the needle she combined celerity and skill. Ten came round, and still no Ellen Vaughn.

"She must be ill," suggested Rosa; "may I go and see, mamma?"

"You will not know where to find her."

Rosa blushed; here was another concealment. "Robert might go with me; you sent him home with Miss Vaughn once."

"True, Robert can go, and then there will be no need of your going."

"But if they should need assistance, mamma, it seems so much kinder for one of the family——"

"You have taken a strange fancy to that girl," observed Mrs. Warner.

"She seems so unhappy!" murmured the child: but it was the starting tear, not the words, that pleaded her cause with her mother.

"You have yet a great deal to learn, my dear," said the proud woman, tenderly; "but still this girl may be in want; her mother may be worse, and I have no objection to your going to see. Get your bonnet, and in the mean time I will fill a basket for Robert to carry. We should never visit the poor without taking some comforts with us."

Mrs. Warner did not *always* think that comforts comprised only the things that could be stowed away in a basket; but for her prejudices, she would have gone herself to look after Ellen Vaughn; and when her heart was enlisted, no human being was ever more completely mistress of the whole vocabulary of consolation than she.

Strange emotions were swelling in the heart of pretty Rosa Warner as she tripped along beside the good-natured serving-man, for she thought of the evening previous, when Ellen Vaughn reeled over the pavement before her; and she wondered what good people—what her father and mother would think of her, if they knew she had been accessory to a theft. It made her shudder, and she resolved not to think of it. Then the conversation at the foot of the stairs came back to her, word by word; and she wished that her mother could have heard it, believing that if she could, she would forgive and pity poor Ellen Vaughn. The clapboards rattling at each puff of air, the useless shutters, and the broken stairs, were not new to Rosa; and when Robert turned and asked her, “Did you ever see anything like it, miss?” she only answered with a shudder.

Robert inquired of a poor woman, at the top of the stairs, for Mrs. Vaughn’s room, and was shown up a rickety back-staircase, the old crone muttering as she hobbled on before them,—

“It’s but a narry room the puir crathur’ll be afther havin’ whin the sun is doon, an’ a deal nigher God’s airth than this ould garret, I’m a thinkin’!”

Rosa, though startled, had no time to ask an explanation, for the old woman stopped, and pointing with her staff towards a half-opened door, hobbled back the way she came.

“Hush, Robert!” whispered the child, putting her finger to her lip; and stepping lightly forward, she stood unobserved in the opening. Unobserved—for who was there to observe her? On a miserable couch, spread of straw and rags upon the bare floor, lay the figure of a woman. The cheeks were sunken and the muscles rigid; weights were laid upon the

closed eyes to keep down the lids; the chin was bound up by a folded kerchief; and the white, bony hands lay as they had been placed, their livid tips crossing each other on her still bosom. The mother of poor Ellen Vaughn was dead. Rosa saw it at a glance; and tears filled her eyes, and streamed down over her face, as she noted a touching exhibition of simple-hearted affection. A pale, meagre-looking child was kneeling by the bedside, trying with her trembling little hand to place in the bosom of the dead a single rose which she had just broken from a scraggy, sickly bush beside her. The mother had probably loved that rose-tree, and smiled on the little bud that came like a sweet messenger to cheer her, and watched its opening from day to day with an interest inconceivable to those who have never been walled up in the prison of a noisome, filthy street, in the darkest quarter of a large city. The child, too, had loved it; and she gave all she had to give, when she broke that cherished stem. A little one, still younger, sat on the knee of Ellen Vaughn, playing with her fast falling tears, and looking into her face with curious interest.

“Be ’s she don to Dod, sissy?” inquired the little prattler; “when will she tum back agin?”

Poor Ellen could not answer; and the unconscious baby-orphan, putting her thin, blue arms about her neck, said, softly, “Don’t ki, sissy, don’t ki, an’ I will tiss ’ou.”

The boy, with quivering chin and swollen eyes, stood at the foot of the bed, watching his sister’s fond movements about the dead; and when she had finished, and left a kiss on the icy fingers and the sunken cheek, he pressed both hands upon the aching forehead, and with a loud, sob-like burst of agony, turned away, and coiled himself up in the farthest corner of the room.

“We are too late, Robert,” whispered Rosa Warner, “go and tell mother.”

Robert drew the sleeve of his coat hastily across his eyes, and hurried down the stairs; while Rosa twined her arms with those of the little one on Ellen Vaughn’s knee, and

whispered such words as were the first to find their way up from her swelling heart.

When Mrs. Warner reached the house of death, she found the seamstress fast asleep, with her head resting on her daughter's lap, and the three children gathered around Rosa's feet, listening to her words of soothing and encouragement. How changed did Rosa Warner seem within the last three days! How exquisitely had the pencil of sorrow shaded and mellowed down her beauty! So thought the mother, as she gazed upon the little ministering angel; and then a severe pang of remorse shot to her heart as her eye fell upon the hollow, death-like face between her child's soothing hands.

"Poor Ellen is asleep, mamma," whispered Rosa; "she has not closed her eyes for two whole nights, and she is almost worn out with fatigue."

John hastened to bring the only stool the garret could boast; his younger sister, a glow of gratitude lighting up her sad face, exclaimed, "You are so good!" and the little one, nestling both of her puny hands in the lady's, looked up into her face, and began telling her that "mammy had don to Dod," never to "tum back agin," but that she would send for all of them one of these days, and then they "should n't be hundry any more — never — never —" so "sissy" said.

Hungry, poor lisper! That the grave should be an infant's hope! Mrs. Warner promised her own heart that their last hour of suffering from hunger had passed; then, taking the prattler in her arms, she called the boy to her side; and, with the most sympathetic delicacy, drew from him revealings that made her heart ache. He told her how they had been happy beyond the sea; how, in an evil hour, his father had sold his little patrimony, and embarked for an unknown land; of a death and burial at sea, that left the little family without a head, desolate, indeed; of a poor woman seeking a home in a strange land, followed by her dependent children; of the daily diminishing of their slender funds; of wakeful eyes and anxious bosoms; of the gradual sinking away of one of their number, and the grave opened for her in the village

church-yard; of toil and sickness, sickness, toil, and tears, then want of work, followed by want of bread; the bitter mockery that men palm off for sympathy; hours minuted by woe; the almost hopeless clinging to hope; of vain, impotent struggles; and finally, the ill-judged removal to the city. The boy stopped there; and Mrs. Warner, glancing around the miserable garret, read all the rest but too plainly. Oh! what sacrifice would not the proud lady have made to be able to live over again the three days since she had first seen Ellen Vaughn! The boy had told her of a previous bereavement, and she now inquired where they had buried his sister. He told her of a pleasant grave-yard on the shore of New Jersey, and of a rose-bush that he had planted, and his mother and Nelly watered and trimmed; "but," exclaimed the boy with a passionate sob, "*she* cannot lie there! They will put my mother in the Potter's-field—they will not leave us even her grave! Oh! that is worst of all!"

Mrs. Warner assured him that his mother should be buried in the spot which he and Ellen should choose; and when Rosa saw the boy's mournful delight, she could scarce forbear waking the sleeper, to whisper the same consolation in her ear. But when Ellen at last did awake, it was not to be consoled. At sight of Mrs. Warner she was at first surprised; then, overcome by shame and remorse, she buried her face in her crossed arms; and finally, springing to her feet impetuously, she would have revealed the whole, but for a whisper from Rosa. "Do not say it before your brother, Ellen."

The girl recoiled; and her limbs gradually failing beneath her, she sank slowly on the foot of the bed, murmuring, "Then you know it all, and the children will know it and despise me. Thank God! my mother is spared this! But who will care for the children?"

"Nobody knows it," whispered Rosa feelingly, "nobody but me; and you must not tell—now, at least."

Mrs. Warner did not wonder that sight of her should so affect the poor seamstress; and she now came forward and spoke kind, pitying words, in those tones which steal so soothingly over the aching heart, and lull the perturbed spirit.

In less than a week, a pleasant room was opened a few doors from Mrs. Warner's, and filled with flowers and choice books, and everything agreeable to a cultivated, simple taste; and this was the home of the orphans. Not that they were paupers, for their busy hands returned an equivalent for all the good they received. The power to use their hands was all that had been given them. John was sent to school four hours in the day, and employed by Mr. Warner the remainder of the time, learning constantly lessons of industry and independence. The sister, who had cherished the rose so fondly, and bestowed it so touchingly, had plenty of roses now; and when not engaged in school, she glided around among the flowers like one of their own sweet selves. The little one talked no more of going to heaven to avoid being "hungry," but still she lisped her broken prayers, kneeling in her sister's lap, and still she prattled to Mrs. Warner of things "sissy" told her, sometimes perverting their meaning ludicrously, and always appearing most enchantingly simple. As for Ellen, she habitually wore a look of sad seriousness far beyond her years; but every day it became more and more mellowed and sweetened, till one could scarce wish it away. It required but few words from Mrs. Warner, to interest several ladies in the young girl's behalf; and from that time she never lacked employment, and consequently never lacked either the necessaries, or a moderate share of the luxuries, of life.

And did Ellen Vaughn ever acknowledge how much more miserable she had made herself, than all the troubles, and sorrows, and privations that had been heaped without measure upon the heads of those she loved, could have made her? and was Miss Rosa Warner's little chain of deceptions ever brought to light? Ay, it could not be otherwise; for the seamstress would not leave her miserable garret until the darkest corner of her heart, the darkest leaf of her life, was unfolded to her benefactress. And Mrs. Warner, proud woman as she was, wept, and for the first time spoke of herself, declaring that she had been guilty of a double crime—

the fault was entirely hers. And Rosa! Oh! the pink barége was only a tithe of her rewards, though no one called the gifts heaped upon her by such a name. And how much more attention Mrs. Warner bestowed upon her now! how much she watched every movement, and strove to read every glance! and how she wondered that she had ever considered the little lady so utterly thoughtless! But Rosa Warner *was* thoughtless, even as the morning bird that

"Pours its full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

That is, she was thoughtless as far as the head was concerned; but her little heart was brimming over with heavenly wisdom—a wisdom made up of love and joy.

20*

TO MY SISTER IN HEAVEN.

My sister, when the evening wanes,
 And midnight hours creep on ;
 When hushed is every earthly sound,
 And all my cares are gone ;

'T is then, into my quiet room
 Thou comest as of yore ;
 And close I seat me at thy side,
 Where oft I 've sat before.

Then I am not as in the day,
 But grow again a child,
 Simple and loving, as when first
 Thy lips upon me smiled.

There, with thine arm about my waist,
 Thy fingers on my brow—
 Those long, thin fingers, parting back
 The clustering hair—and thou

Pale as the unsunned violet,
 Which opens by the rill ;
 I sit and gaze into thine eyes,
 Deep, dark, and loving, still.

And then I hear thy soft low voice,
 Which always touched my heart ;
 And weep because thou tellest me
 How near to heaven thou art.

And still thou speak'st of angel ones,
 That bow before the throne ;
 And say'st the little one thou 'st loved
 Shall ne'er be left alone

But when, an angel too, thou hast
Thy robes of glory on,
Thou 'lt hover round her pillowed rest,
Till morning light shall dawn ;

And ever, through life's mazy way,
Thou 'lt guide her wayward feet
And be the first her spirit freed
In yonder home to greet.

And, sister mine, I 've felt thy care
In danger o'er me thrown ;
And when cold hearts were gathering near,
I have not been alone.

Long years have wheeled their weary round,
Since dark and deep they laid
Thy cofined form, and heaped the earth,
And bowed their heads and prayed ;

Then turned away and talked of spring
And of the sunny day ;
As though the earth *could* smile again,
When thou hadst passed away !

And since, I 've trod a thorny path,
Of loneliness and pain ;
Of clouded skies, and blighted flowers
And coldness, and disdain.

I 've drunk from out a bitter cup ;
With care and grief have striven ;
But then, the rustle of thy wing
Has brought me near to heaven.

Then come, my angel-one, to-night ;
My heart is full of gloom ;
Come with thy quiet step and smile,
And seat thee in my room.

And clasp, me, sister, in thine arms,
And hold me to thy breast;
For by the thronging cares of earth
I'm wearied and oppressed.

And let me close my aching lids,
And sleep upon that arm,
Which used to seem enough to me
To shelter from all harm.

I'm weary now, I'm weary now!
I fain would be at rest!
Yet closer twine thine angel arms,
And fold me to thy breast.

ALLY FISHER.

STUDY, study, study!

Trudge, trudge, trudge!

Sew, sew, sew!

Oh, what a humdrum life was that of little Ally Fisher! Day in, day out, late and early, from week's end to week's end, it was all the same. Oh, how Ally's feet and head and hands ached! and sometimes her heart ached, too—poor child!

Ally was not an interesting little girl; she had no time to be interesting. Her voice, true, was very sweet, but *so* plaintive! Beside, you seldom heard it; for little Ally Fisher's thoughts were so constantly occupied, that it was seldom they found time to come up to her lips. No, Ally was not interesting. She had never given out the silvery, care-free, heart-laugh which we love so to hear from children: she could not laugh; for, though sent to earth, a disguised ministering angel, vice had arisen between her and all life's brightness, and clouded in her sun. And how can anything be interesting on which the shadow of vice rests? Instead of mirth, Ally had given her young spirit to sorrow; instead of the bright flowers springing up in the pathway of blissful childhood, the swelling, bursting buds of Hope that make our spring days so gay, Ally looked out upon a desert with but one oasis. Oh, how dear was that bright spot, with its flowers all fadeless, its waters sparkling, never-failing, living, its harps, its crowns, its sainted ones, its white-winged throng, its King! The King of Heaven!—that kind Saviour who loved her, who watched over her in her helplessness, who counted all her tears, lightened all her burdens, and was waiting to take her in his arms and shelter her forever in his bosom. Little Ally Fisher had indeed one pure, precious source of happi-

ness; and that was why the grave did not open beneath her childish feet, and she go down into it for rest, worn out by her burden of sorrow, want and misery. Yet Ally was not interesting. When other children were out playing among the quivering, joyful summer shadows, she sat away behind her desk in the school-room, sew, sew, sewing, till her eyes ached away back into her head, and her little arm felt as though it must drop from the thin shoulder. "Odd ways these for a child! How disagreeably mature! It is a very unpleasant thing to see children make old women of themselves!" Ah, then, woe to the sin—woe to the sinner who cheats a young heart of its spring!

Neither was Ally beautiful;—her face was *so* thin and want-pinched, and her great eyes looked so wobegone! How *could* Ally be beautiful, with such a load of care upon her, crushing beneath its iron weight the rich jewels which God had lavished upon her spirit? It is the inner beauty that shines upon the face,—and all the flowers of her young heart had been blasted. Her curls were glossy enough, but you could not help believing, when you looked upon them, that misery nestled in their deep shadows; her eyes were of the softest, meekest brown, fringed with rich sable, but *so* full of misery! Her complexion was transparently fair, with a tinge of blue, instead of the warm, generous heart-tide which belongs to childhood and youth; all her features were pinched and attenuated; her hands were small, and thin, and blue; and her little figure, in its scanty, homely clothing, looked very much like a weed which has stood too long in the autumn time. So frail! so delicate! so desolate!

And did anybody love little Ally Fisher? the busy bee—the hum-drum worker—the forlorn child who was neither interesting nor beautiful? Was there anybody to love her? No one but her mother—a poor, sad looking woman, who wore a faded green bonnet and a patched chintz frock, and never stopped to smile or shake hands with anybody, when she walked out of the village church. This desolate, sad-hearted woman, with her bony figure and sharpened face—

this Dame Fisher, whom the boys called a scare-crow, and the girls used to imitate in tableaux—this strange woman, seeming in her visible wretchedness scarce to belong to this bright, beautiful world, bore a measureless, exhaustless fountain of love behind the faded garments and the ugly person; and she lavished all its holy wealth on poor little Ally. Ally had a father, too; but he did not love her. He loved nothing but the vile grog-shop at the corner of the street, and the brown earthen jug which he yet had humanity or shame enough to hide away in the loft. Ah, now you see why Ally Fisher was unhappy! Now you see the vice in whose shadow the stricken child matured so rapidly! Now you are ready to exclaim with me, "Poor, poor Ally Fisher! God help her!"

Ay, God help her!

Ally tried very hard to help herself; but her mother was always very feeble, and there were several little ones younger than herself. What could poor Ally do? She went to school—that she *would* do, because she never could accomplish anything at home in that small, crowded room, with all those thin-faced, miserable little creatures about her; but she took her sewing with her, and every moment that she could steal from her books was devoted to earning bread.

Dame Fisher had looked earnestly forward to the time when Ally would be old enough and learned enough to vary the monotonous character of her employment, and preside in the capacity of teacher over the little school just over the hill. These mothers are so dotingly hopeful! How could she think of it, and Ally the child of a drunkard? To be sure, this was the only vice of which Billy Fisher had ever been guilty. He had never defrauded his neighbor; he had never, in better days, when some who now despised him were in his power, been oppressive to the poor; he had harmed no one, nor wished harm to any; he had only degraded his own nature almost to a bestial level, and poured out a vessel of shame upon his family. Enough, to be sure; but then Ally—she had always been a gentle, patient, toiling, faultless

child, and why must she suffer for her father's sin? What! the daughter of the drunken vagabond, Billy Fisher, a teacher for *their* children! What a presuming minx she must be! The idea was preposterous! She must find other means of supplying herself with the finery she was prinking in of late; let her go into the kitchen where she belonged! Poor Ally! she had wrought till midnight for a fortnight, to prepare herself for presentation to these same fault-finders; and if she had not, they would have called her *ragamuffin*. Where *shall* we look for a reasonable man?

Ally was not much distressed. To be sure, it was the breaking up of a long cherished dream, and the severer that this had been the only dream she had ever dared cherish; but the poor girl had a holy resource, and she did not repine. She went from the door where the one hope of her life had been cruelly crushed, with a swelling heart and faltering step. Over the stile across the way, the little blue eyes of the spring-violets were looking up lovingly from beds of moss; the freed streams were dancing gaily, flashing and sparkling in the sunlight; and on a brown maple bough, where leaf-buds were swelling ready to burst with life, a little bird, the first spring-bird, carolled as blithely as though it might thus bring Eden to a desolate, disappointed, sorrowing heart. Ally Fisher heard it, and the tears broke over their fringed boundaries and fell in a sparkling shower upon her boddice. Then she crossed the stile, and the stream, and passed the trees, till she found a solitary nook away in the heart of the wood; and there she knelt and prayed. How strong was Ally Fisher when she left her retreat! The arm of Him who is almighty was about her.

Ally Fisher passed with quite as light a foot as usual over the dried leaves through which the tender spring-blades were peeping, and beyond the border of the wood, till she came within sight of one of our beautiful central lakes on the border of which the young green was striving with the pallid spoils of last year's frost. Ally Fisher was not very observing — she was too thoughtful to be observing; but as she emerged

from the wood she saw a person, probably a nurse, walking near the lake with a little girl, who danced, and prattled, and clapped her tiny hands, now bounding from the path, now half hiding her little head in the woman's dress, and then running forward with all the guileless glee of a bird or butterfly. Ally looked at her, and felt the warm tears creeping to her eyes. Why had *she* never been thus happy? And why should that terrible shadow which had rested on her cradle, darken at this point, so full of strange, wondrous interest, now when she was

“Standing, with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and childhood fleet.

Gazing, with a timid glance,
On the brooklet's swift advance,
On the river's broad expanse.”

The tears crept to Ally's eyes; but they had no time to fall. She heard a shriek, and saw the woman cowering over the verge of the lake, her hands clasped as though in an ecstasy of agonized fear.

“The child!” thought Ally, as she sprang forward, new life in every limb and lighting up her eye. She was right. The little one was just rising to the surface after her first terrible plunge; Ally caught a glimpse of a pale, agonized face, then a fold of scarlet; and then all disappeared except the successive rings formed by the rippling water. “It is not deep, not very deep,” she said, half to herself, half to the careless nurse, “if I were only taller!” She stepped into the water carefully, as though to insure in the outset a firm footing. Another step, and the water grew deeper — another — another — the water had arisen above her waist, and her slight figure seemed swayed by its undulations. Dare she go farther? Oh, the lake was so still — only a ripple on its surface; and a life — *a life* at stake! Again on, one more step — the little scarlet dress appeared just before her. But one short step more! — she falters, reels — ah, she grasps it! — now Ally! see, she pauses deliberately to steady her-

self! Her presence of mind, even in the moment of triumph, has not forsaken her, and her foot is still firm. She returns slowly, safely to the shore; and sinks, with her recovered human treasure at the feet of the terrified nurse.

Ally Fisher opened her large, wondering eyes upon a strange scene. Her head lay upon a pillow of rich purple velvet; and she turned from her singular couch to magnificent folds of drapery; heavy golden cords half hidden in their soft shadows; rich, massive furniture, the use of which she did not understand — all the wonders of this magic palace — quite unheeding a kind face which bent anxiously over her.

“Oh, I was so careless, and you so good!” was the first exclamation she heard; and then from a sofa at the other side of the room came a pale, beautiful lady and whispered, “Dear child! God bless her!” in low, tremulous tones, as though the terror had not yet gone from her heart.

“Does she recover?” inquired another voice. It was that of a man; and, though strong, there was now a subdued tremor in it, which gave evidence that the string on which it vibrated had been lately jarred by fear and sorrow. “Does she recover? This noble deed has made her ours as Marcia is. She shall never go back to that poor hovel again.”

“My mother!” was Ally’s answering exclamation. “Oh, she will be so frightened! I must go to my mother now.” It was in vain that the lady and her husband, and even the attending physician insisted on her remaining, at least until she was quite recovered; and offered to send for her mother. Ally arose to her feet and smiled her usual sad smile.

“I am well, quite well. It didn’t hurt me any; I was only frightened because I thought the poor little girl was dead. To be sure, I should n’t fear the dead, but when I had her in my arms — Are you sure she will get well?”

“She will; and it was you who saved her life.”

Ally shuddered. “Uh! her cheek was so cold! just like little Willie’s. But you say she will get well, and I am very glad; though sometimes I think it would be a pleasant thing

to die and go to heaven where Jesus Christ is. — It is so dreary here!" she added in a pitiful tone and half musingly.

Dame Fisher was surprised to see the family carriage of the Burnells draw up at her humble door, and more still surprised when her own Ally, all in strange garb "a world too wide" sprang from it, her pale face really brilliant with excitement. Ally's large eyes were larger than ever, and the heart's light was centred beneath their jetty fringes; while her mouth, the lips no longer pale, was wreathed with unusual smiles.

"Oh, mother! I have saved a life! Is not God kind to let me do so great a thing?"

Strange that neither Ally nor her mother thought of the lost school that night, heavy as the disappointment was! Nay, is it strange? They thought of it in the morning, however, and then dame Fisher was much sadder than Ally was.

"So you are to sew your life away," she said despondingly; "my poor, poor Ally!"

"No, mother; God will take care of me."

It was not noon when the family carriage of the Burnells again appeared at the door of Billy Fisher's miserable cottage.

"Mrs. Burnell. It may be, Ally, she will get you the school — these rich people have so much influence."

Mrs. Burnell came to offer Ally, as her husband had promised in his first lively emotion of gratitude, a splendid home.

"You shall share with little Marcia in everything," she said. "You shall even divide our love. More, you are older, and you shall be considered in everything the elder daughter. Come and live with us, dear; for we should have had no child but for you."

Ally looked at her mother, whose thin face now glowed with gratified ambition; glanced at the broken walls of the miserable hovel she called home; turned from one little half-starved figure to another; and then, approaching the lady, said in a low, firm tone, "You are very kind, and I will pray God to bless you for it; but I must not go away from here!"

“Must not!”

“Must not, Ally!” exclaimed the surprised, disappointed mother.

Ally's voice became choked. “This is a very poor place — I never knew how poor until I went into some of the grand houses; but I have always lived in it, and —”

“But the sewing, and that terrible pain in your side, dear!” interrupted the matron.

“It will be better soon, I think; and may be I shall not have to sew as much now Mary is getting bigger.”

“But, Ally —”

“Mother, don't drive me away from home.”

“We will give you a home,” pleaded the lady, “the home you saw yesterday. There you shall have everything you can wish; things much more beautiful than you have ever seen in your life; and little Marcia, whose life you saved, will love you, and so will we all.”

“Then who will love my poor, poor mother?” And Ally burst into tears.

At the commencement of the conference a head had been raised from a pile of bed-covering in a corner of the room, and a red, bloated face looked out on the group with vague wonder. Soon an expression of intelligence began to lighten up the heavy eyes, and now and then a trace of something like emotion appeared upon the face. At Ally's last words there was for a moment a strange, convulsive working of the features, and the head fell heavily back upon the pillow.

It was in vain that both the lady and dame Fisher pleaded. Ally's firm, modest answer was ever the same. “Oh, it was nothing; I could n't let the little girl drown, when it was so easy to go into the water. It was nothing; so I do not deserve that beautiful home. I should n't be of any use there either, and here I am needed.”

“But I will give you five times the money you could earn by sewing,” urged the lady, “and you shall bring it all here.”

Ally was for a moment staggered.

“So you would help us more by going than by staying,”

added the dame, quite forgetful of self while so anxious for her child's welfare.

"But mother, who would hold your head when it aches, and bathe your temples, and kiss away the pain, and then sit and watch you while you sleep? And when the trouble comes, who would try to make it light, and help you find all the happy things to weigh against it? And who would sit with you at evening when you are so lonely? Who, mother, would read the Bible to you? For you told me but yesterday that your eyes were failing; and who would—would love you, mother? Oh, don't send me away! All those beautiful things would only make me sorry if you could not have them too; and so you must let me stay here in the old house; for it is the only place where I can be happy. God would not love me if I were to leave you with all the children to care for, and none to comfort you when you are sad."

The lady's eyes were quite suffused with the heart's-dew, as, with a mental blessing on the young girl's head, and a silent determination to reward her self-denying spirit richly, she turned away.

"You have sacrificed yourself for my sake, Ally," sobbed the dame, folding her gentle child in her arms; "Oh, why did you do it?"

"No, mother, I am happier here, and he ——" Ally pointed to the bed meaningly. "I could n't mention it before her."

"Yes, darling, you are right, as you always are; he would kill himself without you in a week, I know. But, oh, it is a dreadful thing—my poor, poor Ally!"

Ally was at her sewing, as calm and quiet as though nothing unusual had occurred, though there was a singularly bright spot on her cheek; and the dame had busied herself with preparing the children's supper, when Billy Fisher crept from the bed, and glided half-timidly to the door.

"Don't go to-night, father," whispered Ally, laying her slight hand on his, and fixing her large, mournful eyes on his face most feelingly. "Don't go; I will help you fix the

chessmen you wanted me to do last night; or I will hem the pretty new handkerchief I bought for you to-day, and sing whatever you like best while I am doing it; or I will read to you from my beautiful library book, or do anything you like—only don't go! It is very lonely here without you, father."

The lips of the miserable man parted as though he would have replied; but the word seemed choking him, and he brushed hastily past her. Tears came to Ally's eyes as she turned again to her work; but no one heeded them.

That evening passed as hundreds of others had done. The children were all sent to bed, and then Ally and her mother sat down by their one tallow candle to earn bread for them.

"It is so nice to be together," said Ally, raising a face all beaming with gratitude.

"Yes, but you lose a great deal by it, dear."

"Oh, no; I lose nothing. I should have lost a great deal if I had gone away from you. Mother, I have been wondering since this morning that God has been so kind as to keep us together, and I so ungrateful. I never knew how happy it made me to be with you till now."

"We never see half the blessings that God bestows upon us, darling."

Murmurer—you, surrounded by comforts and elegancies, feasting on dainties, and rolling in luxuries—oh, could you but look in upon dame Fisher's cottage, with its bare, broken walls, and scanty furniture! And yet the poor drunkard's wife was really more deeply blest than you—blest with the inner wealth of "a meek and quiet spirit." *She never murmured.*

The hour of ten drew near, and Ally's quick ear caught the sound of a step upon the door-stone.

"Father! he is very early. Oh, I hope he has not ——"

She had no time to finish her sentence. The door was thrown wide open with a quick, earnest, joyous dash.

"I have done it, Ally, my bird! I have done it! There—there—whist! don't look so frightened, pussy; it is nothing bad—it is something good—very good. It will make

your little heart glad, and I ought to make it glad once in your sorry life-time, birdie dear. Shall I tell you, Ally? I have taken the step, *the* step; and now, darling, your poor mother shall have somebody to love her, and so shall you too. Oh, it has been a dreadful course; it has almost broken my heart sometimes to think of my miserable ways; and I have felt the worst when you thought I was stupid and did not care. Sometimes I have been determined to break away, but then I was tempted, and could n't. Now I have done it, *never another drop to my lips!*—so help me God!”

That night there was not so happy a house in all the State of New York, as the wretched hovel to which Billy Fisher had brought such unexpected joy. And Ally. Oh, no! she never regretted having sacrificed her own bright prospects to the happiness of those she loved; for never was human heart more deeply blest than gentle, trusting Ally Fisher's. Other and more brilliant blessings now cluster around her path; but these are mere trifles compared with that great first one.

It was thine own work, sweet Ally; thy never-failing gentleness it was which won him. Go on, pure-hearted one. there is still more good for thee to do.

“Still thy smile like sunshine dart
Into many a sunless heart,
For a smile of God thou art.”

EDITH RAY.

PITY that Albums should have gone out of fashion, 'Bel. I feel like an emigrant revisiting the old homestead, when I open the embossed red morocco doors, and see the mystic furniture, in black and white, just as it came from the hands of the machinists, and yet so unlike what it was. To be sure, there are emigrants who have journeyed farther and been longer gone; but Change labors with the rapidity of second class Irish fairies, and I find but little as I left it. Come to our nestling-place on the sofa, and let us examine some of these tributes from my school-mates. Those delicate little crow-quill touches, surmounted by the two turtle doves on a green sprig smaller than themselves, and unlike anything that ever grew, are Edith Ray's. I have her bright face before me now, as it looked when, despite her notions of pretty penmanship, she assumed her own character long enough to give that preposterous flourish to the final *y*; then clapped her dainty little hands, and laughed at her own work, as fully conscious of its childishness, (billing doves and all,) as such wiseacres as you and I, 'Bel, are this morning. I thought the whole, especially the doves, miracles of prettiness then; and, strange as it may seem, I am no happier since I have discovered that they are things to laugh at.

Edith Ray was a joyous creature, with a heart so brimming over with mirthfulness, that every one who came into her presence caught the infection. She was gentle and delicate too, and yet fearless as a young eagle; doing whatever she purposed in the face of all opposition; and telling the most unwelcome truths, particularly when she might thus unmask hypocrisy, or expose anything mean and cringing. Yet everybody loved her; for although she possessed a dangerous

power, it was never called into exercise for the purpose of crushing; being kept in check by a kind and affectionate heart. Edith Ray, as all who saw her would be very likely to suppose, was an only child, and quite an heiress withal; so it is not strange that she should take a conspicuous place among the Alderbrook belles. The schoolmaster used to quote poetry to her, and bring her bouquets. Mr. Sherrill, a dashing young law student, was the companion of all her horse-back rides, and walked with her to the church-door every Sabbath morning, with the evident hope of one day handing her in very gracefully; and the doctor, the grocer, and a "wild slip" of a dry goods merchant, had severally shown an interest in Mr. Ray's affairs truly gratifying. Yet Edith would parody the schoolmaster's verses most ludicrously to his face; give her gallant squire the slip whenever it suited her convenience; and ridicule the pretensions of the others outright. It is strange that the Argus-eyed supervisors of our little village had no suspicions as to the real cause of Edith's indifference to her admirers; but certain it is that a pale, student-like face passed in and out of Mr. Ray's door, particularly on rainy evenings, and at other times when gayer ones would not be likely to interrupt the visit, without exciting the least remark. Perhaps it was because all had decided that the widow's son never would introduce a new mistress into the parsonage; and perhaps the improbability of the grave young pastor's taste leading him to make such a selection. Whatever the cause might have been, there was certainly an important, life-lasting secret locked fast in the hearts of Mr. Robson and bright Edith Ray. The young lovers were strikingly contrasted in outer seeming; but there was a rich under-current in the characters of both that perfectly harmonized; so Edith feared only for her own volatility when she gave her heart into another's keeping, and the young pastor prayed only that he might be able to repay the trust. The betrothal passed, and still the secret was not discovered; though Edith had unconsciously assumed a gentler manner, and a sweeter expression, which could not fail to excite observation.

As I said before, Edith Ray feared nothing but to do wrong; and her daring had been so much the subject of remark, that she felt some pride in exhibiting her courage; a quality which her young friends took every opportunity to test. Unknown to her companions, however, there was one point on which Edith was vulnerable; she had, when a little child, seen her own mother stretched out in death—she remembered the rigid limbs, with their white covering, giving a fearful mystery to their half-revealed outlines—and anything that bore the slightest resemblance to such a form, inspired her with horror.

It was on a fine moonlight night in midwinter, that a social group had assembled in Mr. Ray's parlor; and Edith, unlike her wont when Mr. Robson was present, had been the gayest of the party. As the evening drew to a close, Mr. Sherrill expressed a wish to see a book of engravings that had disappeared from the parlor; a desire which Edith declared such an evidence of improved taste, that it should be instantly gratified. She tripped lightly from the room; and as she disappeared we all observed that Sherrill crept carefully toward the door. The next moment a short, shrill cry, followed by a low, half-choked sound, as of one strangling, brought us to our feet. With one bound poor Sherrill was in the adjoining apartment; but he was scarce in advance of the young pastor. The rest of us followed hastily, alarmed at, we knew not what. But we soon knew. Upon a long table lay extended an object covered with a white cloth, with the moonbeams flickering over it, revealing the fearful outlines of a human figure with apparent certainty. Before this crouched young Edith Ray, with her fingers clenched in the masses of long hair descending on each side of her face, her eyes distended, and a white foam wreathing her motionless lips.

“Edith! my own Edith!” whispered Robson, in a voice hoarse with agony.

Edith started to her feet, and the mocking walls echoed her wild unnatural laugh.

“ Look, Edith — look !” entreated Sherrill ; “ it is nothing ;” and he shook out two or three cloaks artfully arranged. “ Nothing but these — I did it, Edith — I did it — I put them there to scare you !”

Edith only laughed again.

Mr. Robson drew her arm within his own, and led her quietly back into the parlor ; and poor Sherrill followed and crouched at her feet, beseeching her but to speak one word, only one word just to show that he had not murdered her. But the stricken girl only twined her hair helplessly about her fingers, and smiled.

Three years have rolled away, but they have wrought no change on the darkened spirit of Edith Ray. Mr. Robson still occupies the parsonage, but he has grown graver, and gentler, and more spiritual than ever ; and the young repress their smiles and soften their voices when he comes near ; for untold sorrow is a sacred thing. The neighbors say that Parson Robson is wholly devoted to his books, and the care of his flock. But they make a marvel of one thing. It is a great wonder to them what is the attraction at poor Mr. Ray’s, that he should spend his two hours there every evening. They never saw the stricken Edith at his feet, gazing up into his face with an expression of childish confidence ; nor heard her low, mournful murmur when he went away. Our young pastor is ever found among the sick and sorrowing ; but every effort to draw him into social life fails ; for the poor wreck, which clings to him even in her idiocy, is still borne upon his heart.

KITTY COLEMAN.

AN arrant piece of mischief was that Kitty Coleman, with her winsome ways and wicked little heart! Those large, bewildering eyes! how they poured out their strange eloquence, looking as innocent all the while as though they had peeped from their amber-fringed curtains quite by mistake, or only to join in a quadrille with the sunlight! And then those warm, ripe lips! the veritable

“rosy bed,
That a bee would choose to dream in.”

That is, a well-bred bee, which cared to pillow his head on pearls white as snow, on the heaven-side of our earthly atmosphere, and sip the honey of Hybla from the balmy air fanning his slumbers. And so wild and unmanageable was she! Oh! it was shocking to “*proper people!*” Why, she actually laughed aloud—Kitty Coleman did! I say Kitty, because in her hours of frolicking, she was very like a juvenile puss, particularly given to fun-loving: and, moreover, because everybody called her Kitty, but aunt Martha. She was a well-bred woman, who disapproved of loud laughing, romping, and nicknaming, as she did of other crimes; so she always said, Miss Catharine. People always have their trials in this world, and Kitty Coleman (so she firmly believed) would have been perfectly happy but for aunt Martha. She thought, even, that Miss Catharine’s hair—those long, golden locks, like rays of floating sunshine wandering about her shoulders, should be gathered up into a comb; and once the little lady was so obliging as to make a trial of the scheme; but, at the first bound she made after Rover, the burnished cloud broke from its ignoble bondage, and the little silver comb nestled down in the long grass forever more. Kitty *was* a sad romp.

It is a hard thing to say of one we all loved so well, but aunt Martha said it, and shook her head, and sighed the while; and the squire, aunt Martha's brother, said it, and spread open his arms for his pet to spring into; and careful old ladies said it, and said, too, what a pity it is that young ladies now-a-days should have no more regard for propriety! and even Enoch Short, the great phrenologist, buried his bony fingers in those dainty locks, that none but a phrenologist had a right to touch; and, waiting only for the long, silvery laugh, that interrupted his scientific researches, to subside, declared that her organ of mirthfulness was very strikingly developed. It was then a matter past controversy; and, of course, Kitty was expected to do what nobody else could do, and say what nobody else had a right to say; and the sin of all was chargeable to a strange idiosyncrasy, a peculiar conformation of the mind, or rather brain, over which she had no control; and so Kitty was forgiven, forgiven by all but —— we had a story to tell.

I have heard that Cupid is blind, but of that I believe not a word. Indeed, I have confirmation strong, that the malicious little knave has a sort of *clairvoyance*, and can see a heart where few would expect one to exist; for, did he not perch himself, now in the eye, and now on the lip of Kitty Coleman, and, with a marvellously steady aim, (imitating a personage a trifle more dreaded,)

“cut down all,
Both great and small?”

Blind! no, no! If the laughing rogue did fail in a single instance, it was not that he aimed falsely, or had emptied his quiver before. Harry Raymond must have had a tough heart, and so the arrow rebounded! Oh! a very stupid fellow was that Harry Raymond, and Kitty hesitated not to say it; for, after walking and riding with her all through the leafy month of June, what right had he to grow dignified all of a sudden, and look upon her, when he did at all, as though she had been a naughty child that deserved tying up? To be sure, Harry Raymond was a scholar, and in love, (as everybody

said,) with his books; but pray, what book is there of them all, that could begin to compare with Kitty Coleman?

There used to be delightful little gatherings in our village, and Kitty must of course be there; and Harry, stupid as he was, always went too. People were of course glad to see him, for the honor was something, if the company had otherwise been ever so undesirable. But Kitty hesitated not to show her dislike. She declared he did not know how to be civil; and then she sighed, (doubtlessly at the boorishness of scholars in general, and this one in particular,) then she laughed, so long and musically, that the lawyer, the schoolmaster, the four clerks, the merchant, and Lithper Lithpet, the dandy, all joined in the chorus; though not one of them could have told what the lady laughed at. Harry Raymond only looked towards the group, muttered something in a very ill-natured tone about butterflies, and then turned his back upon them and gazed out of the window, though it was very certain he could see nothing in the pitchy darkness. It was very strange that Kitty Coleman should have disregarded entirely the opinion of such a distinguished gentleman as Harry Raymond; for he had travelled, and he sported an elegant wardrobe, and owned a gay equipage, a fine house and grounds, "and everything that was handsome." But she only laughed the louder when she saw that he was displeased. Indeed, his serious face seemed to infuse the concentrated, double-distilled spirit of mirthfulness into her; and a more frolicsome creature never existed than Kitty was—until he was gone. Then, all of a sudden, she grew fatigued and must go home immediately.

Ah, Kitty! Kitty! thine hour had come; and thou wert learning now what wiser ones had long been endeavoring to teach thee—that thy mirth was but "as the crackling of thorns under a pot," soulless.

It was as much on Harry Raymond's account as her own, that aunt Martha was distressed at the hoydenish manners of her romping niece. But Kitty insisted that her manners were not hoydenish, and that if her heart overflowed, it was not her fault.

She could not shut up all her glad feelings within her; they would leap back at the call of their kindred gushing from other bosoms, and to all the beautiful things of creation as joyous in their mute eloquence as she was. Besides, the wicked little Kitty Coleman was very angry that aunt Martha should attempt to govern her conduct by the likings of Harry Raymond; and, to show that she did not care an apple-blossom for him, nor his opinions either, she was more unreasonably gay in his presence than anywhere else. But, whatever Harry Raymond might think, he did not slander the little lady. Indeed, he never was heard to speak of her but once, and then he said she had no soul. A pretty judge of soul, he, to be sure! a man without a smile! How can people who go through the world, cold and still, like the clods they tread upon, pretend to know anything about soul?

But, notwithstanding the enmity of the young people, Harry Raymond used to go to Squire Coleman's, and talk all the evening with the squire and aunt Martha, while his big, black eyes turned slowly in the direction Kitty moved, like the bewitching sylphide that she was; but Kitty did not look at him, not she! What right had a stranger, and her father's guest too, to act out his reproof in such a manner?

When Harry went away, he would bow easily and gracefully to the old people, but to the young lady he found it difficult to bend. Conduct like this provoked Kitty Coleman beyond endurance; and, one evening after the squire and spinster had left her alone, she sat down, and in very spite sobbed away as though her little heart would break. Now it happened that the squire had lent his visiter a book that evening, which, strange enough for such a scholar, he had forgotten to take with him; but luckily Harry remembered it before it was too late, and turned upon his heel. The door was open, and so he stepped at once into the parlor. Poor Kitty sprang to her feet at the intrusion, and crushed with her fingers two tears that were just ready to launch themselves on the roundest and rosier cheek in the world; but she might have done better than blind herself, for, by some means, her foot came in un-

intentional contact with aunt Martha's rocking-chair, and her forehead, in consequence, found itself resting very unceremoniously on the neck of Rover. It is very awkward to be surprised in the luxurious *abandon* of tears at any time; and it is a trifle more awkward still to stumble when you wish to be particularly dignified, and then be raised by the last person in the world from whom you would receive a favor. Kitty felt the awkwardness of her position too much to speak, and of course Harry could not release her until he knew whether she was hurt. It was certain she was not faint, for the crimson blood dyed even the tips of her fingers, and Harry's face immediately took the same hue, probably from sympathy. Kitty looked down until a golden arc of fringe rested lovingly on its glowing neighbor; and Harry, too, looked down on Kitty Coleman's face. Then came a low, soft whisper—low and soft as the breathing of an infant; and (poor Kitty *must* have been hurt and needed support) an arm stole softly around her waist, and dark locks mingled with her sunny ones, and Kitty Coleman hid her face—*not* in her hands.

Empty gayety had failed to win the heart of Harry Raymond; but the tears were triumphant.

Harry forgot his book again that night, and never thought of it till the squire put it into his hand the next morning; for Harry visited the squire very early the next morning. Very likely he came on business, for they had a private interview; and the good old gentleman slapped him on the shoulder, and said, "with all my heart;" and aunt Martha looked as glad as propriety would let her. As for Kitty Coleman, she did not show her face, not she; for she knew they were talking about her—*such* a meddler was Harry Raymond! But, as the arrant mischief-maker bounded from the door, there was a great rustling among the rose-bushes, insomuch that a shower of bright blossoms descended from them, and reddened the dewy turf; and Harry turned a face brimming over with joyfulness to the fragrant thicket, and went to search out the cause of the disturbance.

Now it happened that Kitty Coleman had hidden in this

very thicket, and she was, of course, found out ; and—I do not think that poor Kitty ever quite recovered from the effects of her fall, for the arm of Harry Raymond seemed very necessary to her forever after.

The mirth and mischief ?

Oh, they vanished with the falsehood which supported their semblance, when the first dawnings of love made the heart serious ; for love and happiness always fling the weight of *feeling* upon gayety, smothering its vain sparkles. The rich draught is never in the foam and bubbles that dance upon the brim. The *heart* never *laughs* ; but the deeper the sunshine that blesses it, the less it looks to outer things for blessings ; and so the world never prizes its light. The gay may *have* hearts, but they have never learned to use them—never learned to think, to feel, to love. Who will may imitate Kitty Coleman and the butterflies ; but there are those who are wiser, and love better the sweet seriousness beaming like the mellow August moon-ray above hidden heart-treasures.

22*

ROBERT FLEMMING;

A VERITABLE TALE, SHOWING

"WHAT THAT BOY DID COME TO AT LAST."

"RACHEL," said a young farmer to his wife, as he entered the house, leading by the hand a curly-headed little fellow, with a particularly bright eye and a mouth with a particularly roguish curl to it—"Rachel, you were wishing yesterday you had a boy; I have brought one home to you."

The young woman dropped the broom which she was wielding with much spirit, and turning short round, placed her two bared arms akimbo. "Well, Eben Howe, you are just the strangest man that I ever saw. What *do* you suppose I can do with a boy, when I have everything under the sun to do, and nobody to help?"

"Why, it is to help you that I have brought him home, Rachel."

"Help! yes, I'll warrant me, such help as I get from everybody that comes into this house. You brought grandmamma to help me, too, I suppose, and——"

"Rachel!" exclaimed the young man, in a tone of sorrowful surprise.

"Not that I mind the trouble with her," resumed the wife, not much abashed; "there's nothing that I like better than waiting on grandmamma; but you've no idea, Eben, of the wear and tear of the slavish life I lead. Here's the baby has done nothing but cry all day long——"

"Well, well, Rachel; never mind——"

"Never mind! Oh, yes, that's always the way. If I should kill myself, you'd say 'never mind!'"

"I mean don't mind anything about the boy. I got him to assist you; but if you think he would make trouble——"

"Make trouble, Eben? Why, I would rather do every

chore myself than have the trouble of following after a boy, watching to see that things were done right, and slaving myself to death to do his washing and mending."

"Very well, Rachel, I can take him back to-morrow, when I go to carry the wool to Smith's. I wish we could contrive some way of lightening your cares, though. If you would only consent to hire a girl——"

"Hire! No—no; I'm not the lazy woman you take me for, Eben Howe. Hire, indeed! Why, I should have the whole neighborhood laughing at me, as they do at that shiftless Mrs. Wood. No; I'll work my fingers off up to the joints, before I'll have it said that Rachel Ellis set up for a lady as soon as she got married, and ruined her husband by her extravagance."

"Nobody would say that, Rachel. But supposing we adopt a little girl, would she make as much trouble as a boy?"

"A thousand times more. I would n't bring up a girl for the world."

Mr. Howe glanced at the cradle.

"One not my own, I mean. A girl could n't cut wood and take care of the cattle when you were gone."

"And a boy could."

"Yes; and—he could look after the baby."

"Certainly."

"And help scrub floor."

"Of course."

"And run of all sorts of errands."

"And bring water from the spring."

"And—and—oh, a boy could do a great deal. Then I could alter over your old clothes for him, and we never have a scant table; so the keeping would n't be much."

"A mere trifle. But consider the trouble to yourself, Rachel."

"Why, as to that, I am pretty strong yet, and should n't mind a little more work, if the boy was faithful and willing. I hope he did n't come from a poor, miserable hut, like the

Murphys; we never could break him of his bad habits, if he did."

"The boy has been well taught, I am certain, Rachel. If he had bad habits, he would be unlike——"

Howe hesitated to say whom, and his wife, without noting it, inquired—"What kind of a bargain have you made, Eben?"

"If we conclude it is best, we can have him three months on trial——"

"Three months, and haying and harvesting all over! Why, a baby could do all the chores we shall have to do."

"Oh, that is of no great consequence——"

"I tell you, Eben Howe, it is of a great deal of consequence when you take any one on trial, that there should be plenty of work to do, and that of the right kind."

"Yes—yes, I know it, Rachel; but if three months don't satisfy us, I presume we can try him a year; we can keep him as long as we please, and send him away when we please. Poor woman! she has not the power to choose," he added, in an under tone.

"Ah, that is something like. What then?"

"Why, if we finally conclude to keep him, we are to consider him as our own boy, treat him well——"

"I hope we are not the folks to treat him ill."

"I am sure *you* will not, Rachel. Then we are to feed and clothe him only——"

"Only! I guess you'd not say *only*, if you knew what that would be. He'll wear out clothes faster than I can make them, I'll warrant, and eat as much as a man."

"So you think it will be very expensive to keep him?"

"No, not expensive exactly—no, not at all. I told you that I could manage the clothing part nicely, and one mouth in a family where there's always plenty don't make much difference."

"But the trouble to you?"

"Oh, I should n't mind it much. I suppose we can keep him till he's twenty-one?"

“Yes, if he is bound.”

“Well, we won't have him bound. I would n't have a bound-boy about the house. He shall be free to go any minute he chooses; though, to be sure, if he prove to be a good boy, we will keep him to bring up, and do well by him, won't we, Eben?”

“That can be decided hereafter; but there's one more item in the bargain. We are to send him to school three months every year.”

“To school, indeed! And where's the money to come from, and the—and the—? Now, Eben Howe, *can* you think of doing such a foolish thing as that? Three months every year! A quarter of the time idled away, books torn and money spent, and all for nothing but to keep a lazy, good-for-nothing boy away from his work!”

“I should n't like to have any one about my house that could n't read.”

“Mercy me, I hope not—that could n't read the Bible! We are not quite such heathen yet. But do tell what's the use of so *much* schooling?”

“It is no more than I hope all American boys, however poor, will be able to receive, Rachel. Education, you know the lecturer told us last evening, is the ‘freeman's birthright.’ What say you, Rachel; shall we keep him?”

“Well, I don't know as we shall do any better. Have you had your supper, boy?”

During this long dialogue, the little fellow, now for the first time addressed, had stood digging with his bare toes into a crack between the boards of the floor, his roguish black eye fixed upon a sleepy dog that lay stretched in the corner, and his fore-finger very intent on poking itself through the braids of his straw hat. Thus called upon, however, he turned his little round face for the first time upon Mrs. Howe, and while his cherry cheek became purple, and his plump, pouting lips rolled back still farther, very deliberately answered, “I guess I shan't stay here; I don't like to be scolded at.”

“Robert!” exclaimed Mr. Howe, in alarm—“Robert!”

"Well taught, indeed!" began his wife, in an angry tone
"Well — well, Eben Howe ——"

"My name is n't 'Well Eben Howe,'" said the little fellow, straightening himself up and drawing down the corners of his mouth, as though he had received a great insult, "my name is Robert Flemming!"

"Robert Flemming, eh?" laughed Mrs. Howe, excited to mirth, in spite of herself, by the look of offended dignity which accompanied the boy's disclaimer. "*Master* Robert Flemming, I suppose we must call you, and ——. Bless me, the child is eating up his own hat! Ha, ha!"

The boy looked up into the face of the speaker, as though unable to comprehend such a singular character, then, apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, joined his clear, silvery voice with hers in a very merry laugh; and springing forward, laid his curly head on the neck of the dog, and a moment after, was rolling over the floor, engaged in a rare frolic with his new companion. The baby, as a child nearly a year old was called, hearing the racket, raised its little night-capped head from the cradle, and clapped together its dimpled hands, and crowed with infinite delight; while grandmamma, crippled by age and rheumatism, hobbled forward and stood in the doorway, joining, with her cracked, hollow voice, in the general expression of mirth. Mr. Howe, too, laughed, amused at the turn affairs had taken no less than by the gambols of the boy and dog, till at last recollecting himself, he called Jowler away, and patting Robert affectionately on the head, bade him bring his bundle from the cart and stow it away in the loft, which was to be his sleeping-place.

Robert Flemming was a beautiful boy (if health and happiness can shed beauty on a face made up of rather irregular features) of eight, possessed of his full share of animal spirits, his young head overshadowed by the clouds of an unusually dark fortune, but with a heart that bounded as lightly in his bosom as ever heart could bound. His mother was a delicate young creature, that had been made a wife before she was capable of comprehending the duties and responsibilities of

the station; and now her loving heart was well nigh crushed beneath the weight of her many cares, and she labored and wept from morning till night, and all night long upon her pillow strained her aching head with visionary projects that the coming light was sure to dissipate. The father of little Robert was one of those who, perhaps as often as better men, lead to the altar the gentle and pure-hearted,—a man of gross appetites and feelings, devoid of that refinement which nature herself grants most of her children, a slave to his passions and a hopeless drunkard.

Ebenezer Howe had known Mrs. Flemming in the days of childhood, and his own benevolent heart induced him to relieve her of her heaviest burthen, the care of a bold-spirited boy, who would soon be grown beyond her influence. Yet the poor mother, notwithstanding her own destitute circumstances, had stipulated for the usual privileges allowed a boy in his situation, and gained a promise that his education should not be neglected. “For,” said she, “he is a wild boy and a careless boy, though a better heart never beat; but I don’t know what the poor little fellow will come to at last. I have taught him to read, myself, while I sat sewing for bread; and I would work still harder and send him to school, rather than to have him grow up in ignorance.”

Mr. Howe too well understood his wife’s foibles to make known to her the true reason of his taking a boy to “bring up;” and so he treated it as a matter of interest and convenience merely, trusting that the child himself would soon enlist her better feelings in his welfare. Mrs. Howe was not an unkind woman as far as action was concerned, but she owned a tongue that was incorrigible. Never human being was so difficult to please if the fault-finding were left to herself; and yet she was a wonderful adept at smoothing away difficulties and removing even her own objections to a plan when she heard them from the lips of another. Her benevolence, which was oftentimes real and heartfelt, was subject to the whimsical variations of her fitful nature; for she was always capricious and sometimes unreasonably exacting. But

of all good housewives Mrs. Howe was the very best. Her table linen was as white as the driven snow, and her table — oh, it would have gladdened any stomach not perverted by French cookery to look upon it. Then her floors (she would n't have such a dirty thing as a carpet — not she) were scrubbed with soap and sand every morning, and her chairs bottomed with basket work, her pine mantelpiece and cupboard shelves had entirely lost the yellow hue peculiar to the wood, and vied with her carefully bleached window-curtains in whiteness. Now all this could not be accomplished without a vast amount of labor; and hence Mrs. Howe's cares, of which her husband had spoken so feelingly. Yet no one, who had once looked on the plump, rosy face and robust figure of the young wife, would fail to laugh at the idea of her being careworn.

Mrs. Howe soon began to love little Robert very dearly, though he kept her in constant fear by his carelessness, and every day she was heard to wonder what that boy would come to. If he attempted to bring the castor to the table he was sure to drop it; the meat always got burned when he was stationed to watch it; the wood that he cut was either too large or made into fine splinters; and when he milked, if the cow neglected to set her foot in the pail, Jowler, who was ever by his side in field, house or barn-yard, substituted his nose and paw, placing it in the condition of the country maid's in the spelling-book. Yet Robert was not an ungrateful lad; and when Mr. Howe talked seriously to him of his carelessness, he would make — oh, such firm resolves never, *never* to cause his kind benefactor another moment of trouble, that no one, could those resolves have been rendered visible, would have doubted his reformation. But, alas for Robert! no sooner did Jowler rub his cold nose against his hand, or little Hetty crow from the cradle, than the admonitory voice of his master was drowned in his own mirthful shout, and his admonitions entirely obliterated from memory. Mrs. Howe scolded and flattered by turns, now threatening to send him home, again raising her hand to give him a blow, which the

little fellow always contrived to dodge, and at other times laughing immoderately at the amusing nature of his blunders. If Robert could have been spoiled, this was, of all others, the very place for doing it; but somehow every influence over him seemed powerless either to sober or corrupt his heart. So it still remained a great mystery to Mrs. Howe and to Mr. Howe, and to some of the Howes' less interested neighbors, what that boy would come to at last. "There is *enough in him*," was a very common remark, "but —." Then followed an ominous shake of the head. Certainly Robert Flemming was not in a position to have his talents, if talents he had, understood and developed. Perhaps it was the position which shadowed his promise.

What an oddity is a country newspaper! — always retailing second-hand news that is news no longer, relating anecdotes that have been fifty times repeated, and reviving old worn-out tales which would otherwise go down to oblivion. And yet, somehow, this news is always worth hearing, these anecdotes are at least as witty as some of the new ones, and these tales are very apt to be sensible and moral. But one thing is certain — nowhere will you find better informed people — that is, those who better understand all the principal movements of the day, whether political, moral or religious, than the readers of a country newspaper. The reason may be that they have so little else to read. At any rate, that was why little Robert Flemming pored so untiringly over the two sheets which weekly found their way into Mr. Howe's dwelling. About the time the newspaper was expected to arrive, it was in vain that Mr. Howe issued his orders and Mrs. Howe scolded, in vain did Jowler jump and Hetty crow. Robert responded to each, but not heartily; he said, "I will, sir," to Mr. Howe; "Yes'em," to Mrs. Howe; twisted Jowler's collar about his unconscious hands till the poor dog was half choked; cried "Bo-peep" to Hetty through his fingers when his head was turned the other way, and, in the midst of the whole, darted off to the road to look for the post-boy.

'Well,' said Mrs. Howe, one day, when this had occurred

at precisely the moment when she was wanting a pail of water — “ Well, if this is n’t enough to wear out the patience of Job ! I don’t know what that boy will come to at last, but — ;” then followed a solemn shake of the head. “ He is the worst boy in the neighborhood, and I can’t bear any longer with him, I am sure I can’t. I wish all the newspapers were burnt up.”

“ I was just thinking,” was the quiet response, “ that the year will be out soon, and — ”

“ You don’t think of stopping the paper ? ”

“ It might be well to stop it for a quarter, for Robert is getting very troublesome, and we should neither of us like to part with him just now.”

“ Really, Eben Howe, I should n’t think that of you, after your grand notions about schooling and such like things. Why, do you think I would keep house without as much as one paper ? It’s but little time I get to read, to be sure, such a dog’s life I lead of it ; but I should be ashamed to own we were such heathen as not to take a newspaper.”

“ Well, what shall we do, Rachel ? ”

“ Do ? Why, it is pretty government that you have, I must say, to let a boy like that ride over you rough-shod ! I’d tie him to the bed-post, if I could n’t do anything else with him.”

“ I don’t know of anything that would be likely to please him better.”

“ Now, Eben, that is going a little too far. I know Robert’s faults as well as anybody, but it can’t be said that he is a lazy boy. He does twice as much as Joseph Smith, and Joe is four years older than he. No — no ; let Robert be what he may, he is industrious — I’ll say that for him.”

“ Yes, industrious enough when he takes the fit ; but look at him now ;” and Mr. Howe pointed to the roadside, where Robert, perched upon the fence, was eagerly unfolding his damp paper.

This was the signal for an attack upon the boy ; and his capricious mistress wheeled about as readily as was her wont.

Robert obeyed her boisterous call, though rather hesitatingly ; and, being in the midst of a spirited description of a tiger hunt, he did not raise his eyes, but read as he walked slowly to the house.

“ Come, go to work, you good-for-nothing blockhead ! ” exclaimed the vixen. “ Do you suppose we are to give you a good home and clothe and feed you for nothing ? ”

“ Yes'em ! ” replied Robert, mechanically ; for the tiger had just turned about ready for a spring upon her pursuers, and the story had become intensely interesting.

This time Robert's art as a dodger failed, or it may be that he neglected to use it, for Mrs. Howe's hand came down certainly not very gently on his ear, which so surprised the absent-minded young gentleman that he gave a scream and a leap, alighting at last upon poor Jowler's paw. The yell of the dog, together with the instability of his footing, induced Robert to take another step, which brought him in contact with the cradle ; and the next moment he found himself on the other side, little Hetty kicking and screaming beside him, and Jowler nosing about and frolicking in the midst as though all this was to him rare sport. The entrance of a neighbor at this juncture was like slipping from the hands of the hangman to Master Robert, for Mrs. Howe was obliged to soothe the baby, and Mr. Howe to entertain the visitor. “ I don't know what that boy will come to yet, ” was all he heard as he made his exit, grasping the unfortunate cause of all his difficulties with both hands.

Robert profited wonderfully by his three months at school, and Mrs. Howe felt almost a mother's pride while listening to his praises. Yet, morning, noon and night, as regularly as the recurrence of his meals, came the scolding ; so that, in process of time, he became quite accustomed to it, and would have felt much surprise at its omission. But notwithstanding Robert gained honor in the district school, it would not balance the dishonor he gained out of it ; for was n't it he that coaxed the boys away to the pond to slide, the day they all fell in and got such a wetting ?—and was n't it he that

lamed Squire White's pony when he made the poor, awkward beast enact Bucephalus, to the terror as well as admiration of the whole school? To be sure, in the first case, he risked his own life and displayed as much presence of mind as ingenuity in saving his companions; and, in the other, he took untiring care of the injured limb till it was quite well again. But what had that to do with the matter? The mischief was done, and done by Robert, and everybody wondered what that shockingly bad, hare-brained boy would come to. But the worst of it was, they wondered what made Mr. Howe keep him — a wonder which, since Mr. Howe himself joined in it, was like to prove a serious affair to the young scapegrace. To be sure, he was always contriving improvements — some useful, some of them complete failures; but what did Mr. Howe want of a boy to make wind-mills, plant trees in the yard, find all the boys in the neighborhood in hand-sleds and balls, and ride the unbroken colt without a saddle? Robert was industrious, nobody could gainsay that; but *such* industry! He declared it was the dullest thing in the world to saw wood all day, unless he might be allowed to spoil the saw by diversions in favor of the line of beauty, which Robert knew even in babyhood was not a straight line; and picking stones in the meadow, when no opportunity was allowed him for building palaces and pyramids, was an employment he detested. Mr. Howe was of the opinion that boys should never think of anything but what they are bidden to do; and so Robert's extra services, particularly when they encroached upon the time that should have been devoted to other things, all went for nothing; yet he could not bear to send the boy away, for he was the best-hearted little fellow in the world, and in one case, if no other, showed that he could be careful. Little Hetty, no longer a baby, followed him about as constantly as did old Jowler; and carefully indeed did Master Robert guard her; carefully did he lift her over the mud, finding a safe spot for her tiny foot on the dry ground, or seating her on the soft moss while he gathered buttercups and daisies for her; and then he led her gently by the hand, and

pulled down the berry bushes that she might pick the fruit with her own fingers, while he warned her against the thorns, and drew her little red blanket about her shoulders lest she should suffer from the cool air.

But the time at last arrived when Robert Flemming was to take leave of his kind master and benefactor. To be sure he was not *twenty-one*, but the farmer concluded as he had set his heart on going, there was no use in detaining him, though the sacrifice was much greater than he had anticipated. "But it is my mind, Robert, that you had better stick to farming," he remarked, shaking his head gravely; "it is the most honorable and honest of all callings, and can never disgrace anybody."

Mrs. Howe thought him an ungrateful wretch, to forsake the house that had sheltered him so many years; talked pathetically of the unsatisfying nature of the world that he was going out to try, and at last concluded by a burst of tears and a speech, in which were mingled so much invective, affection and sad apprehensions for the future, that even Robert, accustomed as he was to her moods, felt confused, and could only say, "You will get a better boy, Mrs. Howe. I have made you a great deal of trouble."

From little Hetty, as she was still called, the parting was yet more difficult. Hetty had all her mother's spirit, but the disagreeable example continually before her eyes had prevented her from displaying it in the same manner, and her look of sorrowful reproach went to Robert's heart. He knew how sad his little favorite would be if he left her alone, and for a moment his resolution was shaken. Why should he go away from the friends that loved him dearly, that had befriended him in his worse than orphan state? But Robert hesitated only a moment. It was no idle caprice that took him away, but there was a necessity in the case; his future prospects, his personal independence, were involved in it. So he led his little playmate to the top of the hill that looked down upon the neighboring village, and there, promising that he would see her very, very often, and would

always bring her something nice from the town, he kissed her forehead, eyes and lips, over and over again; then, dashing away the tears that he thought quite unmanly in a youth of sixteen, he trudged steadily down the hill, not trusting himself to look back, for he knew that the child would maintain her position there till he was quite out of sight.

In choosing a profession, Robert Flemming was true to his early preference; and with the flattering credentials furnished him by Mr. Howe and his old schoolmaster, it was not difficult for him to gain admission into a printing establishment, where he could read of tiger hunts and other wondrous things to his heart's content. We have no inclination to follow our hero through his five years of apprenticeship — not dull, oh, no; — time never hung heavily on Robert Flemming's hands; but sometimes laborious, and never without its peculiar trials. The indignities to which a sensitive nature is subjected by its inferiors, when fortune obliges them to come in contact, are not borne without an effort. But at last his term of service expired, and then, pennyless, but by no means friendless, he had another long probation to undergo ere he could feel himself quite a man among other men. But one truth had been indelibly impressed on the mind of the boy by his sensible master, which many young men of promise have been ruined by not understanding. Young Flemming knew that in this every-day world, few could step at once into fortune — that *persevering industry is the only sure ladder to preferment.*

A country wedding is an affair of importance; and when it was noised throughout a certain neighborhood that "that wild boy, Robert, had returned to marry Hetty," it created as great a sensation as the arrival of a foreign *danseuse* would have produced in other circles. The young men thought the handsome Miss Hester Howe, heiress to all her father's broad lands, very foolish to throw herself away in such a manner; the young misses pursed up their mouths, both pretty and ugly, and declared that these proud folks never made out very well, and to their minds she deserved nothing better; while

the old people all agreed that it was a "pretty risky business." And so it might have been, but our idler had learned something of himself, and of the responsibilities attendant upon *living*; and a change had come over his mind and habits. And the Howes acted with becoming independence on the occasion — Mrs. Howe even going so far as to give some of the most impertinent of the meddlers "a piece of her mind;" and the wedding went off at last to the admiration of everybody. Robert Flemming's cheerful, manly face and commanding figure, did much to turn the current of *public opinion* in his favor; and the hearty grasp of the hand with which he met his old acquaintances, together with the political information that he furnished Squire White, who had not seen the late papers, completed his conquest over their hearts. Busily wagged many a tongue on the morning of the wedding; though, strange as it may seem, nearly everybody had foreseen how matters would turn out, from the very first, particularly those who had thrown up their indignant hands the highest, and wondered the loudest what that boy would come to.

"And now you are one of us in earnest," said Mr. Howe, wringing the tough hand of the bridegroom; "and I shall be almost as proud to call you my son as I should if you had been a farmer."

"And I as proud to call you father as though you were a king," returned the young man, warmly.

"President, you mean—say president!" exclaimed old Squire White, warmly, who, from having been a "*seventy-sixer*," thought that kings should be classed with "other pirates and robbers," and never let slip an opportunity to lift up his voice against them. "It's a shame for American boys to be talking after this sort of the oppressor who sets his heel on——"

"But presidents and presidents' sons should n't be proud, you know; that would be anti-republican," interrupted Robert Flemming, good-humoredly, "and so the comparison would n't be in point."

“Proud!—no, no, that they should n’t,” muttered the old man, while Robert turned again to his father-in-law.

“It shall be the study of my life to repay the kindness shown to an untaught, friendless boy, who, without you——”

“Would have done well, Robert; I see it, I know it now, though there was a time when I used to have my fears of what you would come to at last.”

“Now, Eben Howe, do get out of the way!” exclaimed a shrill voice close at hand; “how can the dear boy speak to his mother while you stand mumbling and fumbling at this rate, owning yourself the half-hearted man that you are, never seeing an inch ahead. It is well that everybody was n’t so blind Robert, or else——” The old lady finished the sentence by a knowing glance towards the bevy of peony-cheeked damsels surrounding her daughter. “And yet here you stand talking with all the old men, and shaking hands with everybody, as though you had n’t a word for your mother.”

“My mother truly—doubly so!” said the young man, imprinting a hearty kiss upon the cheek, which, although somewhat withered, now glowed with the excitement of the moment; “and the very kindest of mothers have you been to me, from the moment of my frolic with Jowler (poor old Jowler! it seemed like losing a human friend when he died) up to the present time.”

“Ay—ay, so you say; but it is little you act as though you thought you had ever received the least kindness from the poor creature you have come to rob of all she ever had to love.”

The raised tone of voice could not fail to reach the ears of the bride, and *such* an entreating look! It might have melted a sterner heart than Mrs. Howe’s—that is, if stern hearts were furnished with eyes to see it with.

“I have certainly caused you no small degree of trouble,” Robert Flemming began, but he was interrupted.

“No—no, you never made any trouble, Robert, not the

east; but I do think you might just come and live with us on the farm, where there 's thousands to support us all——”

“Mother——mother,” whispered the bride, touching her arm with a finger all in a quiver, “mother, don't; everybody is hearing you; don't, I entreat!”

“And what if everybody is hearing me? What have I said to be ashamed of? I say there 's thousands for us all, and it's a shame, and a sin, and a disgrace, for Robert Flemming——”

“But, mother dear, that has been all settled, you know,” again interposed the bride, in a tremulous whisper.

“Yes, I know it has been all settled; but who settled it, Hetty Howe——Miss Hetty Flemming, as I suppose I must say after this——who settled it, and——”

“We will unsettle it, Rachel,” said Mr. Howe, with a glance which added, “What a pity nobody but me knows how to manage her!”——“we will unsettle it, and Robert shall live with us *willy nilly*.”

“Shall! you don't mean *shall*, I hope? Robert has always had his own way, and I'm the last one to interfere with his doings, though he does take the heart out of me and leave the old house desolate. It is a sad thing——a sad——. There, the very papers of cake I had put up for the Thomp-sons! I never! The idea of Becky's bringing such a troop of children with her!”

Year on year had passed, and each, as is the custom with years, left a token; a great one with the great, and a simpler one with the lowly. Even old Time is an aristocrat. A church, a new school-house, and a cluster of dwelling-houses had been erected in the neighborhood of Mr. Howe; while another Robert Flemming, as roguish, as heedless, and as fond of newspapers as the first, had grown almost as tall as his father, and so undertaken the management of his grand-father's farm. Everything was changed. Even a new generation of beings had sprung up around the old farmer and his still wrangling but kind-hearted spouse.

It was a biting cold night. Ugh! what a shiver the swinging of a door sent over pleasant fire-lit rooms! how thankful thinking people were for the roof that reflected back the blaze upon them! But the fireside, lavishly comfortable as it was, was not all powerful. Affairs of importance were to be discussed, and so all the men in the neighborhood were collected in the school-house. A thin-faced man had taken the chair, and a fair-haired one beside him was about unfolding a paper, probably fraught with weighty matters, when the door opened, and in hobbled old Squire White. He held in his hand a crushed newspaper, his long, silvery hair, which was usually braided over his bald crown, was straggling about his shoulders and floating off on every puff of air; his spectacles were across his forehead instead of his nose, and the Sunday hat of his grandson was stuck jauntily (as hats too small must be) on one side of his head.

“Hurrah, boys!” exclaimed the old man, tottering towards the middle of the room, and flourishing his cane with an arm not yet quite nerveless; “returns from all the principal counties, and the ’lection is sartin. Three cheers for Robert Flemming, the best governor that ever set foot in York state. The blood of ’76 is a-stirring yet, I can tell ye, boys! Why don’t ye shout? Hurra—a—a!” and as the successive peals died away, the old man raised his palsied hands and exclaimed, “Well, the ways of Providence *are* marvellous! Who would have thought when little Bobby Flemming lamed my pony, that he would ever come to this?”

It is possible that some knowing politician may attempt to dispute the accuracy of my veritable history; but I defy his ingenuity, except with regard to the name of Robert Flemming. There I will plead guilty to romancing, it being only a veil hung by the hand of propriety over one as widely known and dearly loved as any on whom the Empire state has ever bestowed her honors.

TO MY MOTHER.

[WRITTEN AFTER A SHORT ABSENCE.]

GIVE me my old seat, mother,
 With my head upon thy knee ;
 I've passed through many a changing scene
 Since thus I sat by thee.

Oh ! let me look into thine eyes —
 Their meek, soft, loving light
 Falls like a gleam of holiness
 Upon my heart to-night.

I've not been long away, mother ,
 Few suns have rose and set,
 Since last the tear-drop on thy cheek
 My lips in kisses met ;
 'Tis but a little time, I know,
 But very long it seems,
 Though every night I came to thee,
 Dear mother, in my dreams.

The world has kindly dealt, mother,
 By the child thou lov'st so well ;
 Thy prayers have circled round her path,
 And 't was their holy spell
 Which made that path so dearly bright,
 Which strewed the roses there ;
 Which gave the light, and cast the balm
 On every breath of air.

I bear a happy heart, mother ;
 A happier never beat ;
 And even now new buds of hope
 Are bursting at my feet.

Oh, mother ! life may be "a dream,"
But if such *dreams* are given,
While at the portal thus we stand,
What are the *truths* of heaven ?

I bear a happy heart, mother ;
Yet, when fond eyes I see,
And hear soft tones and winning words,
I ever think of thee.
And then, the tear my spirit weeps
Unbidden fills my eye ;
And like a homeless dove, I long
Unto thy breast to fly.

Then, I am very sad, mother,
I 'm very sad and lone ;
Oh ! there 's no heart, whose inmost fold
Opes to me like thine own !
Though sunny smiles wreath the blooming lips,
While love-tones meet my ear ;
My mother, one fond glance of thine
Were thousand times more dear.

Then, with a closer clasp, mother,
Now hold me to thy heart ;
I 'd feel it beating 'gainst my own
Once more before we part.
And, mother, to this love-lit spot,
When I am far away,
Come oft — *too oft* thou canst not come . —
And for thy darling pray.

A P R I L .

THE spring-time is coming, the merry-voiced spring !
 Young beauty awakes, with the wave of her wing ;
 And the bright heavens ringing with music and mirth,
 From hill, vale, and woodland, are echoed by earth.
 The spring-time ! the spring-time ! there come with the word
 The dash of the glad rain, the voice of the bird,
 The gushing of streamlets, the swelling of floods,
 The springing of verdure, and bursting of buds.

The bright spring is coming ! I feel even now
 The spirit-like touch of her breath on my brow ;
 Her varied light streams over valley and hill,
 And breaks in gay flashes from fountain and rill.
 But the flashing of eyes, with more beautiful light,
 And the streaming of tresses, as golden and bright,
 Are missed from the hearth-stone, are missed from the hall,
 Nor come with the blossoms of spring at her call.

And she glads not the mourner, whose treasure is crushed,
 And laid where the song and the laughter are hushed,
 Though golden-eyed mosses their rich mantle spread,
 And flower-censers swing o'er the grave of the dead.
 Nor glads she the captive, for in his lone cell ;
 Waits hollow-eyed woe, the slow moments to tell ;
 And the exile's foot falters, as memory weaves
 Fond tales with the spreading of wings and of leaves.

Oh ! there are full many that may not be glad !
 Want's children are haggard, sin's worshippers mad ;
 Lips bright as the fruit-buds are steeped in despair,
 And foot-falls like fairies' grow heavy with care ;

And even gay spirits, that welcome the spring,
 As they move in the sunlight, a dark shadow fling;
 Glad, glad are they now, — with the weeper they'll weep;
 Life bounds in each pulse, — with the sleeper they'll sleep.

A WISH.

'T is beautiful! 't is beautiful!
 That soft, rich, half-veiled light,
 Flung by the beams which warmed the day,
 Upon the brow of night.

So when life's golden day shall close,
 And on my mother's breast
 I slumbering lie, may love still smile
 Upon my shadowy rest.

TO AN INFANT.

THE glittering wing, that a leaf might crush,
 A silvery voice, that a breath might hush,
 A dew-drop, quivering on a flower,
 The flickering blush of the sunset hour,
 The chain of pearls round the brow of night,
 That melts and is lost in the morning light, —
 All things gentle, pure and free,
 And fragile, are but types of thee.

THE OLD MAN.—A FACT.

THE old dry leaf came circling down,
 On a windy autumn day, —
 The leaf all sere, and glazed, and brown, —
 On the bleak, bare hill to play ;
 And the sky put on its drearest frown
 On that windy autumn day.

The heavy clouds went drifting by,
 As gray as gray could be,
 And not a speck of azure sky
 Could the crime-chased wanderer see ;
 That dark stern man, low crouching by
 The gnarléd old oak tree.

But drearer grew the inky sky,
 As daylight fled away ;
 And the winds more madly hurried by,
 As if they dared not stay :
 Howling afar and shrieking nigh,
 In wild unearthly play.

Then the old man shook his hoary head,
 As on his staff leaned he ;
 For the sky above with blood seemed red,
 And the earth a bloody sea ;
 And on him crimson drops were shed
 From the boughs of the old oak tree.

Then the old man laughed a horrid laugh,
 And shook his head again ;
 And clenching fast his crooked staff,
 He hurried toward the plain ;
 And the hills rung back his hellish laugh,
 And the wild winds laughed amain.

On, on he strode, but still there rung
Those echoes from the hill ;
And livid clouds above him hung,
And forms, his blood to chill,
High o'er his head in mid-air swung,
And all were laughing still.

The old man noted not his way,
For his heart grew cold with fear ;
Grim thoughts, that dare not meet the day,
Were muttered in his ear,
And his flying feet seemed yet to stay
Those fearful things to hear.

He had trod that self-same path before,
Ere evening, when he fled
A mangled form all bathed in gore,
And to the hill-side sped ;
And now, at mid-night, met once more
The murderer and his dead.

Hushed were the winds, the clouds rolled back,
And on that lonely dell,
Revealing full a blood-marked track,
The cold, pale starlight fell ;—
Ah ! light the old man did not lack,
His handiwork to tell.

He had loved full long and well the youth,
In cold, dumb quiet lain ;
But what to him were love and truth,
For bitter words and vain
Had passed that day, and now, in sooth,
He ne'er might love again.

Morn came ; and on one fearful bed,
In that dark, lonely wild,
With sere brown leaves of autumn spread,
The sun looked down and smiled ;
Smiled, though there lay stiff, cold, and dead,
The old man and his child.

GRANDFATHER.

THE old man's eyes are dim and cold ;
 His pulse beats fitfully and low ;
 He whispers oft, "I'm old—I'm old!"
 And brokenly the sad words flow ;
 But, like the troubles of a child,
 The old man's griefs are all beguiled.

The hair above his wrinkled brow
 Is braided like a wreath of snow ;
 Years have not made his shoulders bow.
 But his worn foot is weak and slow ;
 And totteringly the old man moves
 Among the things his fond heart loves.

His boyish feats are o'er and o'er
 In pride recounted every day ;
 And then he sighs that all who bore
 A share, have mouldered back to clay ;
 A tear just wets his eyelid's rim,
 Making the pale eye still more dim.

But soon another memory wakes,
 Of prank wild, mischievous, and bold ;
 His trembling voice in mirth oft breaks,
 While merrily the tale is told ;
 And then he laughs, long, loud, and free,
 And claps his withered hands in glee.

But tales of darker, sterner days,
 The old man loves the best to tell,—
 The rumor wild, the dumb amaze,
 The struggling bosom's fitful swell,

While Liberty was yet in bud,
And e'en the bravest shrunk from blood.

The rude old church within the wood
Must in his rambling tale have share;
He tells how one blithe day he stood
Within that solemn place of prayer,
When with a scroll a stranger came,
Which turned the latent fire to flame.

How throbbed the pulse! how leaped the heart!
How flashed the valor-lighted eye!
What tears from close-shut lids *would* start,
Though maiden pride suppressed the sigh!
How many a cheek forgot its glow,
And many a voice was choked with woe!

Now hastes the old man in his story,
Thick-coming memories on him crowd,—
The proud array, the battle gory,
The buried chieftain's starry shroud,
The midnight march, the ambush sly,
The savage yell and victim's cry.

The deed of daring proud, the word—
Here soaring memory stays her wing;
Some melody within is stirred,
And tears are trembling on the string;
For dearer meed the brave ne'er won,
Than praise from lips of Washington.

Around the things of later years
A veil of shadowy mist is cast;
The clearest, deepest voice he hears,
Steals upward from the distant past;
And as the lengthening vista grows,
Each far-off vision brighter glows.

He 's going downward to the grave,
The good, the kind, the dear old man ;
A worn bark drifting on the wave,
Which the soft breeze, that comes to fan,
May wreck, while other vessels lie,
With canvass spread, scarce rocking, nigh.

He 's going downward to the grave,
Yet bears a palm-branch in his hand ;
Pauses his standard high to wave,
Ere treading on the blood-bought strand ;—
Ah ! church and hearth will mourn thy loss,
Thou brave old soldier of the cross !

I love that dear, kind, wrinkled brow ;
I love the dim and faded eye ;
I love to see the calm saint bow,
With those he loves all kneeling by ;
For some strange power must sure be given
To prayers breathed on the verge of heaven.

THE DYING EXILE.

THE forms of those I love !
 They throng around me now ;
 And my mother's soothing hand
 Rests on my aching brow ;
 Her face is o'er me bending,
 And, again a boy, I lie
 In the dear moss-mantled cottage,
 To the gray old forest nigh.

My brother's bounding step,
 And thrilling shout of glee,
 My father's eye of pride,
 As he turns from him to me ;
 My sister's clustering ringlets,
 And the love-light on her brow ;—
 Oh the loved, the loved of childhood.
 They are all before me now.

Soft, soft the dewy lips
 To my fevered lips now pressed ;
 And melting are the meek eyes
 That on me fondly rest ;
 Oh, musical the voices
 That float about my bed,
 And my mother's hand is resting
 Upon my aching head.

And now the vision wanes ;
 Strange faces meet my eye,
 And careless voices say
 That my hour has come to die.

Where lofty palm-trees cluster,
Or long bright trailers wave,
Or where the orange blossoms,
They will dig the stranger's grave.

Then, when the white snows rest,
Far, on a frozen plain,
Love will a footstep wait
That shall never come again.
But fond feet hurry after,
And the voices that I love,
When they call, shall have an answer
From the exile's home above.

END OF VOL. I.

ALDERBROOK:

A COLLECTION OF

FANNY FORESTER'S

VILLAGE SKETCHES, POEMS, ETC

BY

MISS EMILY CHUBBUCK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

ELEVENTH EDITION.
REVISED, WITH ADDITIONS.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LXI.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by
WILLIAM D. TICKNOR AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

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A L D E R B R O O K .

VOL. II.

THE UNUSEFUL.

MAN is a born equestrian; and from the time when mother Eve fixed her anxious heart on improving her condition, and crushed a world at a single bound, to this present writing, he has never lacked a hobby whereon to exercise to his heart's content. And it is no tame, gentle exercise; for, whatever the hobby may be, and whether well-mounted or otherwise, he not only rides tantivy, but hesitates not to "run through a troop and leap over a wall." We have innumerable hobbies now-a-days; and many of them (to our credit be it said) are of an excellent character. But, poor things! they are ridden down most savagely.

You may have seen, among these poor, jaded, spavined, wind-galled, would-be-racers of beasts of burden, a huge mammoth, with a back like a continent, and legs like those of Mark Antony in Cleopatra's dream. This is a *universal hobby* that men have named USEFULNESS; and such strong claims has it to the suffrages of all but the butterflies, that whoever eschews the wing of the idler, must needs accept a seat. There is no medium, no spot of *terra firma* on which we may stand and labor in quiet, sober earnest; one must either flutter in the air a giddy thing, or gallop away almost as madly on the back of this irresistible hobby. But we do, verily, constitute a goodly array; and so uncompromisingly do we ride down everything that is elegant and beautiful, and indolently lovely, that

we are even in danger of doubting the wisdom of the Deity in placing those soft, sun-draped, luxuriously lazy clouds in the summer heavens; in scattering the idle, balm-breathing flowers so profusely by the way-side; and in sending out the play-loving zephyrs to dally through the live-long day with every bud that has a lip to kiss, and every light-poised leaf that palpitates at its sly whispers, like a lady's boddice at the first word that takes its course from the tip of a lover's tongue into her heart. Yet, our hobby is a most noble beast originally. What a great pity that it should be made so stupidly ungainly by its mad riders! A finer animal never lost its attractiveness by man's re-moulding; and while most of us jolt along upon the back of our spoiled hobby, we leave its *spirit* to the quiet, unassuming ones who close one hand to the labors of the other. What can be more beautiful than USEFULNESS — the great object of our present existence? What more repulsive than the deformed images to which each, according to his particular fancy, gives the name? So many a person, giving up the world to the *ultraists*, who are sent to occupy one of the "human extremes," preserves the *spirit* in its purity, and is most *unusefully useful*.

Of a character somewhat resembling this, was my friend Nora Maylie; though I think that in its formation nature had more to do than principle. To estimate things properly and reasonably requires both maturity of judgment and independence of thought.

Nora Maylie must have been born under an unpromising star, for in infancy she was fair, fat, and good-natured; without any of that unwelcome vivacity, so illustrative of perpetual motion; but with a very knowing look upon her baby features, that told you, at once, the repose of her manner sprang not from a lack of good sense; at least enough of it to place her on a par with other babies. This sensible look was Nora's curse, for it gave her a preëminence over her sisters; and, in proportion to her height was the number of stones cast at her. It was at once decided that she was born to a high destiny; and so she waddled off to school as soon

as her chubby little feet would bear her weight. But physiological promises are deceitful. Nora was not a particularly playful child, and very far from being mischievous; but yet, all through two golden summers of her school-life, she took her daily course from *a* to *zed*, without once dreaming but her whole duty consisted in echoing back, with her own pretty lisp, each letter as it was pronounced for her.

Nora Maylie was the youngest of five daughters, all *professional* women, and notably, eminently *useful*. I will not say that Rachel, the eldest, could make a nice dish of tea, or prepare a delicious jelly for a fevered lip; but she *could* make dresses superbly. She was perfect in her art. Not that she was *obliged* to make dresses—by no means! Old farmer Maylie had enough in scrip and granary for his family, with now and then a bit to keep the poor around him from a surfeit of want; but that made no difference. Mrs. Maylie hated, not idleness merely, but a tendency to dwell on the minutiae of life, in preference to taking that decided stand indicative of a *woman of character*. She was herself a notable housewife; and she had always privately regretted that she could boast no higher excellence. She would have liked well to figure more largely than was now in her power—for, on account of the exclusively domestic character of her education, the office of directress in a sewing society was the highest that she had ever been able to assume. She was a sensible woman, however, and not only wisely kept her chagrin to herself, but when she saw that Matilda, her second daughter, evinced a fondness for such vain pursuits as dressing dolls, and painting paper flowers with sorrel-leaves and Indian strawberries, she at once decided that the child had a great genius in the millinery line. Susan and Mary had a predilection for intellectuality, and took to books as readily and naturally as ducks take to the genial pool while yet in pen-feathers; and so, of course, they must be teachers—school-teachers—the most useful of all the multitudes of useful people the world contains. But little Nora, (Mrs. Maylie's diminutive for Eleanora,) as I have said, was an

anomaly. At four, she took patch-work to school; but poor Nora! she could n't see into the philosophy of over-and-over seams. She would rather spread the pretty calicoes on her knee, and admire their bright coloring, or twist them up into dolls with paper heads, and closely-pinned drapery. Then she was particularly given to losing thimbles, and knotting thread; and her needle, however clumsy, was always bent or broken at the point,—the legitimate result of her devotion to badly cracked hickory nuts. And then such stitches! Why the little girls laughed till the tears came into their eyes from very merriment at the sight; but when they saw the big drops standing in hers, they all patted her velvet cheeks lovingly, and smoothed her hanging hair; and if they found her inconsolable, made a chair with their crossed hands and bore her away in triumph to the play-ground. In their wise, confidential talks, they used to say that Nora Maylie was just the dearest little creature in the world, but it was a great pity she could not sew. As some compensation for my little friend's deficiencies, I should like to be able to say that she was a good scholar; but no assertion could have less truth in it,—she was just no scholar at all. And yet I am not certain but a careful observer of human nature, even though less shrewd than the worldly-minded mother, might have detected, in this very backwardness, this refusal to trammel the mind with that which seemed in no wise calculated to enrich it, the germ of a higher order of intellect than common minds appreciate. As it was, however, there was no one near to raise the one fold of ignorance from the beautifying soul beneath; and so Nora was judged by her non-attainments. How heartily she hated the monotonous a, b, c, and the smart, flippant a b ab, e b eb, i b ib, that made her companions' tongues resemble so many mill-clappers. When, by dint of constant dinging, she could make out the words of a few easy sentences, such as “no—man—may—put—off—the—law—of—God,” she still evinced the same dead level of intellect, and hated her books, and hated (as poor Mrs. Maylie often despairingly observed) everything that was useful. But Nora

did not hate to follow her mother through the routine of her day's labor; to run for the spoon or carving-knife when it was wanted, and anticipate the thousand little wants that occasion a careful housewife so many steps. She learned this readily, for her heart was her teacher. Neither did she hate the arrant idlers of which I have before spoken: the dallying breezes, the sleepy flowers, the chatty brooks, and the slow-sailing clouds. Oh no! they were too like her dear little self, too natural and graceful, ay! and too idle withal, to be anything but friends to their free and careless playmate. Oh! Nora! Nora! thou wert a sore trial to thy poor mother's heart! but what a pity that our first mother could not have remained contented in her ignorance—then we might all have been like thee. Dear, darling Nora! We cannot *respect* thee, as the dictionaries define respect, but we can take thee to our hearts and hold thee there forever.

Years passed, and Nora had seen a dozen summers. She had retrieved her character at school, *in a degree*, but yet she had never mastered the multiplication table. Every word of a little book of fairy tales, the daily object of Mrs. Maylie's animadversions, was as familiar to her as the robin's song trilled forth every morning beneath her window, or the splash of the spotted trout, that made its home in the brook at the hill's foot; Watts' dear, delightful children's melodies, from "How doth the little busy bee," to the end of the catalogue were on her tongue's tip, to say nothing of the "Children of the Wood," and other ballads, for whose loss no modern rhymster can compensate; but Nora could not repeat a rule from Lindley Murray. When not engaged in homely acts of love within doors, she would wander from field to field, through meadow and copse, over hills and into deep, solemn dingles, until the tangled masses of hair shaded her face like a veil woven of golden threads, and her joyous eyes looked out wonderingly from their sunny ambush, like two renegade stars that had leaped from their azure mounting and set up for themselves in the amber shades of an October wilderness. There she would lie, hours, beneath a shady tree, her straw

bonnet by her side, wild flowers scattered around her, and a bar of sunlight resting on her feet, gazing into the sky with those large chameleon eyes all bathed in light, and with an intensity belonging only to idle dreamers like herself.

Time still went on, and Nora was obliged, like her sisters, to choose a profession. She said she did not care; they might bind her to whatever they chose; though she intimated that if they could provide her with a little spade and a little hoe, she should by all means prefer horticulture. *Such* an enchanting spot as she would make of the old kitchen-garden! The beans, and cabbages, and onions should be uprooted at once. The peas might remain — though she would have all sweetpeas — but all the other weeds should give place to the beautiful violets, and tiarellas, and fringe-wort that she would bring from the woods. And Nora Maylie really grew animated at her own foolish plans.

If truth must be told, Mrs. Maylie was more troubled about the perverseness of her youngest daughter than if it had been any of the others; for never had a mother's ambition a more beautiful corner-stone for the erection of its castles than this. She had first conceived Nora to be a genius, but she had waited long and vainly for what she considered genius-like developments. Nora was unambitious and unassuming, and all the puffing and pushing in the world could not make her other than what she was. Disappointed in her first hopes, Mrs. Maylie had set her heart on making a teacher of Nora, but alas! Nora's head was not of the right stuff. She loved books dearly, but *such* books! Why there was not, if we allow Mrs. Maylie to be the judge, a useful one among them all! She revelled in the enchanting luxuries of literary flower-gatherers: they were the mirrors to reflect her own heart, and the glorious world about her, and her own imaginings. But what science for a school-teacher! Mrs. Maylie was in a dilemma. She hesitated a while, and then, with praiseworthy decision, seized it by the only horn to hang a hope upon. It was decided that Nora Maylie, in view of her tastefulness and lack of intellectuality, should be a milliner;

and she was forthwith sent to her sister's shop. Matilda was an accomplished business-woman, giving a sharp eye to all the ways and means of trade, and she perceived at once that the beautiful face of her young sister would be a great ornament to her front shop. Nora was, therefore, placed by the side of the forewoman, for the express purpose of fascinating customers; but human calculations are often fallacious. I have intimated before (or, if I have not, I should have done so) that my friend Nora had an unusual share of artless goodness, kind consideration for everybody except herself, of whom she never thought a moment; and hence she was ill-fitted for the sphere in which she seemed destined to act. The very first day of her appearance as a tradeswoman, she was foolish enough to tell a sallow-complexioned lady that a pea-green hat, which she was on the point of purchasing, was unbecoming; and so the sale was lost. Another bonnet she thought too heavily laden with ornaments, and so the purchaser ordered a large cluster of artificial flowers, on which Matilda had resolved to speculate a little, taken from the crown. Matilda expostulated and reasoned, but as the simple sister only opened wide her beautiful eyes in astonishment, and seemed utterly incapable of appreciating the arguments, and, moreover, as a week's trial gave no symptoms of reformation, she was removed to the back shop. But here it was but little better; for though she knotted ribands and arranged flowers with exquisite taste, she had a way of softening the drudgery of the business, not at all pleasing to an inhabitant of Dollar-land. If she had been satisfied to play the idler herself, it might have been endured; but Nora could not bear to see those half-dozen necks bent with painful immovableness over bits of silk and stiffened muslin; and those eight times half-dozen fingers ply, ply, plying the needle constantly, as though the whole of existence was comprised within the contracted space enclosed by those four walls. And so she bewildered the little coterie with the things she had seen in her dreams; the rounded periods falling from her bulbous lips slowly and with a delicious quietude that bewitched while

it lulled the senses. There was an interested uplifting of eyebrows, and a relaxing of fingers when she spoke; and smiles became more frequent and stitches less, until the detrimental influence of the unuseful sister became strikingly apparent. The prudent Matilda again resorted to argument; but as Nora's strange obtuseness on these subjects seemed unconquerable, she was, at last, obliged to discharge her thoughtless apprentice to save her establishment from ruin. Poor Nora she was deeply pained at the distress her friends evinced on her account; and she begged to be taken home, promising to do anything and everything there, that should be required of her. But this, as has been already seen, was no part of Mrs. Maylie's plan. She had disposed of all her daughters as she desired, and if she had manœuvred less than mammas who seek for a life-establishment, she did not take to herself less credit for her successful management. But in the case of her youngest daughter she had entirely failed. She had resolved to make Nora a star, but Nora would not shine. Indeed, it would have been impossible to make her think about herself long enough to know whether she shone or not; and the idea of supporting a character, even for five minutes, would have been oppressive to her. Slowly she moved about the large, old farm-house, with a step as noiseless as

"That orbéd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,"

cheerful, and kind, and loving; but as characterless as the pet-lamb which she led about the garden by its grass-woven collar. Yet rare beauties, rare for such beauty-scorning people as the Maylies, sprang up beneath her touch wherever she turned. Her very presence seemed to infuse into everything about her a calm, quiet loveliness; and there was a soft repose in her manner, that made her influence felt by the most bustling of the working-bees in that busiest of all busy hives. Even Mrs. Maylie looked on, and wondered that everybody should yield to Nora; and wondered that with her lazy ways

she could accomplish so much; and then sighed that what was accomplished was of so little use. To be sure, Nora brought the easy-chair to her father, when he came in tired from the field; and smoothed his hair and kissed his cheek; and then supported the basin on his knee, while the old man bathed his heated brow with the cold water she had dipped from the spring; but old farmer Maylie had been his life-long accustomed to waiting on himself, and this was an unpardonable waste of time. And Nora carried flowers, fresh, fragrant flowers, into her mother's little bed-room, and rearranged the simple furniture, and put a snowy muslin curtain in place of the soiled paper one, at the window; and, in short, wrought such an entire change, that even Mrs. Maylie herself smiled involuntarily whenever she opened the door, though she was always heard to lament, immediately after, that such wondrous talent should be wasted on such trivial pursuits. But it was with her brothers that Nora Maylie was the all-in-all. Hers was the only woman's influence that they had ever felt; for their mother and elder sisters were too much like themselves — pushing, elbowing, jostling, calculating, hurrying, eating, and sleeping — both of those last in a greater hurry than any of the others. But coming into Nora's presence was like entering a new atmosphere. There was something superior — something pure, serene, refining, calculated to suppress turbulent passions, and noisy tones, in her soft, yielding manner, and low, musical voice, that no one could resist. The bare, gloomy parlor, which was never opened but to company, Nora won her mother into giving up to her direction, and soon it was entirely metamorphosed, and made a delightful withdrawing-room for the family in the cool of the day. And there Nora sat with her brothers: her luxuriously developed figure so simply, yet so tastefully draped, as to lead one to believe that the addition of a single fold would mar its symmetry; the pearly whiteness of her skin, with the most delicate rose-tint on dewy lip and downy cheek, contrasting strikingly with their bronzed labor-stained faces; her massy volumes of hair, folding plainly around a head

whose beauty would have mocked the chise of Pygmaion, and gathered into a magnificent knot behind; her full, white, exquisitely moulded hands folded over a manly shoulder, or wandering like lost snow-flakes among dark, stubby clusters of hair; her breathing lips parted, and sounds wandering thence at dreamy intervals, the messengers of a heart all goodness, all simplicity, all love. And sometimes she would bring books, the books she delighted in; and though the brothers never glanced their eyes over such pages themselves, Nora's soulful voice, with its bird-like tones and eloquent cadences, was the interpreter between the poet's heart and theirs. The Masters Maylie used to boast of their business-like sisters; asserting that nobody could drive bargains like Rachel and Matilda; and nobody could maintain order among the rebellious spirits of the school-room like Susan and Mary; but their *hearts* always fell back upon the unuseful Nora, and they declared, with softened faces and gentler voices, that she was good for nothing but to love. But there they were wrong. She cheered, she encouraged, she smoothed difficulties, she soothed peevishness, and softened heartlessness; her loving spirit stealing unobserved on all, and distilling its own dews over the whole household. None resisted her power, for there was nothing in it to resist. It was impalpable, undiscoverable, and yet most deliciously felt, most unhesitatingly acknowledged. Was it a matter of regret that Nora Maylie was an unuseful woman?

[I did not promise you a tale, dear reader, (did I?) when I commenced this sketch. If you expected one, you were misled by your own imagination, for I thought only of dashing off, with a few simple strokes, the character of a friend, who, whatever her faults, you will acknowledge has some virtues. If, however, you have become sufficiently interested in gentle Nora Maylie, to desire to hear more, I may resume the thread of my narrative at some future period.]

NORA MAYLIE.

“Do!”

Tell more of Nora Maylie? Ah yes! with pleasure; I love dearly to think of her.

Please vacate that ottoman, 'Bel, and betake yourself to the sofa. My first sketch was written on that, and I have a kind of fondness for it; “by the same token,” as an Irish woman would say, that we love the haunts of our childhood. Besides, it is just the right height; allowing head, neck, and a very small portion of the shoulder to rise above the table. That will oblige me to sit straight.

High-shouldered? Oh no! see how easily the thing is done, and without the possibility of lounging.

Then I have another reason for affecting this ottoman. Geniuses have queer notions, (as well as other spoiled children,) and the world pets and indulges them, and encourages their eccentricities, till oddity becomes the universal badge of the tribe, and men reason something on this wise:

All geniuses have queer notions;
A has queer notions;
Therefore A is a genius.

Or *au contraire*:

All geniuses have queer notions,
A has no queer notions;
Therefore A is not a genius.

Now I have set my heart on playing make-believe, since I am not a genius; and so I must contrive up some little peculiarity. Burns wrote his first things on the air, while sauntering over the “banks and braes of bonny Doon;” and, sealing the light-winged scrip to his memory, he carried it home

to copy from at leisure. It was a very odd thing of the Doon man! Any common individual would have written better in a quiet room, with the most convenient of standishes, a half-dozen nicely nibbed pens, and a quire of foolscap cut and paged, all spread invitingly before him. (And, between our two selves, 'Bel, I think *I* should prefer such a room, genius or no genius.) But here is another case, quite in point. The whilome proprietary of Glenmary found the shadow of a bridge, a wall impregnable to truant thoughts; and he has made the spot, seldom looked upon but by rafters and cross-beams, and the little winged people that go among them to find summer-lodgings, classic ground. That bridge at Glenmary! What a scrambling there will be to see it one of these days!

And this ottoman! it is a very trivial thing, to be sure, but that is what makes it important; and I shall take pains to let it be known that this is my own peculiar property, leaving it to be inferred that I could not possibly write anywhere else. Then think of your great-grandchildren, 'Bel, exhibiting this same pretty ottoman—the cover so faded that you could not recognize it, and the hair peeping through a thousand crevices—think of their exhibiting it to their gaping little ones as—I can no more, 'Bel; for, even while these light words are on my tongue, there comes a grave between my eye and the point it would settle on.

Wheel around the sofa, dear, and sit close beside me; for the ugly vision has got upon my heart, and you must wile it away, while I tell, whomsoever chooses to read, something more of Nora Maylie.

'St, cousin! 'st! *The public* is my audience now, and will care no more for that point-lace of yours than they would for so much "Lisle thread."

Dear reader, how left we Nora Maylie? Indolent and good-natured, was she not? Disliking anything like bustle, and resisting every attempt to be made something of, with an invisible strenuousness that made wise people marvel mightily, whether her nature were of wax or adamant? I think we see

eft her, and so we find her; as like what she was as yon sun will be to its present self, when we, who now glory in its light, are shut away from it by the coffin-lid. Few changes come upon such characters as that of the fair Nora. They appear before us quietly and without ostentation, as the bright-eyed pansy unfolds its petals in the spring-time; and, like that loveliest of lovely things, they live on, smiling in the sunshine, and bending to the storm with a pliant gracefulness which mars not their beauty. And yet those who looked only at outward circumstances would have said that Nora Maylie was changed most entirely. You will recollect that at sixteen poor Nora was considered unfit to become a milliner even, and sent home in disgrace to do nothing. At eighteen she was altogether above the necessity of doing anything.

Mrs. Maylie chanced to have a sister, who married a fortune, together with an aged and gouty metropolitan; and this lady chanced to get a glimpse of our fair Nora. Instantly Mrs. Maylie was made to understand that she had mistaken her daughter's vocation; and so the young beauty was bewelled, be-flounced, and bedizened, till it was proved by every possible experiment, that, adorned or unadorned, she was all the same, and transferred to a fashionable drawing-room. Everybody said that Nora Maylie was a very lucky individual, and many a pretty maiden sighed with envy as the proud mother recounted her darling's triumphs. But what thought the young lady herself? Alas! the perverse-ness of human nature! Nora longed for the green woods where she had first dreamed over the gorgeous creations of ninds as dreamy and as idle as her own; the silver-toned voice arising from the little trout-stream at the foot of the hill was forever in her ear, and she was sure no man-made music could compare with it; and there were birds and flowers, and — shall I tell you? Those were very homely tastes of Nora Maylie's. The tame rabbits, peaking their ears at every sound; old Mooly, with her crumpled horns and sober, sensible face; the doves that used to fly from the barn-top to her bosom; the hens, with their domestic, motherly ways; and

the geese, with their pretty necks and tea-party voices — all these were to poor Nora as so many lost friends, whose places could not be supplied by the simpering things in stays and broadcloth that flocked to do her homage.

And were there any other home attractions for Nora than these, and her own kin? Anything for which she would have resigned her envied position, with all the eagerness of a pent-up stream leaping every barrier, and bounding away to the ocean's bosom?

You may never have heard of Will Waters, a handsome dark-eyed, roguish-looking, care-for-naught sort of a fellow who would rake up more hay in four hours than anybody else could between twilight and twilight, and give the rest of his time to rod or gun, or some other *heathenish amusement*. Was there a dance, Will Waters was in the midst, leading out the brightest of the blushing damsels; was there a husking, it was an entire failure without Will Waters' songs; and at fourth-of-July orations and stump speeches, and other movements for the *public good*, nobody could hold a candle to clever Will Waters. Yet (great men *will* have their failings) Will was a wild fellow, very wild; and people said he was not to be depended upon in the least. Nobody could tell what bad things he had done or was in danger of doing; and everybody loved him for his frank heartsomeness, his ready wit, and his gay good-nature; but still, it was the general impression that Will Waters, though a "very promising young man," would somehow manage to seduce his nature into breaking its promise.

There was a village between Mr. Waters' farm and Mr. Maylie's; and Will's handsome face was no stranger to the village beauties, who had wasted more smiles on him than often burnish a coat of country finish; but Will had somehow dodged the whole artillery and passed on. Away in the woods, skirting fair fields of pale green maize and dancing flax, so proud of its light-poised gem of blue, Will Waters was destined to another trial; and this time the weapon was pointed by a more celebrated marksman than himself.

The sun was just scattering his last grains of gold-dust upon the spotted alders that leaned over the trout-stream at the foot of "the Maylie hill," when Will Waters, his fowling-piece over his shoulder, and his dog by his side, leaped upon the chattering brook; and, making a great crackling and rushing among the underbush, landed headlong upon a velvet bank, hemmed in by witch-hazel, blackberry bushes, and the white-flowering dog-wood. The rude *entrée* was occasioned by an officious grape-vine that had taken a fancy to put its arms around the young man's foot, coarse-booted though it was; but Will Waters was in a very proper position, considering all things. Beneath the deep shade of a broad-leaved bass-wood, whose peculiar perfume made the air around it heavy with richness, appeared, in wondering amazement, the mistress of this sylvan drawing-room. A bob-o'-link had come up from his home among the sedges over the brook, and was perking his pretty bill, and smoothing his plumage with a knowing impudence, directly before her face; but quick was the exit of Master Robert when wild Will Waters became an actor in the scene. A scarce adult mouser, fast asleep on its mistress' knee, opened its yellow eyes in affright, and scampered off as fast as its velvet feet would carry it; and a crow that had lighted on a limb above, and sat in silence, apparently civilized by the nearness of the white-browed divinity, spread his black wings and rushed skyward with a caw! caw! which threw Madam Echo into an ecstasy of noisy fear. But the fair *human* joined not at all in the commotion. True, she rose to her feet, but not with that twitch and jerk which any another would have adopted; she rose with the astonished dignity of one who intends to say by the movement, "I am quite superior to being annoyed by you, but I *should* like to know how far your impudence will carry you;" and her large, changeable eyes were opened to their greatest width.

"The position could have been no more appropriate had it been of my own choosing, O fairest thou of witching Sylphs!" exclaimed the youth, springing to his knee, and repeating the salaam.

The lady blushed a little, and looked as though not quite sure of what she ought to do in such a case, and so she did nothing; though her face grew talkative with its declaration of amused curiosity.

"Is it not enough that you have snares at your door-way, nymph most beautiful," continued wild Will, "but must he who enters your charmed circle find the chains rivetted about him forever?"

"Nay," returned the lady with a delicious smile, that belied her mocking words, "nay, poor youth, I pity thy mishap, and release thee without a ransom; depart in peace!"

"Bid the poor charmed thing be free, that is beneath the eye of the basilisk," exclaimed Will in a tone of mock mournfulness.

"Be free!" repeated the lady; "the basilisk withdraws his gaze;" and she gathered up her scattered implements and with a slight curtsey, was turning away.

"Nay, lady," exclaimed the hunter in an altered tone, springing to his feet and shouldering his fowling-piece, "I intruded unwittingly upon your sanctum; and though, by your leave, I cannot regret the accident, you must not abandon it; for see! I am gone."

As he spoke, Will stepped back a few paces; but how he could consider himself *gone*, is a query in my mind to this day; for there was a good yard of the golden-hued moss between him and the blackberry bushes and Co., which palisaded the pretty retreat. The lady, however, must have believed him, for she turned round very quietly, and fixed her eye on pussy, which was peeping her little head from a clump of thorns that threatened to disfigure her coat most sadly. Will Waters retreated slowly, until the folded leaf of the dog-wood touched the hem of his hunting-frock; and then with an air of the most respectful deference, he ventured a remark on the beauty of the wood-land scene. The lady, in common civility, could but answer; and Will replied; and then the lady's voice gave out a bar of music, which Will Waters could not allow to close the interview, and so ———

should not like to tell you how much time passed, dear reader, for it was shockingly imprudent in NORA MAYLIE to allow herself to be so beguiled. Will Waters, however, understood his cue well enough to lean upon his fowling-piece; and Nora turned her back upon the bass-wood tree, and employed her fingers in making baskets of its leaves. The twilight was putting on its grayest hue, when Nora recollected that she should be returning home; and though the youth did not venture to accompany her in person, his eyes followed her every step across the fields.

Will Waters made two or three ineffectual attempts to get up a whistle on his way homeward that evening; and once he struck out into a song very clamorously; but he was so absent-minded as to break off in the middle of a word, which word is waiting for its other half to this day.

The very next evening Nora Maylie was again surprised in her rustic bower; but, as the young hunter came in a different manner, and, moreover, as he made a very characteristic apology (prettily impudent) for coming at all, the lady did not consider it necessary to rise from her rich cushions. Neither did the bob-link fly away—instead, he gave out a glorious gush of music; pussy opened her eyes lazily and immediately closed them again; and a good-natured little thrush, that saw fit to make itself quite at home there, went hopping along on the ground, and never once turned its eye to inquire whether the intruder came for *it* or its neighbors. Very well might humble brownie manifest such indifference; for wild Will's step had an exceedingly innocent sound to it, scarce rustling a leaf, much less presuming on the entertainment which, by the aid of the grape-vine, he had furnished for woodland edification the day previous. I know not how it was, but Nora Maylie took the intrusion something in the spirit of Mrs. Thrush, whose back of plebeian brownness never ruffled a feather; and so wild Will Waters leaned his gun against the bass-wood, and placed himself at the lady's feet without the ceremony of asking. Will Waters had a dashing way of talking which Nora had never heard before,

and so she decided in her own mind that it was dramatic Shaksperian, or something of that sort; while Nora's voice reminded the young hunter of the whisper of the south-wind dallying with the silver-lined blades of grass, on whose waving tips he had often been borne away to the land of dreams.

That our young friends were mutually pleased with each other, was very certain; and that their friends would be mutually displeased, should the acquaintance chance to ripen into anything more than common friendship, was quite as certain. As far as farmer Maylie was known, it was thought that his handsome daughter would make an *unprofitable wife*; and Mrs. Maylie would have been struck with consternation at the thought of committing her poor child, with her lamentable deficiencies, to the keeping of such a dashing, careless fellow as wild Will Waters. But young people never will fall in love prudently, and this second interview decided the fate of Will and Nora. To be sure, they did not meet then nor afterwards *as* lovers, but they did meet, nevertheless; and two young people do not go every day to the same spot, and listen to each other's voices, and look into each other's faces, and read from each other's hearts to no purpose. No, no! the temple that God made, the solemn old wood, is a dangerous place for beauty and manliness, that should not love, to meet in. There is so much of love in every wind-moved pulchritude which beats there, that the heart must own a triple crust of worldliness to brave its influence.

At last Mrs. Maylie's eyes became opened to the truth, but she was saved the trouble of expostulation by the timely interference of her wealthy sister; and so Nora was borne away to other scenes. Before she went, however, the moon witnessed a very solemn meeting between herself and Will Waters; there were vows, and tears, and comforting words, and baseless castle-building enough to occupy long hours; and then, with promises, the fiftieth time repeated, and other words whose meaning was derived from the breath that bore them, the lovers parted.

“Forever?”

We shall see

Was it strange, then, that Nora Maylie did not love the city? that her aunt's splendid drawing-room was a prison to her, and the mustachioed things, caught in the trap the sharp lady was setting for her benefit, a living annoyance? There was one thing in Nora's favor; she had an inexhaustible fund of *good feeling*. She could never bear to see even her enemy (Nora was not conscious of having one, however) unhappy, and so she could not be thoroughly unhappy herself. While we feel an interest in a single living being, we are many a good league from misery. Nora felt an interest in a great many. Her aunt treated her with habitual kindness, and for her she had gratitude; her gouty uncle was more like a bear than a human being, and for him she had pity; a great many persons showed her infinite respect, for which she returned an overflowing measure of the same with a mingling of something warmer; and the few that loved her she loved with all her heart. Oh no! Nora was not *miserable*, but she was sad—sometimes very sad; for her thoughts, in gayety or loneliness, were full of Will Waters and her own quiet home. Nora was still determined *not to be made anything of*.

And Will? What of him?

He turned from Nora Maylie on the evening of their last meeting; and, standing beneath the bass-wood where he had first met her, he spread open his heart and character to his own inspection. Long and serious was the examination; and then, with the centred light of his proud eye mocking the stars above him, his fine face full of animation, and his head elevated with a consciousness of his own powers, he bounded from the love-charmed circle, leaped the creek, and bent his way homeward. Determination was in his firm step, and hope glanced from every lineament of his face. Mr. Waters had measured off an elder son's portion a few years previous, and why might not Will hope the same favor? The next morning he asked, and was refused. Moreover, he was made understand that if he married "that shiftless Maylie girl," he should not have a cent "to the longest day he lived."

It was very impolitic as well as disrespectful in Will

Waters to make the answer he did; and, for one, I do not blame the old gentleman for snubbing him for it. But Will had never been used to such things, and he had no idea of being made a little boy of, in his three-and-twentieth summer and so, after a few more words hotly peppered with anger, he turned on his heel and walked away.

“A year and a half have I worked on this farm since might have been doing for myself, and all for nothing,” muttered Will, as his eye wandered over the closely-shaven meadows, and the fields of grain, with their upright sheaves many of which had been bound by his own hand.

“Well, I have *you* yet,” and he stretched out his strong arm, and regarded it for a moment very affectionately; then reaching it above his head, he twisted off a heavy bough and lodged it far away in the meadow.

“Ha! ha!” laughed Will, regarding his own feat with the most decided approbation, and clapping his hands together “shall I beg of an old man, whose acres are his all, with such things as these to carve out a fortune with? No, no! Will Waters is not a beggar yet;” and he trudged on right manfully.

That winter there was one axe rang from the woods from dawn till nine in the morning, and from four till darkness made the trees almost invisible; and the remaining hours the axe was sheltered beneath a little wood-shed beside the village school-house, while its owner presided within. Everybody remarked that a wonderful change had come over Will Waters. And what was to be his reward? How was fair Nora Maylie? Did she stand the winter’s test of gayety? At first, though surrounded by a crowd of admirers, she seemed to have no preference; all passed alike before her; but, as winter set in, Nora had grown partial. One by one, her suitors stood back for the favorite, till Nora scarce ever appeared with anybody but young Horace Dacre. It was said that there was an engagement in the case, that the seal of the ring would soon be appended; and Nora took no pains to deny the charge. Neither did Nora’s aunt. On the receipt of a letter from her sister, Mrs. Maylie looked up her be-

up, and went into the extravagance of a new silk gown. The next she heard was that Dacre was married, and that her daughter had had a very narrow escape—she was a bride's *aïd*. How angry aunt, and mother, and Rachel, and Matilda, and Susan, and Mary were with Nora! and how Nora, and the sly bridegroom, and shy bride, congratulated themselves on the success of their provoking *ruse d'amour*. Oh! there must have been a spice of evil about Nora, notwithstanding her quiet ways. Two thirds of the winter had gone, when the astonishing *dénouement* took place; and there was a most glorious *fishing-season* well-nigh lost through this silliest of Irish freaks. Nothing daunted, however, the manœuvrer resolved to gather up the scattered fragments of time still left her; and, to prevent imposition, she took the cards into her own hands; and she played so adroitly that a fortune soon lay at Nora's feet. Nora would have put it *beneath* her feet, had she consulted only her own feelings on the occasion—not that she had any particular dislike for a fortune, but there was a certain incumbrance upon it that she did not like. So Nora, like the foolish girl that she was, refused the whole. But as fast as Nora said *no*, Nora's aunt said *yes*; and as the affirmative could boast superiority in years, Mr. Lever (the lady's principal objection to the fortune) was inclined to think that the affirmative had it. Still Nora was obstinate, and her aunt was obstinate, and Mr. Lever was obstinate; so it was thought proper to have Mrs. Maylie's counsel.

Early in the spring, the dressmaker, the milliner, and the two school-mistresses, were called home to put the farm-house in order for the reception of important guests. It was reported far and wide, that Nora Maylie had come home to be married; a version of matters in which popular gossip invented less than the lady's own friends. When they told Will Waters, he smiled contemptuously; and when they told his father, he smiled too, and said he hoped his son would return to reason now. When, however, Nora came home, accompanied by her aunt and Mr. Lever, the face of Will Waters grew anxious, and his smile lost its complacency.

And now Mr. Lever had plenty of assistants in his wooing, and things would have gone on swimmingly, had not Nora possessed the most provoking of pliable natures. Had she only stormed, and declared that she would sooner die, that they might kill her, but she would never commit such horrid perjury, there would have been some hope; but when Nora, with her sweet, low voice, repeated every day, "it cannot be mother," Mrs. Maylie's heart grew faint, and she was almost tempted to give up the contest. Her sister, however, was more persevering; and, finally, affairs were brought to a crisis. The father was called in, and, being urged on all sides, he at last resorted to authority.

"Obey! or you are no child of mine!" was the stern parental injunction.

Poor Nora! Should she accept the splendor that was dazzling all eyes but hers, and buy the favor of those she loved most dearly? or should she go forth upon the world an outcast, orphaned by worse than death, friendless and pennyless?

"You shall have my answer to-morrow," was all that Nora said.

The sun had just looked his last good-night, and many a bright cluster of golden rays was loitering in its way heavenward, when Nora Maylie, attired in her simplest muslin, and with the little straw hat she had worn the summer previous tied under her chin, stole from the seclusion of her own chamber, and glided like a spirit across the fields. When she had reached the old trysting-spot, hedged in by the blackberries and witch-hazel, she pushed aside the bushes, and knelt upon the roots of the now budding bass-wood. Then she arose and passed on. She crossed the brook on the stepping stones, and hurried over the springy ground beyond, until her feet were bathed in the cold draught held by the deceitful soil, and on she went, still more hurriedly, until her father's broad lands all lay behind her. Climbing a fence, Nora was just losing herself among the stately patriarchs of the forest, when she heard her own name pronounced, in tones more of won-

er than gladness, and she stood face to face with Will Waters.

“I—was—was going to the village,” remarked the lady, her large eyes turning doubtfully to her lover’s, and veiling themselves in alarmed perplexity at the coldness they encountered.

Nora did not know how many tongues had been busy with the ear of Will Waters.

“I will not detain you,” was the answer, and with an ironical smile and a low bow the young man vacated the path.

“But I hoped—to—to meet—*you* there.” Nora stammered excessively, and the color went and came upon her cheek with strange precipitancy.

“*Me!*”

“Is it so very strange, then? I have gone down to the knoll by the brook many a time to meet you, Will.”

“Ay; but then you were——”

“Then I was happy in home and friends—now I have neither—you have taught me—*not one.*”

“Nora?”

“You may as well know it, Will—though it matters but little now. I came out to tell you that, without your protection, I have nowhere to go! I came to ask your advice—your—your—”

“Without *my* protection, Nora? I do not well see how that can be; but, were you ten times dyed in falsehood, you should not ask it in vain;” and the young man’s arms were extended, as though, if their shelter could yet be accepted, they should be a shield that none of the ills of life could penetrate.

Nora did not draw back, nor yet advance, for she was stricken to the heart by this suspicion, where she had expected the confidence and sympathy so much needed. The large, round tears broke from their dark-fringed enclosure, and followed each other silently, gemming her palpitating bodice; while the lady answered, almost in a whisper, “I do not ask it *now*, Will! Oh! you are so, *so* changed!”

“It is not *I*, Nora—look into your own heart if you would know where the change lies. But, perhaps—perhaps—! and now there was a strange eagerness in the tones of Will Waters—“if there *should* be a mistake, Nora! if they have belied you! if——”

A sudden flash of joy lighted up the face of the young man. His supposition became at once reality. He had been a fool and she—he did not say what; but his arms were a little farther advanced and folded over, and Nora Maylie lay within them. Not a word of explanation was necessary now, for heart was beating against heart, and they told their own true story. But words were spoken, nevertheless, so low that the light-winged zephyr sitting upon the lip could scarcely hear them; yet they proved, beyond a doubt, that Will Waters and Nora Maylie were both unchanged. And so—and so—

We are intruders, dear reader; let these foolish lovers have the next hour to themselves.

The hour is passed, and Will Waters and Nora are beneath the bass-wood.

“And if you cannot effect this most cruel compromise, dear Nora, you will meet me here at ten to-morrow?”

“I will.”

“Do not promise them too much, Nora; do not quite cut off all hope. You are right, I suppose; I know you must be; but it is a hard thing for me to consent to. I would not have believed that I ever could.”

“You would not but that it is *right*, Will.”

See that touchingly sweet smile accompanying the lady's words! Will Waters cannot resist it, and he acknowledges with almost idolatrous zeal, who taught him *right*; and so with mutual blessings, they part.

The compromise?

Nora had decided that her friends had no right to force her into a marriage which her heart did not sanction, and therefore that she ought to resist it firmly. On the other side, as the bestowal of her hand on Will Waters involved no point of conscience, obedience was her first duty. This may sound

ke cold reasoning; but it was arranged with many tears, even with sobs, there in the little chamber, and it was whispered with anything but coldness in those dear old woods. And, strange enough, the gentleman consented! Notwithstanding he had become estranged from his own father, and for six months had been in the neighborhood of his home without once stepping his foot over the threshold, he could not but consent to a measure which seemed so much a matter of course to Nora, that he was ashamed to offer more than a score of objections.

The next morning, while yet the clock was on the stroke of ten, Nora Maylie pushed aside the witch-hazel and dog-wood, and placed her hand within that of Will Waters; a mute acknowledgment that he was her last and only friend, and Will accepted the sacred gift as a man should do. Carefully he led her down to the roadside, where a carriage stood waiting them, lifted her to a seat, and they drove away to the village.

There were tears in the eyes of the fair bride who stood in Arson Lee's little parlor that morning; and a proud, happy soluteness in the whole air and manner of the bridegroom, softened and subdued by an appreciation of the touching usefulness that had possessed him of that quivering hand. And so they went forth, they two, with but the rewards of six winter's toil to buy them bread, and with scarce a voice to cheer them on their way. How everybody laughed when it was reported that Will Waters had borne his useless wife to the wilds of the far west! As though Will Waters, with his strong arm and strong spirit, and his sweet Nora, with her loving heart, could not make a pathway for themselves through the wilderness!

Please make me another pen, 'Bel; this story drags awfully.

Not finish it, did you say? Why, people will think they were devoured there in the woods, or the wolves ate them up, or, at least, that they encountered the ague and fever.

"Which is not true?"

Which is not true. I have called Nora Maylie *my friend* and so she is, though we did not quite grow up together. The first time that I ever saw her was on the morning of her marriage. The holy man had just put the "amen" to his prayer, when one whom we both love, 'Bel, sent me to the village with a pretty bridal bouquet, and I had the honor of presenting it myself. The kiss on my cheek, and the light touch of that soft hand upon my head, was quite enough to secure my little heart forever, even though I had not loved Will Waters as children usually love those who pet them most. My mother took the young couple into the family, sympathized with and advised them, and wafted many a prayer westward after they had gone.

We never heard that any bad luck happened to Will Waters, but somehow no news came of his having planted a city or given his name to a village, or of having gained emolument to himself; and so it was generally supposed that the young couple were having plenty of time to repent their folly.

It was eight years last spring since Will and Nora were married, and a year this summer since I saw them. I never forgot Nora's sweet bridal face; and when, by the aid of a dashing steamer, I had measured nearly all the links in the great northern chain of waters, you may be assured that I was quite willing to look upon a person that I had seen before. And after jolting all day in a big, springless wagon and sleeping at night in a villainous garret, lighted by four panes of glass, that would not shove, sharing my breathing stuff with a dozen others — pah! I will never subject myself to such things again, 'Bel!

"Ah?"

Perhaps I would for a sight of those glorious old woods and magnificent prairies — nothing short. But, as I was saying, after all this, you may well suppose that I would be grateful for any corner, however small, where the fresh air revelled in by day, might not be wholly shut from me at night.

We expected to find our friends in rather low circumstances

and so we inquired at every log hovel for Mr. Waters, and every time were answered, "farther on." Everybody seemed familiar with the name. We had left the last of these western edifices about five miles behind, when suddenly our road changed its character; and from having "two wheels in the gutter and two in the air," our clumsy vehicle righted itself, and jogged along on all fours with very decent sobriety. At the same time, we found ourselves in a fine clearing. A robe of variegated gold and green, flounced by a fold of silver in the shape of a creek, with here and there groups of trees looking into it, was spread out to our view; and we turned questioning glances on each other, wondering if this could be the possession of Will Waters. There was an air of thrift about it that said nay; while many a little tasteful arrangement — shade trees left standing where they should be, the brook made to show its bright, mischievous face at bewitching intervals, a beautiful grove on a rise of ground beyond, which looked as though it was intended to be made something yet more beautiful, with a thousand other proofs of a care for something less important than clearing the land and raising good crops, made us waver in our opinion. There was a clump of green that we could not make out in advance of us; and as we drew near, we called on the driver to slacken his pace while we endeavored to satisfy our curiosity. And what think you it was? Why, a magnificent avenue, fenced in by stately old elm trees, and leading up to the most charming little bird's nest that ever nursed such wee witching things as we saw frolicking among the vines over-arching the door-way. Curiosity stood on tip-toe, and J—— went up the avenue to repeat the inquiry we had so often made before. We saw him tap at the door, and caught a glimpse of a white dress through a crevice. In a moment he turned back, accompanied by a charming woman, who glided over the hard pathway with singular gracefulness. We knew our old friend Nora at a glance, and we did not allow her to reach the end of the avenue before we had her in our arms. She was scarcely changed. There was the same warm, soul-full ex-

pression in the varying eye ; the same loving smile upon the lip ; with a deeper happiness portrayed in every lineament of her eloquent face ; a richer hue of health upon her cheek , and a *feeling* in every glance and movement. J—— whispered me that there was *soul* in the very touch of that foot, as it kissed the earth ; and a more careless observer than J—— would have detected the *soul* in the turn of the white neck, and the carriage of the classic head.

And the bright creatures at the door ? The young mother presented them to us with all a mother's love and pride, and we were not inclined to undervalue her jewels.

The house was built of logs, carefully caulked, and was white-washed inside and out. Very simple and unpretending was it, with its low walls buried by the clinging grape-vines which had been brought thither from the wood. And there were marks in the pretty garden-patch of Nora's "little spade and little hoe," as well as of implements wielded by a heavier hand. The lady, doubtless, found more beautiful flowers in the woods of Iowa, than those which had received her girlish homage in New York. It was a very pleasant room into which we were ushered ; but simply enough furnished for the cell of a hermit. A piece of furniture answering to a bureau stood against the wall, surmounted by a small, well-filled book-case ; beneath a window, shaded by a snowy muslin curtain, was a couch, evidently an article of home manufacture, cushioned with a pretty calico ; and beyond this, directly beneath a plain, cherry-framed mirror, stood something like a dressing-table, so completely covered by its simple cloth, that eyes less curious than ours might not have discovered the white pine feet below, and so judged it to be the work of the couch's artisan. Mrs. Waters had indulged in one luxury ; those handsome porcelain vases on either corner of her dressing-table were not *useful* things, for they could have been purchased for no earthly purpose but to hold the flowers which were now making the air of the apartment rich with their perfume. Possibly, however, they were a present from her husband, made sometime after encountering unusual luck

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in trading off his grain. On the same table stood a willow work-basket, with the hem of a little cambric apron lying up against its rim; and chairs of basket-work, and a very pretty carpet, evidently a recent purchase, completed the furniture of the apartment. Not quite, however. There was another table, now occupying the centre, with a snow-white cloth spread over it, and upon that a simple repast, lacking but the smoking tea-urn; and the cakes which, from the peculiar flavor emanating from the room beyond, we knew to be in a course of preparation. My eyes (I *must* acknowledge it, though I be set down as a table-lover from this day forth) turned from the golden-hued butter, and the delicious strawberries peeping their dainty crimson heads from the sweet cream in which they nestled so provokingly, to the promising kitchen, and back again, with wondrous eagerness; when lo! a scream of delight from the little watchers in the door-way, and a new comer was introduced among us.

That wild Will Waters!

Wild enough to be sure he seemed then, with his heartily-expressed joy at seeing us; but how came he by that unstudied polish, that courteous manner, that *je ne sais quoi* which marks the gentleman—how came he by it here in the wilderness, where his whole business must needs be felling trees and ploughing land? So did not Will Waters leave us. He was bold and blunt then, and notwithstanding his many engaging qualities, had but little more refinement than his neighbors; but now, though his manliness had not suffered by it, you would have believed that he had been a metropolitan for a life-time. It was strange, unaccountable—ah no! not *unaccountable*. We turned to the sunny face of the wife; we marked her singularly quiet air, the choice words and delicate sentiments that she uttered; then the sweet, carefully-dressed and carefully-taught children, and the neatly-furnished apartment; and the riddle was unfolded. We saw for whom that pure white dress had been donned in the close of the day, for whom the little muslin collar had been taken from the drawer probably half an hour before, and for whom the glossy braids of hair were so carefully adjusted about the fine head

Blessings on sweet Nora Maylie! True, she was no genius; and she could not become a teacher, nor a milliner, even; neither was she of the material to be moulded into a woman of fashion; but she was a most charming wife and mother. We found her a charming hostess, too, and lingeringly did we turn from her sunlit door.

When a poet again inquires, "Where is happiness?" I will point him to a little log cottage, nestled among wild grape-vines, in the far-off woods of Iowa.

GRANDFATHER BRAY.

DEAR lady—thou that reclinest so gracefully upon yon sofa, I mean—lady, for a moment close thine eyes upon that handsome volume, though its dress of gilded morocco was certainly invented on purpose to be pressed by thy dainty fingers, and the printed words may make thy heart palpitate almost as much as did the whispered ones of the giver. Nay, turn them not upon the brilliant chandeliers, nor the voluminous folds of crimson that shut in the rich, warm light, flecking the heavy drapery with changing gold and purple; nor let them fall upon the soft, yielding carpet, almost yielding enough to bury up thy tiny, slippered foot. No, no; shut out for a moment all these things; I would turn thine eyes to a homelier quarter. Dost see that comfortable old farm-house, lady—that with the generous court-yard, broad kitchen garden and ample out houses? How trig and nice everything is about it, although the season of verdure is quite passed! Look at the ricks of hay, raising their conical heads down in the meadow, and the neat stone wall that surrounds the orchard—speak they not of thrift? Ay, that they do; but they speak of a thing that is passed, so far as the owners of the farm-house are concerned. Yet we will not dwell upon that now. That lofty well-sweep, resting its tip against the lower horn of the moon, is certainly one of the most aspiring of its kind; but it has labored faithfully in the cause of temperance for many a long year. This is one of the finest wells in all the country round. Wouldst test it? Close within the curb rests the gray old bucket, and it is a right merry feat to fill it o the brim with the clear, sparkling fluid—that mossy brim, that when the October sun shone was as soft as thine own lip, lady.

It is a cold, frosty night, so let us take a peep within the farm-house. The stranger's foot was ever welcomed here. The crackling wood fire blazes brightly in the huge fire-place and sends its cheering rays to the farthest extremity of the room, quite overpowering the light of the mould candle that stands upon the oaken chest of drawers. The cross beams overhead are set off with festoons of dried fruit, intersperse with bunches of herbs; and a swing shelf, suspended by bits of leather attached to the ends, is loaded down with useful books and waste newspapers. The axe has been brought from the wood-shed, and leans against the wall behind the door; above this hangs a hand-saw parallel with the top of the broom-handle; and, higher still, an old musket, with its rusted barrel and broken lock, rests in honored peace from the labor of '76. Articles of wearing apparel, varying from the heavy lion-skin overcoat to the red flannel blanket, to suit the wants of different members of the family, range along the walls, appropriating the goodly number of nails and pegs with which every prominent piece of timber is garnished. Cherry table and wooden chairs occupy a due space. A large house-dog under one of the former, rests his nose on his two fore paws and looks about him very knowingly, and three or four complacent cats occupy as many of the latter as they can conveniently appropriate. The floor is bare, but it is scarcely less white than the carefully scoured churn, from which a girl of sixteen is pouring the bubbling milk, that but a few moments since mingled with the flakes of golden-hued butter, now transferred to the snowy bowl. That old lady in the corner opposite, with the grey yarn knitting, and muslin cap, is granny Bray. She is a good deal bent with age; time has ploughed deep furrows in her brow and taken all the roundness from her cheek; but what a sweet, holy expression is left instead! Love speaks from the midst of wrinkles and paleness and decay; her energies have gone, her vigor is wasted, but love is in her heart—such love as angels feel. A girl of eight is close beside her, knitting too. She has knotted up her yarn and is "trying a race" with granny

By the table, a boy and girl of ten and twelve are busy at a game of checkers; and the father, that stout-built, honest-faced man with a newspaper, now and then glances from its columns to the kernels of red and yellow corn "jumping" about the board. The remainder of the group are grandfather Bray, Mrs. Hunter, the mother of the young folks, and her little son Neddy, grandfather's little pet. Grandfather, though the crown of his head is quite bare, and the sides decorated with fleecy locks, is as erect as a grenadier; and, if we may judge by present appearances, more to be feared than any son of Mars that ever trod the field. He is in a violent passion, a perfect rage. Mrs. Hunter has probably asked some great favor, and the old man is angered at her assurance.

"No! no! no!"

"But, father —"

"Silence! I command you, Mary Hunter! Another word, and you are no child of mine! I have said and will abide by it! James Bray shall never step over this threshold till he comes to look upon his foolish old father's corpse; you may let him see that, Mary."

See! the fine figure of the matron cowers, and she raises her clasped hands, as if deprecating her father's anger. Now she sinks back upon her chair, rocks to and fro, and tries to stifle her sobs in the folds of her neat, checked apron. Mr. Hunter seems to have lost his interest in the newspaper and the game too; a cloud comes over his bluff, good-humored face, and he springs to his feet with an angry exclamation. He checks himself, however, and stalks across the room in dogged silence. The faces of the young people grow anxious, even to paleness, and the beautiful child standing at his grandfather's knee retreats behind him, looking out from the shelter of the high-backed arm chair, with distended eyes and parted lips. Granny Bray alone dares speak. With her shaking, withered hand, she draws a pair of silver-mounted spectacles from eyes meek, soft and dove-like, though the haze of age has almost obscured their brilliancy, and her

gentle, tremulous tones cannot fail to remind us of the "still small voice" hushing the tempest.

"Jacob, the sin of anger leads to other sins; you are unjust to your own flesh and blood. Poor Mary has been an obedient child to us for more than thirty years, and it is ungrateful to treat her so."

"Then why does she fret me?" And the old man, as he speaks, flings a relenting glance upon the matron. "I am sure I think as much of Mary as you do. Eh, Neddy?" He is sorry that there is any cause for disagreement, and that is why he stoops to caress the little fellow, who, reassured by the natural tone of his voice, is already tugging at his coat-tail. "Don't grandpapa love mother, Ned?"

"Yes, but you don't love uncle James, grandpapa, you know you don't; and that is just as wicked as ever it can be."

The old man starts as though a wasp had stung the hand laid upon the boy's head. How his voice is changed! "Go to your mother, sirrah!"

But the brave little fellow is not quite ready to obey; he has not *had his say out*. His clear grey eye does not blench, as it is fixed on the face of the angry old man, and his voice rings out like a silver bell. There is a touch of the grandfather's own spirit.

"Do you hate me, too, grandpapa, because I look like uncle James?"

"Neddy, Neddy!" exclaims the mother in consternation, "you are a very naughty boy, Neddy; come, come away to bed!"

The old man answers not, but his heavy tramp, as he stalks about the room, betokens a gathering storm. Only one can stay its fury, and that is the faithful being, chosen in rosy youth from a bright throng; his soother in adversity, his nurse in sickness, his counsellor in perplexities, his companion and never-failing friend through all the vicissitudes of a long life. She now drops her knitting upon the table, quite forgetting that she is not in the *seam-needle*, and hobbling forward, places her hand upon his arm.

“Take down your Bible, Jacob; consult that; your own heart is deceitful.”

“They teach even their children to taunt me, Ann;” but the old man’s manner is comparatively gentle.

“No, no, Jacob; there you are wrong again. Children will be children, and Hunter and Mary are not to blame if Neddy is now and then saucy to you. You play with him so much that you ought to expect it.”

“I ought to expect it from the face he carries!”

“Poor James was the most dutiful of sons.” The old lady sighs, as though the involuntary tribute came from a full heart.

“Dutiful

“Father,” says Mar; you have often told us that brother James was the kindest and best child you ever had. Don’t you recollect how he nursed you through that long fever, and —”

“And how he wheedled me out of all my hard earnings and made me a beggar in my old age, owing the roof that shelters me to the charity of strangers, and dependent for my bread on one who has not a drop of my blood in his veins! What do you say to that, Mary? Thank God, I have yet a roof above me! *He* would have turned me into the streets, but strangers — thank God that I *have* a roof! and, that, I swear by —”

“Jacob, Jacob!” interposes the mild voice of granny Bray, “say nothing you will be sorry for; you are in a passion, Jacob, and no good comes of anger.”

“Father,” — this is the deep bass of Hunter, who has till now remained silent. “Father, just now you spoke of being dependent; you know Mary and I are glad to be with you and right proud to make you comfortable.”

“Dear heart!” What a grateful glance accompanies the old lady’s exclamation. “Jacob, we have the best children in the world!”

“All but one, all but one.” This is not all the old man mutters between his teeth; but perhaps it is as well that we do not hear the rest.

“And he is good, too. Nay, Jacob, listen; James is our first-born; he was our pride in the days of our strength, before we knew how foolish and sinful it was to lay up our treasure upon earth. He has taken care of us, and comforted and watched over us; to be sure we leaned upon a broken reed, but that was our own fault; a better child never lived. He has met with misfortunes, and you cannot forgive him for it; how can you expect to be forgiven?”

“I *do* forgive him; I told minister Dean so; but I never will see him—never, while I have strength to shut the door against him!”

“It does strike me, sir, that this spirit is not befitting a man of your years and profession,” interposed the bass voice bluntly.

“It is not for you to call me to account, John Hunter, unless indeed—”

“Do not say it; do not say it, father,” whispered Mary, crouching on the floor beside him, and folding her arms over his knees; “Hunter is a lion when he is aroused, and you and he must be kind to each other.”

“For your sake, Moll; you are a good girl, and I must humor you, if only because you are the baby.”

Peace seems to be restored, and we will retire, lady, while I explain in a few words the scene.

Grandfather Bray was now verging on his eightieth winter, and his son James (himself a grandfather) was scarce twenty-five years his junior. When James first married, he lived at the homestead and cultivated the farm, and as one after another of the children made for themselves homes in the neighboring towns, his situation only seemed the more permanent. At last, Mary, the youngest child, left the parental roof, and James and his kind family were more necessary to the old people than ever. The farm yielded a comfortable support for all, and there was no reason why it should not continue to do so; but the demon of speculation entered the honest, sensible head of James Bray. The title-deed of the farm had been his for several years; he rashly risked it, and

lost. Through the generosity of creditors, his father received a life-lease of the house and garden; but what was this to the sturdy old farmer, who had all his life long gloried in fertile fields and overflowing granaries? His very mind was narrowed down—his faculties cramped by thinking upon his diminished fortunes, and they burst forth in anger. While the old lady raised her eyes meekly and wondered what her poor grandchildren would do, he only raised his voice to animadvert on what had been done. He declared that he was cajoled, cheated, swindled, and he would not bear it. The more unreasonable his anger became, the more fire it gathered, for indignation always increases in inverse ratio to its righteousness. It was soon found necessary for James to seek another dwelling, and this was a much sorer trial to poor granny Bray, than the loss of property. James had more of his mother's spirit than his father's, and it was a sorrowful thing for him to part in anger from his beloved sire. When Mary Hunter took her place by the sacred old hearth-stone, he whispered in her ear, "Never cease persuading till you have made peace; my conscience tells me that I have been foolish and imprudent, wickedly greedy and covetous of this world's goods; and my father's anger will weigh heavily upon me until it is withdrawn." And so Mary's pleading voice was often heard; but it only increased the old man's irritability. This was the night before *Thanksgiving*, and, as usual, the children and grandchildren were to join in the *Thanksgiving* merry-making at the dear old homestead. And Mary pleaded and pleaded, and cried as though her heart would break, when she found her pleadings in vain. *Thanksgiving* came and went, but heavily passed the day at the farmhouse. Granny Bray said the like had never been known since the funeral of poor little Jemmy—the bravest and fairest, she had ever since declared, of all her grandchildren. The Hunters had done their best to make the festival joyous, but no joy was there. Even the young children missed the familiar faces of their young cousins, and looked thoughtful in the midst of their amusement.

The feast was spread, and it had never been more sumptuous; but nothing seemed as in former times; the soul of the feast was wanting. The love, the unity of feeling, that had consecrated it since the now outcast son sat on his father's knee, a baby, had been rudely jarred, and the house of feasting was turned to one of mourning.

Weeks passed by, and grandfather Bray was as positive and unyielding as ever. It was in vain that the sweet, tremulous tones of his wife preached the duty of forgiveness.

"I *have* forgiven him," was the uniform reply, "but I never will forget."

Still the old man's stubbornness made him miserable, and granny Bray, in kindness (whether judiciously or not is another matter) ceased not to tell him of it every day.

As New-Year's day approached, a feeling exceedingly uncomfortable seemed to pervade the atmosphere of the old farm-house. It was a festival that had been almost as religiously observed as Thanksgiving; and, should it now be neglected? Grandfather Bray wished that it might, and looked about him for a reason, but none presented itself. As the merry anniversary drew near, even the very clouds and sunshine seemed to have an inkling of the old man's state of mind, and to conspire against him. There was a heavy fall of snow on the night of the twenty-eighth; on the twenty-ninth the roads were somewhat blocked up, and grandfather was inclined to think them quite impassable; indeed, he more than hinted that none but madmen would venture out for at least a week to come. On the thirtieth, however, sleighs flitted here and there like fairy boats on a sea of foam; and such a day as the thirty-first was an era in the life of pleasure-lovers. The sleighing was a perfect marvel. Oh, how the horses pranced! And *such* a jingling of bells! It was enough to turn the whole world of young folks into Robin Goodfellows, and make the most withered heart dance within the bosom. And hearts *did* dance, and were mirrored in dancing eyes, and sat upon warm, loving lips, and rang out in glad young voices; ay, winter though it was, the earth was radiant with

beauty, and the air vocal with a music far more joyous than the gush of melody from a summer woodland. The last sun of the old year set in a flood of golden light, and grandfather Bray's heart sank within him. That bevy of try-to-be happy faces haunted him; he was sure he could not endure another day like the gloomy Thanksgiving; yet not even a cold had he been able to muster, to confine him to his room. The old man's face grew longer as the evening deepened; but as no one appeared to observe him, he had no excuse for being surly, and was only sad.

What a bright morning was that of the New Year! the air was pure and bracing, and a gay dazzling sunlight played many pranks with inclined snow flakes and pendent icicles, and decked old, withered trees in a gayer garniture than that of spring. Granny Bray, with her usual placid smile, decorated herself with her newest muslin cap, and folded her whitest kerchief across her bosom, and then sat down to her knitting in the corner. Mr. Hunter went about his usual morning avocations, but with unusual alacrity; his wife took another look at the pies of pumpkin and mince-meat, the dough-nuts and cookies and gingerbread, and then turned to a whole table full of featherless bipeds, waiting to be roasted; while the children busied themselves in making ready, in their own way, for a whole troop of expected cousins. Grandfather Bray *stumped* about the house and barn, and up and down the nice path cut through the snow to the road, then threw on his Sunday coat, and made a desperate attempt at cheerfulness. But all would not do; his heart was troubled. Just as the clock was on the stroke of nine, a pretty pony dashed up to the door with a light vehicle of a somewhat unique pattern, the self-same little *jumper* that grandfather had assisted the two boys of his banished son in contriving and making. The reins were held by his own favorite grandson, and, by Charley's side, all hooded and cloaked, sat his young sister Lucy, ready to spring from the sleigh the moment stopped.

"Cousin Lucy! cousin Lucy!" shouted the noisy children;

and before she reached the gate they were all around her, and little Eddy had half precipitated her into the snow-drift in the attempt to jump astride her neck.

“How glad we are to see you, cousin Lucy!” and “Did grandfather invite you to New Year’s, cozy?” and “Is uncle James coming?” were among the questions and exclamations poured upon the little maiden, as she proceeded to the house.

Even Charley, who kept his station in the sleigh, was for the moment forgotten, but it was only a moment. Eddy turned back to him, and, with a delighted scream, accomplished the feat he attempted with Lucy; and the children, attracted by the noise, gathered round the funny little *jumper*, leaving Lucy with her eldest cousin on the threshold.

“Does grandfather love me yet?” she whispered in Julia’s ear.

“I don’t know,” and Julia shook her head, as though she would have added, “you would n’t think he did.”

“Then he never speaks of me?” inquired the child, in a still softer tone.

“Poor grandfather!” sighed Julia Hunter; and “Poor grandfather!” echoed Lucy Bray; “poor dear grandfather! It must make him unhappy, not to love everybody; he was always *so* good.”

By this time the door turned on its hinges and Lucy stepped into the capacious kitchen, where you and I went, lady, the night before Thanksgiving. Grandfather was trying to busy himself over a newspaper, but Lucy’s quick eye at once detected the failure, for it was upside down. “A happy New Year, grandfather!” she said, in a cheerful tone; and the old man, though he raised his hand, and drew back his head, could not prevent the dewy, red lips from meeting his.

“You are cold, Lucy,” he attempted to say in an indifferent tone; but his voice sounded husky and unnatural, and he was ashamed to trust it.

The meeting between granny Bray and her little granddaughter was a loving one but the child soon turned away

from the dear old lady, to one who, notwithstanding his faults, was none the less dear.

“I did n't come to stay, grandfather, for I know that it would spoil your New Year's to have anybody here that you don't love; but I *did* want to bring you some of my socks and mittens, you liked them so much last winter. Don't you remember, grandfather, that first pair of mittens? how they twisted, and the stripes went all askew? and then how you laughed at me, and put both my hands into one and tied them fast? But the next pair was done to a charm—don't you recollect? Now, look here, grandfather!” and Lucy began to display the contents of her basket.

Grandfather, however, did not look. There was a slight redness about his eyes, and a nervous twitching at the corners of his mouth; but what principally prevented him from looking was the extreme difficulty he had in finding his way into his pocket, though his only object seemed to be to force an entrance, for when he once accomplished the feat he withdrew his fingers and tried again. In the mean time, Lucy had produced from her basket a neat muslin cap, and granny Bray's snowy head was bared to try the effect of her pretty present. For thirty years her caps had been made by the same hand, and she was sure that no one could suit her but the elder Lucy.

“Tell your mother,” said the old lady, “that it was very kind in her to think of us; and especially to-day, when we have done the same as to shut the door upon her. Your mother is a good woman, Lucy, and you are a good child.”

“Her *mother's* child,” said the old man, struggling with a whole throatful of emotion.

Lucy turned her full eyes upon him; then they brimmed over, and, twining her arms around the old man's neck, she buried her face in his bosom and sobbed, “My father's child, and yours, dear grandfather; you cannot cast me off!”

The shaking arms closed around her, as if declaring they did not wish to cast her off, and the old man threw a troubled glance upon the floor. It was not the place to gain firmness'

for there stood the basket, with the hose and mittens that nobody but Lucy and her mother could knit just right; and upon the top lay a pair of cloth slippers, so comfortable that his feet felt a strong inclination to creep into them at once. How he had wanted just such a pair of slippers! and how granny, and Mary, and Mary's daughter, Julia, had fretted over them, and at last succeeded in producing a pair that would fit the hooped foot of—of anything that has such feet, much better than the pedal extremities of any human being. But there was one thing about them that troubled the old gentleman more than all the rest.

The soling was the handiwork of James. There could be no mistake about it; James was ingenious and economical, and he had always done such things. Grandfather Bray drew the back of his horny hand two or three times across his eyes; and his aged partner knitted away very earnestly, having—not the tact, oh, no, the old lady was far from being celebrated for skill in that line—but the genuine kindness of heart, to forbear speaking. Prying eyes overthrow a vast amount of good in this world. Honest hearts do not like to be looked into, and spied out, and commented upon, much better than dishonest ones. Emotion of all kinds is a sacred thing, and the man who loves to display it has only the counterfeit. Grandfather Bray never counterfeited; it was unnecessary, for he was in possession of the true coin. All he did was done bluntly and honestly. For a moment he held his breath and winked back the moisture from his eyes; but the mute evidences of love and carefulness looked up pleadingly from the child's little basket, and told of by-gone days; and the precious burden within his arms, quivering all over with emotion, was too close to his heart not to exert a softening influence upon it.

“God bless you, Lucy!” at last the old man broke forth “Hush your sobbing, child; hush! There, there, my little puss, be quiet now, and you shall have everything your own way. Children are *so* wilful now-a-days! Do you hear, pussy? everything your own way.”

“Grandfather! my — do you mean ——”

“Mean! to be sure I do; mean a great many things! Hop down from my knee. Crying children should never kiss; you’ve sprinkled my face all over with your tears;” and grandfather, thinking he had, by this last remark, proved the impossibility of any of the tears belonging exclusively to himself, rolled the bewildered child from his arm and hurried to the door.

“Hunter! John Hunter! How d’ye do, Charley? come here, my boy! we are to have grand times to-day, and you and I must do the little odd jobs, you know. Hunter, harness the horses to the big sleigh, and — hem! — and go over to the corners and bring — ahem! — bring James Bray, and all the family — *all* of them, remember, Hunter; down to the cat, if Billy has a notion.”

Off started the overjoyed son-in-law with a skip-hop-and-jump-step, that made the children send up a merry peal of laughter exactly suited to the gayety of the morning; and grandfather Bray joined in the merriment, though very far from certain that it was not at his expense. Lucy had heard the command; and she now had both hands clasped about her grandfather’s arm, with her sweet, sunny face upturned and looking into his; while Charley expressed his joy by leaping over the fence and back again three times successively.

Lady, if you *could* have looked in at grandfather Bray’s that day! if you *could* have heard the stale joke applauded, as though that moment coined! and seen the mirthful faces (to say nothing of the steaming meats and smoking gravies) and heard the long, loud peal that shook the rafters, mingling with the silvery tones of childhood! If you *could* have seen and heard all this, I do not say that you would have envied that joyous party, but you would have wondered all the rest of the world did not envy them. And Lucy clapped her small, dimpled hands, and skipped and frisked about like a little kitten; and Neddy declared that grandfather only hugged him the closer when they all said he looked like uncle

James. Not a word was said of forgiveness, on either side, for when the heart has done its work words are weak things; but nevertheless words did pass; words of care and consideration, and they were appreciated.

You will wonder, lady, that I have taken you to such a common place, and told you such a very common story; and I can hardly answer why. It must be that *you* have kept all *home feelings* pure and sacred; the chain of love that passes around *your* hearth-stone can never have been tarnished by the breath of an unjust or unforgiving spirit. Lady, pardon me; my story was intended for unreasonable old men like grandfather Bray, and resentful people *unlike* his son James; and I am sorry to have detained you so long. Of course, the fire on your domestic altar never burns dim; and you are too gentle and loving to stand up in unbending coldness, because you happen to be in the right. Would that all were like you, lady!

SONNET TO WINTER.

THY brow is girt, thy robe with gems inwove ;
 And palaces of frost-work, on the eye,
 Flash out, and gleam in every gorgeous dye,
 The pencil, dipped in glorious things above,
 Can bring to earth. Oh, thou art passing fair !
 But cold and cheerless as the heart of death,
 Without one warm, free pulse, one softening breath,
 One soothing whisper for the ear of Care.
 Fortune too has her Winter. In the Spring,
 We watch the bud of promise ; and the flower
 Looks out upon us at the Summer hour ;
 And Autumn days the blessed harvest bring ;
 Then comes the reign of jewels rare, and gold,
 When brows flash light, but hearts grow strangely cold.

LIGHTS AND SHADES--A SONNET.

IF there be light upon my being's cloud,
 I'll cast o'er other hearts its cheering ray ;
 'T will add new brightness to my toilsome way.
 But when my spirit's sadness doth enshroud
 Hope's coruscations, pleasure's meteor gleam,
 And darkness settles down upon my heart,
 And care exerts her blighting, cankering art,
 Then, then, what I am not I'll strive to seem ;
 Woe has no right her burden to divide,
 To cast her shadows o'er a sunny soul ;

So, though my bark rock on the troubled tide,
Or lie, half wrecked, upon the hidden shoal,
The flowers of hope shall garland it the while,
Though plucked from out her urn in death to smile.

SONNET.

THE BUDS OF THE SARANAC.*

AN angel breathed upon a budding flower,
And on that breath the bud went up to heaven,
Yet left a fragrance in the little bower
To which its first warm blushes had been given;
And, by that fragrance nursed, another grew,
And so they both had being in the last,
And on this one distilled heaven's choicest dew,
And rays of glorious light were on it cast,
Until the floweret claimed a higher birth,
And would not open on a scene so drear,
For it was more of Paradise than earth,
And strains from thence came ever floating near;
And so it passed, and long ere noontide's hour,
The bud of earth had oped, a heaven-born flower.

*Lucretia and Margaret Davidson.

BORN TO WEAR A CORONET.

SOME people *are* born to wear a coronet, no doubt; but why such things happen on this side of the Atlântic, where plain, simple, republican blood alone is allowed to pass current, I cannot imagine. Yet that such things do actually occur here, I am certain, and so would you be, dear reader of mine if you had ever seen Rosina Brown. Well do I remember her—a tall, dark-haired maiden, in the first half of her teens, with a form remarkably well developed, an easy air, and a very peculiar manner of carrying a head which was in reality a very fine head, when it was not thrown back so far as to destroy the equilibrium of the figure. In school-girl phrase, she was a magnificent creature, with hair like the raven's wing, and eyes to match, features of nature's most exquisite workmanship, a queen-like figure, and a step like Juno's. People less enthusiastic would have said that she was a very fine girl, who, if she did not spoil herself by disagreeable airs, might become a useful and accomplished woman. We were not so tame and common-place, however; and, from the dignified Miss Martin, who had come to Alderbrook "merely to review her studies," down to us lisping Peter Parleyites, we all regarded such equivocal encomiums with the contempt they merited. Oh! how we did lament the vulgarity of American society, and deprecate the debasing sentiment which is the corner-stone of our government. But for those "rusty-fusty old men," who put their heads together, as old men are forever doing, to destroy all the dear, delightful romance of life, by making believe that all the people in the world are born free and equal, our splendid beauty might have been at least a countess.

"The head of Zenobia!" Miss Martin would sigh, and,

“Such a head!” came the echo from lip after lip, with a half-lisped finis from the baby-pet, Fanny Forester.

Alas! that Nature, who it is generally believed may be implicitly trusted in matters touching pedigree, should, on this occasion, so far forget herself as to send a model for a princess of the blood royal across the water, where women are expected to wash their own dishes and scrub their own floors!

It must have been some awkward mistake, and I have since come to the conclusion that Miss Rosina Brown was intended for the Queen of England, and the more simple Victoria for Miss Rosina Brown. Be that as it may, many were the fresh-hearted, simple-souled little damsels who threw up their pretty hands in ecstasy at every sentiment she uttered, and heard her animadvert on fashion, refinement, and, above all, aristocracy, with staring eyes and gaping mouths. Among these did Miss Rosina move a queen, though deprived of any other court. We understood the contraction of her brow, the drawing up of her neck, and the curl of her lip perfectly well; and unfortunate indeed was the stranger who, by some peculiarity of voice or manner, or the display of some article of dress not precisely in accordance with our sovereign's taste, called down upon herself these unequivocal marks of disapprobation. But Miss Brown, (if her title *must* needs be simple Miss, pray why *could n't* it have been Neville or Montfort, or something that had at least a shadow of nobility about it?) Miss Brown, with all her holdings forth on aristocracy, could not have defined the word any better than two thirds of the brilliant misses and ambitious mammas that have so well nigh exhausted the theme by their continual harpings, both before her day and since her settlement. She knew that aristocrats were a touch above the vulgar, that they lost caste by making themselves useful, that they should not come in contact with—*with*—well, even I, her pet pupil, have forgotten whom; but it is a class whose traits it is given them to understand intuitively. That aristocracy is a shadowy word to me yet; for it is enveloped in the misty veil of Miss Brown's explanations. I think it conveyed the idea of some exclusive privi-

leges, I do not recollect what, and a particular way of bowing and curtsyng, I have forgotten how ; whether it had anything to do with the curl of the hair, or bend in the bridge of the nose, I cannot say ; but it certainly had with the curvature of the lips, for I recollect one sweet little girl was voted plebeian by Miss Brown's court, because, after numerous lessons, she could not throw up the corners of her pretty mouth, as my Zikka does when angered by the bit. Neither do I know whether high birth had part or parcel in the matter of making an aristocrat, but I half suspect in theory it had ; for I remember one young lady who was considered an unfit associate, because her father was a " vile mechanic ;" and Miss Brown carefully concealed from us the fact, that her dear papa was the same Adam Brown, the flower of his profession, who had graced so well the character of " mine host," proud, rather than ashamed, of the gilt letters emblazoned on the swinging sign before his door. Adam Brown was a worthy, painstaking man, kind and affable, and very much of a gentleman withal, having not the slightest suspicion that his business was incompatible with the maintenance of that character. Neither was his fair daughter troubled with any qualms about the matter ; but she flitted like the gladsome thing that she was among the numerous visitors, laid the snowy cloth, served the tea, and performed the thousand other offices that none can grace so well as a sweet little girl, flashing with spirit and dimpling with good humor. Indeed, though afraid of scandalizing myself by the expression of such a sentiment, I do more than half suspect that much of Miss Brown's Zenobian grace was picked up in this very manner. If she did not owe the shape of her head to the duties of the hostel, she certainly did the carriage of it ; and not a coroneted brow in Christendom could bear its honors more proudly than she the clustering wealth of her own black tresses. But things were not destined to continue long in such an even course. Adam Brown died, lamented as men who " act well their parts " always will be, and left his daughter an heiress.

Of such stuff as this are American aristocrats made — they

lay the parent who has toiled for them in his grave, and rear the fabric of their miserable, degrading glory on his ashes. Their fathers are honest laborers, they are spendthrifts and mountebanks, and their children, if no worse, are beggars. (Dear reader! a word in your ear. From the dash a couple of sentences back, not a word of all this rant is mine; but, unluckily, there is leaning over my shoulder a Democratic monomaniac — a genuine Jeffersonian Polk-and-Texas-man, as he calls himself, and I must needs submit, now and then, to an interpolation.)

It was a sad day when our clique of exclusives was broken up by the loss of the nucleus round which we gathered; but we all promised never, *never* to forget Rosina Brown, and kept the promise as well as school-girls usually do. In a short time rumor brought to our ears something, I scarce know what, about her marriage; and, one by one, most of us followed in her wake, till scarce a heart in our little band but beat the echo to another's throbbings. Then we were scattered widely; none but us "little ones" remaining at Alderbrook, and we were of course so fluttered at the idea of growing up into womanhood as to forget our *a-b-c* days entirely. Even our little keepsakes found their way into the ashes, or at best some old bag or oaken chest in the garret; and scarce a trace remains to tell of by-gone days, except, now and then, a faded flower within the heart, which the dews of memory cannot soften into life. Thus lasting are the friendships founded on a momentary fancy, and nourished by flattery. Sometimes I felt some interest — not curiosity, oh, no! — in the fate of my dear Rosina; but I always quieted myself with the reflection that she must be the star of some proud circle; and, if truth must be told, I had become so in love with the quiet, simple beauties of our darling Underhill, that I valued her estate but lightly, however high it might be. But of its elevation I doubted not; and when fame condescended, now and then, to waft the name of some beautiful lady, one who was the cynosure of all eyes in her own land,

across the Atlantic, I involuntarily inquired if she were not American born.

More than a dozen years had passed when I took a journey to the far west. Oh! those wild, luxuriant woods! Every pulse within me dances at the remembrance of them, and even yet my heart flutters like a caged bird in sight of its own free heaven. How I clapped my hands, and laughed, and shouted in baby-like glee, until the old woods rang with ten thousand answering echoes. Then how I sat and dreamed, till fancy transported me to gay Sherwood, and I detected among the changing foliage the Lincoln green, and started at every leaf that rustled, expecting to see peering out upon me the face of bold Robin Hood, or some one of his merry foresters. Oh! beautiful wild, wild west! I love thee, not "despite thy faults," but, as rare Elia did things scarce more loveable, "faults and all." I love even thy corduroy roads, mud and underbrush, log houses without windows, quizzing inhabitants, and gruff, bragging hosts, who think it very strange that people can have any objection to sleeping a dozen in a room, particularly if it be summer, and that room has no air-hole but a chink in the wall, made for the especial benefit of beetles and mosquitoes.

We had left Will Waters' fine farm away in the distance, and commenced our return home. Oh, such roads! Our ample wagon was like a miniature ark of particularly clumsy make, now rising on the tip-top of a billow, and suddenly sinking almost out of sight. Then we had an over-turn, and that was the climax of the day's enjoyment; for nobody was hurt, and everybody laughed, and perpetrated stale witticisms and laughed at them again; till the birds were no doubt convinced that upsetting a big travelling-wagon is one of the rarest sports we humans engage in. Next the horses, panting as though worn out by their own strong will, set their forward feet stubbornly down, refusing to part company with the turf even for an instant; the driver flourished his whip and swore roundly, the gentlemen coaxed the horses, soothed the driver, and laughed with us, who, with comical glances, half of mirth half

of anxiety, nibbled the tips of our kid gloves and wondered what we should do. Then all at once one prying fellow of our party announced that a spring was broken, a pin lost, or something of that sort had occurred, which women are sure to get wrong if they mention it afterwards; to which the provoking driver responded that a horse had lost a shoe. And so, as in duty bound, we all laughed again, not heartily, as before, but a nervous, hysterical laugh. The gentlemen looked perplexed; we cast sidelong glances at the woods, as though the wolves had already smelt out our discomfiture, and were only hiding behind the nearest trees till night-fall; and the driver used harder words than ever. A consultation was now held, rather short to be sure, as consultations are apt to be when there remains but one path to choose; and then each gentleman tucked his lady under his arm, and on we jogged as merrily as before. It might be five miles, indeed it might be twenty, to any human habitation, but no — it was only *one*. A neat log cabin, situated in the very centre of a Paradisal bower, its white-washed walls nearly concealed by woodbine and eglantine, loomed up from an expanse of cleared land; and, all at once, our rejoiced party discovered that we were very tired, and could not have lived to walk farther than this one mile. Beautiful dark-eyed children, in neat, coarse dresses, were playing about the cottage, and interrupting with the cry — “Oh! look here, father!” — “Father! Robin has hit the target!” — a tall, sun-embrowned, intellectual looking man, who was reading in the doorway. We were cordially welcomed by this man, and shown into a little room full of flowers and green bushes, through the leaves of which the hot air, made heavy by the weight of the sunshine, cooled itself and dallied lovingly with the flowers, then came to play about us who knew so well how to appreciate both its freshness and its perfume.

“A little paradise!” whispered I.

“Almost equal to the nestling-place of your friend Nora,” returned J—, in the same tone.

“A pretty good house-keeper for the woods, I imagine,” added another of our party.

“House-keeper, indeed! Who would think of a house-keeper’s arranging all this? It was undoubtedly some little sprite with taste enough to prefer such a bright spot to fairy-land!” And I tossed my head in make-believe playfulness; but, in reality, feeling quite resentful that any one should think of such prosaic things as house-keeping in a place like this.

So I looked about among the foliage for my sylvan deity, but nothing was there more fairy-like than a domesticated robin, which, perched on a fresh bough that waved above the snowy pine mantel, was practising a little duet with its partner in the fragrant bass-wood, just beyond the court-yard fence. But we had no more time for observation or remark. Our hostess, a young woman of dignified, matronly air, as unlike a fairy as anything you can imagine, came in to welcome us; and, shortly after, we were seated around a plentiful board, smoking with hot corn cakes, and the most fragrant imperial, and — oh! did n’t we do justice to these same? And did the fresh cream, and the strawberries, and the snowy cold bread for those who preferred it, and the raspberry jam, or any of the other nice things, suffer from neglect? During the repast the fine eyes of our hostess frequently turned on me, and there was such a peculiar attraction in their deep darkness, that mine invariably met them. Then there was a little blushing, a little confusion on both sides, and a resolution on my part not to be so rude and stare so again. After tea we repaired to the little embowered parlor, while our hostess was “putting things to rights,” and in less than a half hour were joined by her and her husband. They kept up an interesting conversation, but I was silent and perplexed. There was something in the face, air, and manner of this woodland lady that was familiar; and at the same time I was sure that I had never seen any one so dignified, so self-possessed, and yet so simple and unaffected in every word and

movement. I ran over my list of acquaintances that had "married and gone west;" but no, it was none of these.

"Fanny!" exclaimed J., somewhat impatiently, "are you dreaming? I have spoken to you three times without getting an answer. Our host tells me that his wife spent some of her school-days at Alderbrook."

"At Alderbrook?"

It came like a flash of light.

"Rosina Brown!"

"My little Fanny!" and we were locked fast in each other's arms.

My countess, my queen, here in the wilderness, actually washing her own dishes, and sweeping the floor of her own log-house, and "not always with a *civilized* broom either," as she laughingly asserted. Only think of it! Of course I was astounded; and no wonder that I did n't venture on asking a single question, while she overpowered me with a whole volley. But at midnight, when all were asleep within, and the stars alone kept watch without, (Rosina assured me that there was not a wolf in the whole neighborhood,) we stole away, and beneath the silent trees renewed our former intimacy.

"And so you wonder," said Rosina, "at my being here. Well, so do I sometimes; but oftener I wonder why I am so happy, so contented, so willingly circumscribed in my wants and desires, and yet so free in soul and fancy. Believe me, Fanny, I never before knew a single day of such pure, unalloyed happiness as I have enjoyed every day since we sheltered our pretty birds within this forest nook. Don't you think they are pretty, Fanny? They stole their red cheeks from the dewy flowers, and their bright eyes have grown brighter by looking on the beautiful things about them. Then these stately old trees have made them thoughtful and deep-hearted; and they are little musicians, too, vying with the woodland minstrels in melody."

"Perfect cherubs—and so happy and healthful!"

"Yes—happy, and healthful, and frolicsome, as the young colts you must have passed when you wound around the bend

n the creek. They used often to be sick, and I watched beside them until all the color was gone from my cheek, and I acquired this stoop in my shoulders—see! I never shall be straight again!”

“Oh! I should n’t observe it at all—it is very slight indeed, and you will soon overcome it. But do tell me how it happened that you, of all others, should marry a farmer, and—and—”

“A poor man, you would say. I did not.”

And then I listened to a story, of which I should never have dreamed that Rosina Brown could be the subject.

Rosina had met Richard Merrival several times before she came to Alderbrook, and their acquaintance was renewed every vacation. So when she had “finished,” and he threw off the student and was admitted to the bar, it was no great wonder that he pleaded his first cause in the queenly presence of Rosina Brown. It were a pity, indeed, if such a handsome young barrister should plead in vain; and so Merrival ensnared his lady-bird, and bore her away to town; and there, in an elegant mansion, surrounded by every luxury, their chief study seemed to be how to make everything about them more luxurious still. At length their means failed, and Merrival applied to his father. But this fountain of wealth was dry. Failure had followed up the old man’s golden schemes, and Richard Merrival and his father were beggars. Rosina saw herself falling; she knew that the magic circle of which she had been the brightest star was shutting her without its pale; the glittering bubble, which, in her girlish days, she believed it the chief aim of her life to grasp closely, was crushed within her hand. All that was bright, all that was gladsome, all that was worthy of possession in this world—every meteor that for long years she had gazed upon and believed a sun—all the roses that had clustered so luxuriantly about her path—all receded now, and the world lay stretched out before her, a wilderness. And yet, an old friend came, one who had loved her when a little girl in the inn by the way-side, and she would not know him. No! come poverty,

come beggary, come starvation even, — these should not oow her spirit to go back to things she had despised. She could suffer, but she would not bend. And so the old friend went away, and Rosina wondered where she should find bread for her children.

But Merrival, though he had spent years in idleness, was gifted and eloquent. He knew that his profession was a fortune in itself, and he gathered strength, as manliness ever does when struggling with obstacles. With a heart somewhat lightened, he sat down by his humble fireside at evening, to gain sympathy from the loved ones. But discontent and misery were there. His wife complained; his pampered children missed their accustomed luxuries, and they complained also; recrimination followed between the husband and the wife, and they lay down to rest with hearts full of bitterness toward each other. When the whole world is the object of bitterness the individual is never spared.

Weeks passed, and Richard Merrival grew gay again; but it was over the cup of death. His laugh was long and loud, and his eye had a fearful sparkle to it—a flash that every one knew was but the kindling of pent-up misery. The little cottage grew dark and darker, the loving heart grew desolate; but on the top wave of anguish rode always the harrowing thought—“Bread! bread for the little ones whom God has given me!”

Months—years went by, and Rosina was a drunkard's wife! Not a tithe of the degradation of such a lot was abated; but the bitterness of her spirit was drowned in sorrow. She had watched day and night by the bed-side of innocence, and she grew gentle in such an atmosphere. Then she laid two of her sweet nurslings in the grave, and so a link was forged between her heart and heaven.

A change came over Merrival. Poverty had taken up its abode by his fireside; suffering and sorrow were there, but none of these had driven him thence. It was the bitterness of crushed pride; and that was a guest there no longer. He laid his hand upon the icy forehead of his dead child, his first-

born darling boy, and took upon his soul a vow, and that vow never was broken. And now behold them, pale and weary, but calm and hopeful, wending their way to the far west, where they might forget their vain dreams and their degradation together.

“We are yet poor in gold and lands,” continued Rosina, “but are rich in health and peace, in our children, and in each other. And now, my dear Fanny,” she added, as we turned toward the house, “I am as *aristocratic* as ever. We lord it over the natives of these wilds, the birds and beasts, as though we were peers of the realm — Nature’s realm — and claim the *exclusive privilege* of making each other happy, and of offering our humble roof to the stranger benighted in these woods, — privileges which not a living thing about us ventures to exercise.”

“But do you never long for society, Rosina?”

“Society?”

She led me to a couch where two living rose-buds, two bright-lipped sleeping Hebes, lay nestling in each other’s arms, and throwing back rich clusters of golden curls, kissed cheek, and lip, and forehead, — a gentle, loving pressure, so mother-like that a tear sprang to my eye, for I seemed again lying in my own little cot at Alderbrook.

“Look at these, Fanny; and my two noble boys! What more society could I desire, unless it be *his*! I wish you knew my husband, Fanny. I used to boast that he was a perfect gentleman, and so he was; but that is an abused term, and now I know the highest praise that I can offer is that he is a *man*! — in heart, and soul, and intellect, a man — full of integrity, and courage, and strength, and truth — in short, my little Fanny, he is, as I suppose every loving wife thinks of her lucky Benedict — *the one man in the world!*”

It was almost morning when Mrs. Merrival and myself gave the good-night kiss, and turned away to dream of our school-days at Alderbrook.

When the sun arose, and the discovery was made that we should be detained a whole day and night longer in our par-

lor-bower, my resignation on the occasion entitled me to become *pattern-woman* for the whole party; and our hostess looked anything but sad at our discomfiture. It was a happy day; and, when evening came again, I no longer wondered that Rosina was satisfied with her society. In the course of the day I took a peep into the little library, composed of a few choice volumes, to which the Merrivals had clung in weal and woe; walked into the garden and viewed, not only the wall flowers and sweet peas, but the beans and cabbages; and then went to the log barn across the creek, and brought in our own hands the fresh eggs that were served up for dinner. I learned, also, that Master Robert Merrival, the active little fellow who had just "hit the target," on our arrival, mounted the pony Roger every Saturday, and rode off fifteen miles, to the nearest post-office, whence he returned well-laden with papers and letters.

Another morning came, and we turned with reluctance from our parlor-bower, and with still more reluctance from the dear ones who had constructed it, to pursue our journey. The adieus, the prayers and prophecies, the clasping of hands and kissing of lips, I will not attempt to describe; neither the heart-swell that it took so many miles to calm; for I would not leave a tear here at the close of my tale. So we parted, the Alderbrook Zenobia and her little worshipper. A strange throne that of rare Rosina Brown's!—her hut away in the green wilderness. And yet—and yet, I do believe—— Well! I will not brave a straight-jacket for the sake of having *my say*; but whatever mistake Fortune may have made in the execution of her plan, of one thing I am certain, my proud-browed friend was at least *born* to wear a coronet. J. says I am mistaken, that I must be thinking of her husband's "crown.

WILLARD LAWSON.

CHAPTER I.—LEAVING HOME:

“ You will be sorry for it, Willard.”

“ Sorry! I tell you, Sophy, I have been in leading strings long enough; and I will go where I can, now and then, do as I choose!”

“ You will be back in less than three days.”

“ No, not in less than three years. Come, tell me what I shall bring you from over the seas; they have all sorts of gimcracks in the Indies, and, maybe, I shall go to China, or—”

“ Or take a peep into Symm’s hole, or a ride on the roc’s back. Bring me a pair of slippers from Lilliput.”

“ I will bring you a pair so small that you cannot wear them, if that is what you like; and a rare India shawl, to beat cousin Meg’s.”

“ I hope you will get your purse well replenished; I dare say, you will find them in New York.”

“ New York!”

“ Don’t speak so contemptuously of our mammoth city, Will; there will be a little fading out of those handsome curls, I dare say, before you will see a larger.”

“ I tell you, Sophy, I am going to sea. What part of the world I may visit, I don’t know; but it will be many a long year before you will see me again.”

“ Nonsense, Will, think of scrambling up ropes and perching in the air like a monkey! You have always had a taste that way, I know, but try it in a gale, and you would soon come to the conclusion that you had a little too much of it. Come, this freak of yours is all nonsense; be obedient, and father will be kind to you, but you know it was wrong for you to go——”

"I know it was not wrong, Sophy, and I am glad I went. I should like to know what right anybody has to hinder me from speaking to a school-fellow now and then, or even from shaking my toe in a dance, if I choose. Wondrous good some people are, indeed! I wish they would tell me how much worse dancing is than anger; and did n't you see how pale he turned? James turned pale, too, for I believe he thought I would get knocked down. I almost wish he had done it."

"Willard!"

"He drives me to it, Sophy."

"If you go away with these bad feelings, I am afraid you never will come back again."

"Maybe—but—yes, I shall—of course I shall. I shall want to see you, and—and all. Oh, I shall come back some-time."

"I am afraid not, Willard."

The observation seemed to induce a new train of thought, for the boy's excited countenance assumed an unusual soberness; a tear crept to his eye and twinkled on the upraised lash, but he brushed it hastily away, and with a "never fear for that, Sophy," sprang to the door, as though afraid to trust his voice with another word. The sister waited awhile for his return, thinking that he would at least bid her a good-night; but when she perceived that he was not coming, she began to persuade herself that he was ashamed of his folly and would be in better temper in the morning, or that her father would abate some of his sternness; at any rate, somehow, the difficulty would be settled, as others had been before; and so she went to sleep. These troubles were nothing new to her. Judge Lawson was a noble-minded, upright man, who exercised a kind of patriarchal sway, not only in his family, but over the whole neighborhood. He was a good father and a kind neighbor in the main, but stern and self-willed; all suavity and gentleness when obeyed, but woe to the luckless one who dared to oppose his plans or wishes! To such, if the truth must be owned, Judge Lawson was a tyrant. He

had managed, however, without unpleasant bickerings, to bring up his family in the strictest integrity; and they were now about him, doing honor to his gray hairs. They had yielded to him; he had led them wisely, and now they honored him with all their hearts. Sons and sons-in-law looked up to him with reverence; all but a bold, daring boy, his youngest child, the handsomest and the bravest, but, alas! *so* full of faults! Willard had talents, but he did not like the trouble of cultivating them; like many another, he was so well satisfied with his natural acuteness, that he could see no necessity for bestowing labor on the mental soil. Mistaken Willard! Mistaken thousands! He was spirited as a young colt that spurns the bit, and grew restive under his father's control before he had reached a dozen summers. Now he had grown into a tall stripling, and considered himself very nearly a man, and was he to be led about like a baby? I think—I do not know—but I really think that if Judge Lawson had not been quite so authoritative and unbending, his son Willard would have been more manageable; but yet I must admit that the Judge never required anything of him which was not right. Then Willard was frank and joyous, with a heart full of generous sentiments and brimming over with sympathy and kindness; and it must be owned that there was something which shut down over his spirit like a lid whenever he entered his father's house. He had felt it when a little boy playing in the sunshine on the lawn; and used to think, when called in at evening, of the atmosphere of a damp, dark cellar in the spring-time; but the uncomfortable feeling had increased as he grew older, and now Willard Lawson did not love his home. It was a rare good place for his intellect, but there was no room there for his heart to expand. All were kind, his sister Sophia especially so, but it was a kindness which was always smooth, and even, and cold; no bubbling, no sudden gushes, like the spring which lures the travel-stained wanderer from the way-side, or the fountain leaping up at the kiss of the breezes and the glance of the sun-light; but a quiet, calm, lifeless sort of kindness, that seemed to lack that uni-

versal inspiration — love. So he went away from home for society, not always selecting the best, for how could the boy know how to choose rightly? He found more sympathy without doors than within, and so Willard Lawson, young as he was, had set both feet resolutely in a most dangerous path. Beware, Willard! Nay, but he will not beware; he has “been in leading strings long enough,” and he has resolved on emancipation.

How much Willard Lawson slept that night I will not attempt to say; how many misgivings visited his heart in the lone darkness, or how much dearer his home became as he thought upon the words of his sister: “If you leave us with these bad feelings, I am afraid you never will come back again.” The thoughts and emotions were his own, his own to brood over, his own to bury; *forget* he probably never would. Morning dawned at last, and by the first faint glimmer Willard rose and dressed himself. He then walked about the little room as though taking a farewell of every article of furniture, and looked from the window, and walked again, till a tear, actually a big round tear, rolled from his eyes like a red-hot bullet, and dropped upon his hand. He was alone now, and so it was no shame to weep; and Willard did not even put a hand to his eyes while the liquid sorrow rained down over his cheeks in torrents. Poor boy! It is a pitiful thing to forsake the roof which sheltered us in our helplessness; where the only real love the wide earth knows beamed on our infant eyes; where tenderness and purity and truth bud and blossom in the sunshine of kindness and the dew of innocence; the dear hallowed hearth-stone, circled round with sacred affections,—pitiful to leave it, and for what? Thank God for the gilded veil behind which the Protean future is allowed to conceal her features! Who would look into the book of fate and read at a glance his own destiny? Willard Lawson had no very bright hopes this morning; for the false star glittering but yesterday before his eyes, had set in darkness, been extinguished in tears. He had laughed and sported in that room, he had slept there

while angels guarded him, he had lisped his first prayers there, and there too had he almost forgotten the duty. He was still but a boy, and yet he was very much changed; and he thought upon this change with sadness. What an innocent little fellow he was when he went to sleep hugging his first top to his bosom, and thinking what a dear good papa his was to bring such an invaluable present from the town! And how often, in his childish reverence, had he thought of that same father, and wondered if his Heavenly Father could be any better or any wiser! And how disobedient he had been of late, and self-willed, and disrespectful; in actions rather than words, and in thoughts more than either. Dost thou relent, Willard? Is there not a softening in thy heart? Are not thy lips moving to the words, "I will arise and go unto my father?" Ah! stay thee, rash youth! Gently, gently! There is a balm in penitential tears! I already see the rainbow arching thy heart. It is a precious moment, Willard; beware! Nay, all is lost! That movement below, followed by the whistle of Bluff Bill, the man-of-all-work, has sent other thoughts into the head of the stripling, and the scale is turned. The tears are brushed away, and in quiet, but hurriedly, the room is left without a tenant.

Willard stood in the yard, beneath the dear old trees where he had sported in childhood. The large, long-limbed butternut had never seemed so beautiful as now, since the day when, an urchin in petticoats, he had scrambled up its jagged trunk to get a peep into the snug little home of Madam Redbreast. and came down again amid huzzas and chidings; and as for the elm trees, he had pruned them himself many a time, and he had watched them year after year, till he knew the position of every graceful branch against the sky, as he knew the places of the children at his father's table. There was a locust precisely his own age, and the circumstance had been so often mentioned, that he felt as though somehow that tree belonged to him—was linked to his life—was a part of himself, which he ought to carry away, or rather which he ought to stay and cherish. He cast a glance around to see that no

one was near, and then he threw his arms about the dear old tree, and pressed his lips to the rough, dew-spangled bark, as though it had been a living object of love. This done, he looked back upon the house hurriedly, and passed on. In the stable stood gay Larry, the fine young saddle-horse, which turned at the sound of his voice, and laid his finely arched neck over his shoulder, with all the affection of a child; and he patted the animal and passed his hand over his smooth glossy skin, and then buried his face in the flowing mane and wept unrestrainedly. Poor Willard! Larry was an old playmate, and that Larry loved him was clear, for to no other one was he so gentle and obedient. Oh, if Larry could but go with him! Our hearts warm toward thee, dear Willard, more than they did a half-hour since, when the careless whistle of Bill awakened thee to all thy stubbornness; for there is that in thy spirit which the angels know to be priceless. Thou art even as mettlesome as thy pet Larry; but thou art good and noble, too, for thou lovest the poor dumb animals which look up to thee for care and protection, even as thou shouldst look to Heaven. Mayst thou never lose the manly softness, young Willard! The lad found as he passed on that he had bestowed more love on Lawson farm than he had imagined. The cows—one in particular, which had always been called his—looked into his face with a kind of pleading mournfulness—a sad, beseeching expression, that seemed to him made up of love and censure; and then they came lowing after him, as though they would yet entreat his return. Even the fowls gathered about his feet familiarly, and raised a chorus of sounds which it was not difficult for him to interpret. “Sir Chaunticlere” shook his long parti-colored plumes ominously, and sent out a shrill, high-ringing warning; the hens, cackling, flocked before him, like a swarm of butterflies in August; and a dove flew from its perch to his shoulder, and then nestled in his bosom, looking up to him, with its warm, melting eyes swimming in love as his were in tears. There is yet time to retract, Willard. Take back those dangerous steps, and no one will know they have been trodden.

No, this is not among things possible to the boy. The parting is taking the very life from the innermost core of his heart, tearing away the threads which invisible fingers have been braiding within, ever since his baby foot first tottered on the threshold of being: but who ever suspected Willard Lawson of wavering or fickleness? Why, we might as soon expect the judge himself to change his mind and reverse a decision! Willard, boy as he is, will never hesitate and falter after he has resolved; but it is no part of his philosophy to dispense with feeling. Perhaps—I am not sure how strong the sense of right may be in his bosom—but, perhaps, if he were thoroughly convinced that he was taking a wrong step, one which he would regret in all after life, he might yet be induced to go back and nestle again, more lovingly than ever, among the dear old associations which are clustering around him, striving to entangle for good his erring feet. But Willard, with his bold, free spirit swelling in his bosom, will never stay with Larry and the other dumb things that love him, at what his boyish inexperience deems a sacrifice of his yet unbearded manliness.

Willard passed from the barnyard without venturing to look upon the garden patch, for he had had chiding enough without listening to the gentle murmurs of the green things that the morning breeze was dallying with; and leaping the stile, he took his way across a rich field of clover, which the little spirits of the night and the messenger sun-rays had decked out in matchless diadems. Sometimes a little sheet of gossamer, fastened to shafts of emerald, gleamed with all the colors of the rainbow, here and there breaking from its fastenings, as highly gifted spirits sometimes sink beneath the weight of their own wealth. Spires of grass bent beneath clusters of the same jewels; and the fragrant clover-heads and nodding butter-cups flashed and sparkled like the coronet of a duchess. Birds, sweet, glad little creatures, with wings and voices but too familiar, carolled from the tree-tops, or wheeled and careered in mid-air, mad with exultant happiness, (blessed spirits of the air!) and the bee, in his glossy black coat, with

more gold than even a gay courtier of the olden time would have cared to deck his mantle with, sped beneath the soft clouds like an arrow, and plunged headlong among the luxuriant sweets of the fragrant clover blossoms. How all these glad things contrasted with the heavy spirit of the young wanderer! A stream went dancing and bubbling by, right merrily; and close beside the rustic bridge was a deep place, where he had angled for trout for many a summer. Willard glanced at it and seemed inclined to stop, then passed on—returned again, and kneeling down, bent his head far over and peered earnestly down into the water. A fin swept by, with a thin layer of silver over it; and he caught a glimpse of a mottled back, crimson and amber, and a pale, soft azure in a setting of gray. Another followed, and then came a troop of little silver things, hurrying after each other, as though on their way to a fairy wedding, scarce rippling the water as they went. Willard caught by a branch of the birch tree that grew there when he first opened his eyes on the landscape, and swung himself to the bank. His seat was as soft as the richest carpet, woven of glossy brown and gold; and as he again bent over the stream, he scooped up handfuls of the cold water and dashed them over his burning face, jewelling his wavy hair and the luxurious bank together. Along the borders of the stream grew clumps of willows, their narrow leaves trembling on the breath of the morning, and now and then a wild elm, shagged with green away down to the earth, or a round-topped maple, or a silver-coated beech; and at their roots sprang troops of flowers, bending their blue and crimson cups to the water, while in the spots of light breaking through their branches swarmed clans of bright-hued insects, dipping their gay wings in the liquid gold of morning, and warming their bloodless limbs at the heart of nature. It was beautiful, and Willard had often thought so; but now his heart yearned toward the familiar scene, and he would have taken the whole to his bosom and folded his arms about it as tenderly as a mother clasps the child she dotes upon. Again the tears rushed to his eyes, and again he dashed the cool water upon

his face; and, without turning for another glance, hurried on. The sheep were speckling the green of the neighboring pastures, and the horses were bounding and tossing their manes in play, or quietly cropping the grass at their feet; but Willard had grown wiser and did not trust himself among them. He sprang over the fence and proceeded resolutely along the roadside. But his trials were not yet over. With a cry of joy, that seemed almost human, a dog rushed over the banks among the thorny bushes, scattering down a shower of rain-drops, bounded over the fence, and leaped, quivering all over with gladness, to the shoulders of his young master.

“Good dog! good Rover!” exclaimed the boy, in a husky, broken voice, patting the head and smoothing the neck of his favorite. “Good fellow! I did not want to scold you, and so — Bill should have known better than to set you free. But I must take nothing, not even my own dog, from the farm. Go back, Rover, go back!”

The dog seemed to understand the words, though they were spoken low and sorrowfully and without a gesture, and he looked up with his large meek eyes into the boy's face — oh, so pleadingly! Poor Willard's heart had been swelling until his bosom seemed hardly large enough to contain it, but this last appeal was too much; and, with uncontrollable sobbings, he threw himself upon the neck of his dumb favorite, and clung to him as though he had no other associate or friend on earth. And he had no other now. Poor Willard! For awhile the wanderer sobbed on in utter abandonment; the dog now thrusting his nose into his bosom, now licking his hands and face, and striving by such mute eloquence to win him from his grief, whatever might have occasioned it. At last the youth mastered the emotion, and with trembling lip and swimming eye stood again upon his feet.

“Go home, Rover — go! Go, Rover! Rascal! down! down! go home!”

The dog, at the first command, given falteringly, had sprung again to his master's shoulders, wagging his tail, as though to congratulate him on his restored calmness. But at

the last words, spoken authoritatively, he crouched at his feet, whining piteously, and looking up to his face with the most beseeching fondness. If the eyes be the mirror of the soul, what a soul some brute animals must have! Willard turned his head from their chiding, appealing gaze, and choked down the heart that was springing to his throat, while, in a louder and still more commanding tone, he exclaimed, pointing with his finger and stamping with his foot, "Back, Rover! Go home!"

The dog only lowered his head quite to the dust, and whined more piteously than before. Perhaps Willard was afraid to trust his voice again, but he certainly was resolved on making the animal obey him. Taking a knife from his pocket, he proceeded, not very deliberately, to a tree which drooped its heavy branches over the stone wall by the way-side. The dog did not move, but his large, pitiful eyes followed his young master to the tree, and watched him with a look of meek sorrow while he cut a limb from it and hastily trimmed away the leaves. But—as he returned! Willard was within a yard of his mutely eloquent friend, when the dog seemed of a sudden to comprehend his intent; and with a sharp, piercing cry, made up of more emotions than often swell in a human bosom—a cry of intense, heart-crushing anguish—he leaped the fence and bounded away. Willard watched him; not with tears now, for there was something horrifying in what he had done, but with a kind of awe-stricken fear, until he reached the little bridge which had been thrown over the creek in the pasture. Here the dog for the first time relaxed his speed, turned about, and stretching his neck, ominously, in the direction in which Willard stood, sent forth a long, dismal howl. Howl after howl—howl after howl—prolonged—terrible! And the boy, putting his fingers to his ears, ran with all his speed, till he had left the hill between himself and his home. Pause once more, and bethink thee, Willard! Perchance, that far-off howl, dying now in the distance, is warning thee of coming evil. Pause, and think!

As Willard hurried on, though he passed familiar farm

nouses, bidding adieu to the scenes of boyhood, perhaps forever, a change gradually came over him; for the clear, fresh air of morning brushed his cheek and cooled his forehead giving courage to his heart; and the brisk motion quickened his blood and took some of the pain from his pulse-throbs. By degrees his thoughts passed over from the things he was leaving, to the future; and he went on, whistling "A life on the ocean wave," and carelessly switching the thistles and May-blossoms with the stick which he had cut for Rover.

CHAPTER II.—A STRANGER.

Willard had been wandering by the wharf all day, passing from one vessel to another, talking with seamen and laying plans for the future with apparent boldness; but, spite of all this, there was a desolate feeling at his heart, which was fast writing itself in unboyish characters of thought upon his face. He still had with him the stick which he brought from Lawson farm; and carried suspended from it a small bundle of things which he had taken the forethought to tie up in a pocket handkerchief on the morning he left home. This, with a very scanty purse, was all he had on earth; neither money, nor goods, nor friends. But he possessed that which was worse for him, unguided as he was, than his wants—a bold, impulsive nature, self-confidence and an undoubting trust in others, warmth and energy and gayety, and a desire to see everything and test everything; while, just at this moment, when he most needed it, a hinge was loosened in his strong heart. He wandered alone to a back street, dark, narrow and filthy, for he was taking his first lesson in economy, and seated himself on a bench at the door of an alehouse. Strange beings were passing by. The drunkard and the pauper, the undisguised miserable and the degraded mirthful in their misery, the needy beggar and the beggar by profession, all went trooping on; varied only now and then by a face which had some tokens of decency in it, to break up the disgusting monotony. After awhile men began to gather in the

alehouse, for night came creeping on. And *such* men! Willard had never dreamed of their like before. There were oaths and blasphemies, and brutal jests and coarse loud peals of laughter, and wrangling, with now and then an expostulation that had but little gentleness about it; and as Willard listened, he moved uneasily on his bench and looked about him with some anxiety, for his prospects for the night were anything but agreeable. But should he be coward enough to change his quarters? Willard was but a boy, and boys have some super-refined notions of courage. He stretched himself upon the bench, placing his little bundle under his head. He had not been in this position long when his attention was attracted by another new-comer. The stranger was tall and broad-shouldered — magnificently made; and as he stepped into the light beyond the doorway, Willard raised his head and looked after him admiringly. Was it some brigand chief, some proud and powerful sea-robber, or could it be a mere common man like the others there, smoking and drinking and swearing? He could not be a good man, for Willard knew that this was no place for the good. And yet he did not look like one given to vicious habits or evil passions. His rich, wavy hair was slightly grizzled, but it had evidently been touched by no pencil more objectionable than Time carries; his complexion was pale and delicate, quite unlike that of a sea-robber; and his soft blue eye was full of mildness and love. He wore a stiff, military-looking coat, buttoned closely to the chin, displaying his strong muscular proportions to the best advantage, and carried in his hand a heavy walking-stick, headed with silver. Willard could not discover in what the stranger's peculiarity either of dress or manner consisted, and yet there was a peculiarity which attracted the attention of all the bar-room loungers. He spoke a word or two to those nearest him on entering, in a voice of singular richness and energy; and then drawing back a little from the company, placed himself upon a settle, just inside the door. He was evidently a stranger to the rest of the company as to Willard; and although he seemed disinclined to join in their

mirth, his eye wandered from one to another with an interested kind of curiosity, which puzzled our young friend not a little. Was there any affinity existing between the spirit of the stranger and a scene like this? There was a nobleness in his countenance and a majesty in his air, which belonged to no common person—an arch-angel fallen, perhaps, for, if not fallen, why should he be there among the vicious and degraded? Willard watched him wonderingly, and as he watched, the heads within began to dance together, the night-lamps joined them, and finally the stars, and at last the boy's dull eyes closed entirely, and his chin rested upon his shirt-collar. Willard was tired and sleepy that night. How long he gave himself up to the dream-spirits he did not know; but when he awoke, a voice of singular kindness, close to his ear, remarked, "You have slept soundly, my son."

"I have had an unusual pillow," returned Willard, smiling, and raising his head from the shoulder where it had rested, "I trust I may not have hugged it too long for its owner's convenience."

"That is its owner's care. It was presented unasked, and might have been reclaimed at any moment. But, surely," added the stranger, in a lower tone, "you are not in the habit of resorting to such a place as this?"

"I might return the compliment," answered Willard, laughing, "for I take your remark as something of a compliment; I wondered myself to sleep upon the subject."

"And what did you decide?"

"Nothing."

"I have met with better success in my study. You are a stranger."

"Not quite a companion for men like those?—thank you."

"You are far from home, for the first time?"

"The first time," returned Willard, with a sigh.

"You have not always been happy in that home?"

"There's no great skill in that—who has?"

You left it in anger."

“Go on, wizard.”

“You know you have taken a false step, and feel much regret; but you are too proud to return.”

“No, no, I am not sorry I have done it. I am not sorry—I would n’t go back for the world!”

“Rover misses you.”

Willard started, and turned slightly pale.

“And your sister Sophy——”

“Ha! I believe you are the deuce, man.”

“Not quite, my son; your guess has even less courtesy in it than mine, when I dub you runaway.”

“Who and what are you that you should know so much of me—know the names of Sophy and Rover?”

“I can tell you more—you have a desire to go to sea.”

“Right, but you must have dealings with his black majesty.”

“And more.” Here the stranger took the youth’s hand affectionately in his, and looked into his face with solemn earnestness. “I can tell you more, my son; and I am no magician to discover it. I see it written upon your forehead; I see it beaming in your eye. God has done that for you which may make you among men like yonder star among these feeble lamp-lights. He has gifted you with a quick, powerful intellect, and a warm, earnest heart; but that power may be degraded and spend itself on trifles; that warmth may be perverted. The gallant craft you are about to launch upon the broad ocean of the world, (pardon me, my son,) with tender sails and warped rudder, is a thing too noble to subject to such a risk. If you were an older sailor you would make better preparations for your voyage. No, I am laying no unusual weakness to your charge. I see the fire in your eye; I read strength of purpose on that bold brow, and I know what a strong will may enable you to do. But beware, my son! as noble vessels as yours have been wrecked; as strong minds have yielded the jewel of intellect—integrity, unswerving principle; hearts as true as yours have blackened under the finger of pollution. What talisman have you to bear you

safely through? There was a time, I think—there must have been a time when you prayed, ‘lead us not into temptation;’ and now you are voluntarily walking in the way of it. Do I not tell you truth, my son?”

“What am I to do?” asked Willard, with a quivering lip.

“First sit down and tell me all your troubles and your plans.”

“You seem to be pretty well informed on that subject already.”

“I never saw you, nor heard of you till this evening.”

“How, then, do you know so much about me?”

“Your face is just now strangely full of thought—you look innocent—you are respectably clad—you carry a bundle on your walking-stick—you are in a place given up to the vicious—you go to sleep unsuspectingly where any but a stranger would feel pretty sure of having his pocket picked—you murmur names in your sleep—your speech on awaking is intelligent; am I a wizard?”

“You are observing.”

“I came here to observe; and shall be but too happy if I can be of service to you.”

“I thank you, but I believe my path is pretty plain before me. I have had conversation with a shipmaster to-day, and have very nearly enlisted as a sailor. You are very kind; but, notwithstanding your warning, I have a fancy that he who cannot preserve purity of mind and morals on the water, would scarce do it on the land.”

“Very true, my son. Is it your intention to go out as a common sailor?”

“Yes, I begin at the bottom of the hill. I have no friends to help me to a better berth.”

“Your associates then must necessarily be men who, if not vicious, are ignorant—you will have no change of companionship, nothing to elevate your thoughts and feelings—all a dark, degraded level about you, and you must be more than human not to sink to it. You are young, too, and do not yet

understand your capabilities, because you have not tested them. You should be thoroughly educated——”

“I do not like study, sir.”

“Scarce an excuse for a man, my son. If the bird should chance not to like the air, we might give it to some little girl to enslave, or if the fish should find the water disagreeable, we should scarce take the trouble to reason with it—let the foolish thing die; but the immortal mind is not a bird or a fish, to be granted its whim and perish. The question is not what you *fancy*, but what you *need*. Nothing worth having flies to you and alights upon your hand; you must seek, dig, dig, dig, and the ‘hid treasure,’ when found, will be worth a thousand worlds to you. There is something glorious, too, in the labor. You commence in this world a process which is to be carried on hereafter under the eyes of angels—which is to make the bliss of eternity. Think of the great, undying, God-like mind within you, lying all uncultivated, its capacities undeveloped, its powers unimproved, its affinity to the Deity unrecognized—benefiting no one, influencing no one, lost like rubbish among the things that perish—a chasm in the great intellectual unity, a monster of ingratitude to the God who endowed it, and a curse to itself. You cannot walk through the world as the fool walks, and be happy; for there is that within you which demands your life-long care, and if you neglect it—listen to me, my son, believe me, for I have seen more years and more men than you have, and I have made natures like yours my study—if you neglect it, you may almost as well turn at once to yonder bar and find your associates there. You cannot satisfy the yearning of the deathless spirit for the food it covets, with husks; it will not be toyed with; and when, starved, enslaved, trampled on, its sharp cry comes to your ear, you will drown it as—*those men drown it*. Look! that one with the scar across the brow, and the frightful scowl had—*has* no common mind—you will discover it for yourself if you watch his actions and his words. On the table yonder, degrading himself lower than any mountebank

is one made to love beauty and harmony—a poet by nature, a harlequin by prostitution.”

“You seem to know them well,” remarked Willard, throwing a scrutinizing glance on his monitor.

“As I know you; I have never met them before.”

“I had been looking at them before you came in, and I thought them either fools or madmen; there seems to be no reason either in their actions or words.”

“They are both; but not half as mad as you are now to run voluntarily into the same danger.”

Willard drew himself up. “I have reason to be highly flattered, sir, with your opinion of my strength of character and purity of principle.”

The stranger laid his hand soothingly on the shoulders of the half-angry youth, which lowered beneath its magnetic touch, until he stood smiling beside him as before. “Have you more than human strength, my son? There is an angel hovering over your heart I know; but is there one standing at its door with a flaming sword to keep out evil? Is it chained fast that it cannot go into error? Are you stronger than the Son of the Morning, and purer than he, that you cannot fall? Does none of the original sin of our ruined natures cleave to you, and have you added nothing thereto? A Redeemer died for you; but did he make it impossible for you to sin? or was it not this same Holy One who said, ‘Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation?’ Think of the indignant exclamation of one as pure-hearted and unsuspecting as you are: ‘What! dost thou think thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?’ And what things did he not do? What crime too black for him afterwards? There was a time, I doubt not, when yonder harlequin would have been indignant had his present degradation but been hinted at. But listen to him now. That was a beautiful sentiment to drop from such lips—but how distorted—and finished with an oath—hear him. There was a time when he was innocent and self-confident, and I am sure not many years ago. Wait me here while I recall those days. If I can but lay my finger on the

right chord, I may produce a vibration which will call up some well-nigh forgotten strain of better days, and do him good."

The stranger stepped to the table, where a light-haired, fair-faced, lithe young man was dancing and singing songs, and performing various feats of buffoonery for the amusement of the boisterous company about him."

"Henry Crayton, I believe!"

"Ah! 'what's in a name?' 'Avoid ye! get thee behind me!' 'Do you squinny at me?'"

'When the wine-cup is smiling before us,
And we pledge round to hearts that are true, boys, true,
Remember your part's to encore us;
So here's for a hulabuloo — loo, loo, loo,
So here's for — here's for —'

Where are your voices, boys? Oh, there is the big shadow yet—out with it, man!"

"I have a message for you."

"Then deliver thyself, an' thou art not breathless with the weighty matter, my little foot-page. Speak on; these are all our right loyal subjects, and we have no secrets from their ears."

"I had better wait your leisure," replied the stranger, turning away.

"Leisure! here's for you, then. I come—I come!" and, plunging from the table, young Crayton alighted on his hands, turned a somerset, cleared himself of the applauding crowd, and joined the tall stranger on the portico.

"Perhaps I should apologize for interrupting your *agreeable* amusement," Willard heard his new friend remark.

"Agreeable! Well, there is laughing and the hours go by—yes, it is agreeable. You had an errand."

"My message was a petition."

"You had better have presented it then while I was on my throne. Ha, ha!"

"It is a solemn one."

“ Well, speak, though I have no liking for solemn things,” answered the half-sobered youth,

‘ Let ’s laugh and be merry,
For old Charon’s ferry,
It —— ’

“ I beg your pardon, speak on.”

“ An angel once dwelt in your heart, and he would fain come back again. Innocence is the lost one’s name—oh, take her to your bosom, and with her she will bring a sister—Peace.” Willard did not hear the reply, but he thought it was a scoff, and he wondered if it were possible for him ever to become so degraded. The two men still pursued their walk up and down the portico, their voices gradually growing lower and more earnest, till not a single word could be distinguished. At last they parted. The younger walked away in the darkness, and the stranger monitor returned to the waiting Willard.

“ Poor fellow! He is very miserable, for he is as sensitive concerning his degradation as though it were not his own work. He was not sorry to find sympathy and encouragement, and I have left him with an arrow in his heart which he may turn to balm. Heaven help him! He has promised to come to me in the morning for employment. If he should, I will do the best I can for him, and I think some friends that I have in town would second my endeavors.”

“ Do you believe that he will keep his promise?”

“ It is doubtful. He might reform, but it is hard to retread steps of darkness and bitterness; better *commence* aright, my son.’

Willard wished himself at home again, and almost thought that he would submit to his father’s control, (tyranny he named it,) in order to avoid the fearful hazard of his present position.

“ I would commence aright,” he began, falteringly, “ I would commence aright—but—I cannot go back to Lawson farm. There is no one to guide me here, no one to advise me; what shall I do?”

“And why not go back, my son?”

“I am not happy there—I cannot be. If there were any one to talk to me as you do, to awaken me to a consciousness of my own powers, and teach me to cultivate and improve them, I might find pleasure in that; but I shall go away and forget what you have told me, and I cannot do right when I am unhappy. No, I never will go back to Lawson farm.”

“Go with me then, will you not?”

“Where?”

“To—to complete your education, to fit yourself for usefulness in the sphere which to-day you may choose; to-morrow will be lost to you. Go with me, my son, and you never will regret this most important decision of your life.”

“How can I go? I am but one remove from beggary, though I decline the profession, in favor of the ‘bounding billow.’ Here is my wardrobe in this pocket-handkerchief, and here my purse—just eighty-nine cents in it—a weighty capital with my expectations! I have nothing else in the wide world.”

“You have a strong hand and a strong intellect. Improve well what you have, and I will make the rest easy for you.”

“Who then are you?”

The stranger pulled a card from his pocket and put it in the hand of the youth, who stepped nearer the light to read it. In a moment he returned, his eye moist and his voice tremulous.

“I have heard of you. You have been very kind to reason so with my waywardness, and I commit myself, without question, to your guidance; for your voice has reached to my inmost spirit, and roused aspirations which might have slumbered forever.”

“You will go with me, then?”

“I will. I dare not refuse. It almost seems to me that you have been sent here, in this hour of danger, by my dead mother.”

“Perhaps; the spirits that have gone home before do watch over us, my son.”

CHAPTER III. — THE ORATOR.

AN immense concourse of the proudest intellects our state can boast, had assembled at ———. There was a hush like the pulseless silence of the tomb; for the inspiration of a mighty spirit had passed over them; and each rapt listener suspended his breathing, lest even that should drown some tone replete with the eloquence of the mighty indwelling spirit. The voice of the speaker was one well known in the council-hall, one to which senators had listened with reverence, one which wisdom honored and philanthropy had cause to bless. And he now spoke eloquently and feelingly upon a subject, which it was evident interested him beyond measure — the dispersion of the clouds from the intellectual horizon of the human race; and the full, steady light, flooding everything in its way, which was spreading itself from zenith to nadir. He spoke of the might of mind even in its clay prison; of the man of the wise thought beside the man of the strong arm; of the little voice which comes up from the lone philosopher's cell to shake the broad earth with its thunders; and of the foolish one, who goes out among his fellows, never knowing nor making it known that he carries more than the wealth of an empire in his bosom. He went back to the earth's midnight, and plunged into the closet of the alchemist and the cell of the monk, where genius wrestled with superstition, in the dense darkness, and where knowledge long hid her mourning head; and he brought up from each a libation to pour upon the altar of intellectual democracy. He pointed to the lone stars that formerly glittered, wonders to gaze at, in the wide heaven of literary fame; and then he suddenly unrolled a new firmament, all spangled over with orbs full of brilliancy and beauty, but so lost in the universal light as to be scarce discoverable. And with what heart-felt eloquence he hailed the glorious morning! Ah! he must have been standing beneath a sun of his own, to be so enraptured with the spirit-warming effulgence; for there are those who even now see nothing but feeble rush-lights, glimmering in the

darkness; who long for the olden time, when but one star blazed aloft to light a century, and after its exit the world slumbered on, till another came, darting its wild coruscations athwart the gloom with startling fitfulness. He was not a mere orator, he was an artist, a Pygmalion, and his creations breathed—glowed—burned; his Promethean hand had stolen the sacred fire, and he scattered it with a wild profusion, which left a spark on every heart—not to kindle passion, but to burn away the dross, and leave the godlike spirit unalloyed, in unshackled freedom. He ceased, and that vast concourse arose and walked away in subdued silence. Each mind, however deeply buried in frivolities, flung open its portals to thought, and *thought* is the angel which, once admitted, rectifies and renovates the whole inner being.

Among those who listened to the thrilling eloquence of the gifted orator was a noble-browed, mild-eyed old man, with locks of snow, and a face whose expression combined benevolence with native dignity. His broad chest heaved with emotion while he listened; and, when the eyes of others kindled with enthusiasm, his closed over the warm tears which gushed up from a fountain stirred in *his* bosom only; for he knew that from a little seed which he once held between his own fingers, sprang all those sentiments so fraught with life, so redolent with wisdom and purity. In a few minutes they had grasped hands—the noble old man, and the son of his better nature. They met not with outward caressings, but with a close clasping of the spirit which is sometimes granted on this side of bliss, and a more than womanly gush of tenderness quivering in either voice; for it is a gross wisdom which claims not love for its twin.

Go on, Willard Lawson! gather thy jewels about thee, as thou art gathering them now; make thine own setting one of unsurpassed glory; for soon a brow thou lovest will turn from earth to be adorned in heaven; and on that noble brow the jewel of thine own bright spirit will glitter.

A CASE OF LUNACY NOT UNCOMMON.

"WHEREAWAY, Jem?"

"Up country."

"Aha! What's in the wind?"

"A raise."

"As how?"

"Honor bright?"

"Honor bright."

"Fact is, Tom, the New Yorkers are purse-proud — no money to be had for *love*, even. All wrong — money buys love, why not love money? A'n't I a philosopher, Tom?"

"Very good for a beginning."

"Well, I must practise a little, you see — nothing like practice; and no knowing how soon I may be drawn out. Country belles, I've heard say, are the deuce-and-all at philosophy."

"And who is to have the honor of buying the ninety-ninth part of some hitherto hidden corner of Jem Fletcher's heart, (all there is left,) and what's the bid?"

"No funning, Tom; I'm in sober earnest this time. That is, what with the billet-doux from trades-people, and the lack of them from heiresses, I am getting *feeble*, very. Pulse low, (*alias* purse,) no rest, (worried by bills a mile long every day,) can't sleep o' nights, (for want of a bed,) appetite shockingly irregular, (ravenous when somebody else foots the bill,) — tell ye what it is, Tom, I'm *a case*, that's clear. Nothing will do but change of scene — country air, and country exercise — the doctors would recommend it, I know. If I don't get better, they'll smother me with duns — I shall be regularly Burked — chopped into minced meat for the benefit of Shears & Co. Sad, is n't it?"

"Very. Poor Jem Fletcher!"

“Tho’t the soul of ye would melt a little. But don’t quite break your heart; I shall take a dose of the country and come out new. The worst of it is, I must serve an apprenticeship, and *my* Laban will outdo his prototype; he will make me spin every thought that is in me into gold threads to match the yellow-boys in his eel-skin purse.”

“That *will* be oppressive.”

“So it will, but I must submit.”

“And for lack of the gold, substitute the labor of gilding, eh?”

“Ah! *you* understand, Tom; you know all about it. A fortune in *your* eye, my boy!”

“Something in that way, you know.”

“Ah, yes! ‘waiting for dead men’s shoes;’ but take my word for it, Tom, there’s nothing like this plan o’ mine. Catch a bird with a piece of money in her mouth, and you have birdie and all.”

“Ay, *catch* the bird.”

“Oh! that’s nothing. She’s as good as caught, now. I’ve got a fortieth cousin up there in the woods, (Alderbrook they call the settlement,) and he’s a great man among them—justice of the peace, town clerk, or something or other. Well, I believe he has an inkling of the state of my affairs; and having done pretty well in the matrimonial-money-making line himself, he just takes it upon himself to advise me. Let me see—I have a mem. somewhere. Deacon—Deacon—Palmer, (I believe it is,)—a hundred thousand—one pretty daughter, *very* pretty, and sole heiress—about sixteen—bright eyes—dark hair, given to curling—tall—hands and feet—(dang it! not a word about them! all right, though, I dare say,)—loves to queen it—a little blue, and wilful as Zantippe! What say to that, eh! Tom?”

“No pulling hair, I hope.”

“Do you think I had better go to the barber, Tom, by way of a preventive?”

“Time enough. You told of an apprenticeship.”

“Oh, ah! that’s the bitter pill, the drop too much, the great

sacrifice that's to make a martyr of me, Tom. It seems they have got an academy of learning up there. (When I am president, I'll have all such ruinous institutions levelled.) James Fletcher, A. B., your servant, sir, was graduated at old Harvard, and he purposes assuming the duties and responsibilities of principal of that most excellent institution — the academy at Alderbrook, I mean."

"Capital, Jem! But no! Why not dash out, play high and take the fortress by glitter? No danger of an indictment for swindling."

"There's a papa in the way, with an eye like a hawk. No; sober and intellectual is my cue — not moneyed, but evidently 'a rising young man.' Dang it! won't I rise?"

"If you can. But see! the steamer is ready for putting off. Success to ye, Jem — Good-by."

"Good-by. Better try my prescription, eh? Think on't — do!"

Oh! what a sensation there was in our village, when it was reported that James Fletcher, Esq., of New York city, a young gentleman of very brilliant parts, and highly-finished education, was coming to take charge of our academy! There was much sympathy for him, too; for it was rumored that the exigences of the times had deprived him of a very fine fortune; and, moreover, that he came to us for the sake of giving his mind the opportunity to recover its usual tone and vigor, after having been nearly shattered by adversity. Mr. Fletcher arrived late of a Saturday evening; but in the ten minutes that elapsed before he disappeared in one of the upper chambers of the "Sheaf and Sickle," he had been seen by half the men of the village. The next morning there was a great rush to church, which must have been anticipated by the parson; for the elder part of the congregation did not fail to observe that he had taken unwonted pains with his discourse. Adeline Palmer called at our door, and, as we walked to church together, I had a full description of Mr. Fletcher — eyes, hair, complexion, bearing, character, and even feelings. The picture *was* rather "taking," I must

own; but my muslin and straw were "as good as new, then; so I only readjusted the precious morsel of paste glittering in my breast-knot, and carried my parasol as daintily as possible. But it was of no use. Ada Palmer was *the* belle of Alderbrook; and, though it is impossible, in any case, to resist the desire to look one's prettiest, the vainest of us never dreamed of being *seen* when beside her. Worse still, I was informed that Mr. Fletcher was particularly anxious to board at Deacon Palmer's, for the reason that his love of retirement and quiet might be better gratified there than at any other house in the village.

"And will he?" I inquired, with quite enough interest.

"If we can get papa to consent."

"To think of *your* having a boarder!"

"You pity us, I dare say, Fan," whispered Ada, with a very roguish twinkle of the eye, and a knowing look about the corners of the mouth, that was particularly provoking.

"Rather impertinent, Miss Deacon's daughter," thought I, "I shall treasure that up to measure back to you one of these days;" but there was no chance to reply, for we had entered the church porch; and so, with a mutual smile, and a nod of good-natured defiance, we parted. I soon discovered Mr. Fletcher, for his was the only strange face there; and he evidently soon discovered Ada Palmer. Oh! *Ada was* a little queen, and she never looked so beautiful as on that day. It was impossible not to concede to her her winnings; and when, in a fortnight after, Mr. Fletcher was reckoned unfailingly among them, I do not believe there was a belle in the whole village but thought it was her due, and yielded the conquest to her with a good grace. But we *did* have rare times, making Ada blush, and (did you ever observe that awkward right-angle which bashful consciousness puts in the corner where the two lips meet?) make *square mouths*. Rare times had we; and it was as good revenge as need be.

But poor Jem Fletcher! he was right when he anticipated a severe apprenticeship, for the deacon was "a marvel of a good man." Deacon Palmer's right hand, holding his purse

within it, was given to every good enterprise, whether for the advancement of religion and morality, or intended to promote the secondary interests of the village which acknowledged him its head. So poor Jem was not only obliged to attend church three times every Sabbath, and lectures of various kinds during the week, but he must needs listen, with at least pretended interest, to a thousand plans for ameliorating the condition of the human race; from which weighty matters, he hoped, as he listened, at some future day to relieve his intended father-in-law, by taking the helm into his own hand. The more Jem saw of the old gentleman's generosity, the more sanguine became his hopes; and bright was the picture his fancy painted, of the time when good Deacon Palmer would no longer be obliged to look after wealth which he did not know how to use. But Jem's hardest apprenticeship was not to Laban—it was to Rachel herself. Oh! such a sprite as was Ada Palmer! Proud as Juno, and mischievous as a whole troop of those small people they call fairies, headed by bright Titania's own jester. An

“Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian”

was she, with the same “crimson-threaded lips,” and the “silver trebled laughter” on them; but as dignified as a lady duchess, when she chose. Oh! there was no bringing Ada to terms till she was ready to come; and sometimes I used to doubt whether Jem Fletcher, though he trained his eyes, and trained his tongue, and tuned his voice to the tone of a harp with a die-away air on its strings, would be able to accomplish it. Ada was un-read-able, even by us. Jem, however, hoped on, and with good reason, for it was evident that he had the right ear of both parents.

There was to be a meeting of the “Alderbrook Young Ladies' Temperance Society,” and Mr. Fletcher was unanimously declared “the very one” to deliver a fitting lecture on the occasion. Jem Fletcher lecture on temperance! But no matter; he had embarked, and must push forward at all

hazards. Besides, what better opportunity could a lover wish for the display of his eloquence? What delicate compliments might he pay to *one* under cover of the whole! How charmingly would he *angelize* all the fair teens at Alderbrook, while Ada would be thinking within herself, "if he holds all of us in such high estimation, what would his idolatry be when concentrated?" Mr. Fletcher delighted the ladies by consenting to address them; but, in the mean time, he begged a week's delay, as he would not presume to rise before such an assembly of wit, and beauty, and talent, without due preparation. The delay was granted, and poor Jem Fletcher sat down determinedly and perseveringly to his severe task. Such havoc as was made among the goose quills and foolscap! Jem's organ of destructiveness had never accomplished so much since the days of his babyhood, when newspapers had been given him as playthings. But he succeeded. Even his own fastidious taste was fully satisfied. And what might not be expected of those bright beings on the look-out for beauties? Jem was in raptures. He read, and re-read his address; and each time it grew more strikingly brilliant, more witty, more sweetly sentimental, more gracefully insinuating—in short, more decidedly the precise thing to bait the hook dropped through a lady's ear into her heart. We all expected wonders of Mr. Fletcher; and curiosity, pushed back like a boisterous beggar till the latest moment, was ready for a rush.

"Ada, go up to Mr. Fletcher's room and get the newspaper," said the deacon, after the young lady had donned bonnet and shawl to go to the lecture.

Ada seized my hand. "Come with me, Fan; Mr. Fletcher is down taking tea with mamma. He stayed out late to-night—conning his speech, I dare say," she added, in a whisper.

The deacon rang for lights, and away went Ada and I for the newspaper. Mr. Fletcher's hat, with his gloves beside it, was upon the table; and upon a folded handkerchief, like the driven snow in whiteness, lay a little manuscript book.

"Look! the lecture, Fanny!" said Ada, taking one corner between the tips of her fingers, and elevating it above

her head. "Now what would you give to see the inside of it?"

"A bound to the top of the staircase; I never could bear to read a manuscript. But what a very *nice* man this Mr. Fletcher of yours must be! See how carefully that bit of blue riband is knotted."

"The very same that he stole from my work-basket this morning! Saucy, is n't it? I have half a mind to punish that impudence. Besides, (between our two selves, Fan,) this very correct Mr. Fletcher is an arrant hypocrite—I see it in his eyes and hear it in his voice. He would be far more at home, I dare say, singing—

'Blame not the bowl—the fruitful bowl,'

than saying pretty things for the edification of us cold-water-ites. Let's punish his knavery. Here, come to the window while I untie this knot."

Ada Palmer's fingers shook as though shocked at their own naughty doings, while she loosened the blue riband; and then she slipped the inner sheet from it, and slid it down behind the sofa.

"Now, if I only had some queer thing to substitute. Look! there's a sheet of note-paper on the table! He has just written down a page, and the ink is hardly dry on it. Bring it, Fanny—it is just the size of this—some love-note, I dare say; and we shall get a blush from him, at any rate, when he opens to it. Think of making him blush in public! but *we* must be very demure—it would not do for us to smile even, or we should be detected."

By the time Ada had finished her caution, the sheet of note-paper was fastened snugly in the middle, and the book returned to its resting-place on the handkerchief.

A more mellow, rich-toned voice, than Jem Fletcher's, I never heard; and, on that evening, it was modulated to its utmost capacity for melody. I had entirely forgotten Ada's mischievous prank, and so had she, I doubt not, before he had turned over three leaves. The sentiments, too, and the happy

mode of adorning them ! Oh ! Jem Fletcher deserved success for his industry, if not for his honesty ! Suddenly, while Fletcher's tongue was thrilling beneath a whole tide of eloquence, and hearts were beating, and eyes flashing before him, he made an abrupt pause. Placing his right hand upon the page, he raised the other to his eyes hastily, as though brushing away some intruding vision—but no, it was there yet. Jem tried his handkerchief, but it did no good. Something had evidently planted itself before him that he did not wish to see. He turned over leaf after leaf confusedly, and back again, while the red blood seemed ready to burst from his forehead, and we could almost fancy that we saw his hair raising itself in consternation above.

“I did not mean to embarrass him so much,” whispered Ada in my ear.

At that moment, Fletcher's eye fell upon us, and *such* an eye ! Mortification, distress, anger—everything painful was there ; and no doubt our blazing faces, with the attempt at a smile, which we both of us instinctively made, betrayed the whole. Fletcher gave but one glance at us, one at the curious audience, now in a buzz of wonder ; and, snatching his hat from the seat behind him, he bounded for the door. The congregation was astounded ; and poor Ada and I trembled like two leaves in a storm. Slowly, and one by one, the people went out ; and that night a light was kept burning in every house for fear of the mad tutor.

“Do you know what was the matter with Mr. Fletcher last evening ?” inquired Deacon Palmer of his daughter, while at the breakfast-table. Ada's face took on the hue of a full-blown peony. “Then you have seen this before ?” and the deacon pulled from his pocket the little book tied with the blue riband.

“I am sorry, papa ; indeed, I am very sorry. I did not intend to mortify Mr. Fletcher so much—I only slipped in that paper for a frolic ;” and poor Ada actually burst into tears.

“Then you have not read it ?”

“ Oh, no, papa ! you could not think I would be so mean ? ”

“ Well, Mr. Fletcher *thought* you had. I found this by the church-door, where he dropped it. If you do not know what paper you slipped in for a frolic, you may read it now.”

Ada's eyes grew larger and larger as she perused the precious document which had turned Jem Fletcher into a madman ; and such a volley of laughter as she closed it with, had never before burst even from *her* merry heart.

No wonder that poor Jem was mortified past redemption ; for the note, which he supposed Ada had perused, gave a full account of his plans and prospects to his friend Tom ; and closed with a characteristic eulogium on pretty damsels in general, and moneyed pretty ones in particular.

Jem Fletcher has never been heard of since at Alderbrook and many a good lady, to this day, often expresses the hope, that the poor dear young man has found shelter in some unatic asylum.

THE GREAT MARCH HOLIDAY.

THE boisterous, bustling, blowing, chilling month of March Ugh! it makes me shiver to think of it! Even its smiles are undesirable—mud-producers as they are. But yet it brings, like every other part of the year, its own peculiar pleasures. It is, indeed, a season of the utmost interest and importance to a large class, quite as likely to supply us with future statesmen as college walls or city boundaries. It is strange how much, and yet how little, we are indebted to position and education for what we afterward become. The pale student, with his classic face, soul-beaming eye, and graceful step, bows himself from our presence on commencement day; while our hopes and good wishes follow him on what we believe will be a bright career; and we never hear of him again. The awkward, square-shouldered country lad comes trudging into town with his grain, perhaps, and at evening slips away to the lecture-room. We observe neither his coming nor his going, but if we did we could scarce see the strong intellect bursting its rough kernel. Years pass, and suddenly a great man rises before us—a kind of intellectual miracle. The district school was the nursery of this intellect; a country newspaper lent its aid to foster it; books, old dry books, that those acquainted with modern literature would never think of reading, hedged it round with common sense; occasional visitors and occasional visits added to the fund of information which the newspaper supplied; thought, driven to feed upon itself for want of other food, wrought itself into a giant; and so the wonder grew.

So the district school is a very important thing; and hence we are not disposed to undervalue the holyday at its close—

a great and important day, not to be surpassed by Fourth-of-July independence or Christmas feasting and frolic. The close of the winter school is very much like the breaking up of a half-tamed menagerie. As some of the more loving sort of animals linger around their keeper, for old affection's sake, so Lucy or Tommy hang, finger in mouth, upon the door-latch, or creep, pussy-like, near the desk, half-ashamed, yet loath to go without the farewell smile. Others stand undisturbed and unmoved, like sturdy bruin or Moses Meecham; while a few of the wildest, including the whole catalogue of apes, enter upon some mischievous prank, as Zeke Brown removes the door-step, or Fred Lightbody purloins the school-master's spectacles, and kindly adjusts his wig on one side of his head. But by far the greater part of these freed prisoners (from both menageries) scamper as though for dear life; and scarce knowing whether their feet are in the air or on the ground, give such an idea of Babel as your imagination never conjured up. Oh, those are very desperate *hopefuls* that in March break from the bondage of the district school!

I once had the pleasure of spending a winter where sleigh-rides and apple-bees, and spelling schools and grammar schools, constituted a very delightful complement of the useful and ornamental, and made the weeks and months go by with the rapidity of a season in town, with the advantage of coming from the winter's dissipation with added freshness and vigor. Our school-house was a little square box of a thing, tucked down at one corner of a piece of woodland—not for the advantage of shade—oh no! All the trees that would be likely to keep off the broiling sun in summer, or in winter prevent the snow from drifting eave-high before the door, were carefully cut down and cleared away. It must be owned that this was not the best situation for the school-house, but Squire Jones wanted it in the eastern part of the district, and Doctor White was determined that it should be in the western; so, to settle the difficulty, the puzzled managers, who were expecting nearly all the funds from these two titled personages, decided on what they considered a central position, measuring

off equal distances from each hearth-stone. The result was, both great men were offended, and refused to relax their insulted purse strings. But the school-house was built at last—a little “teenty taunty” nut-shell of a “concern,” the roof making a rather steep inclined plane from ridge-pole to eaves, which latter just overtopped an ample row of good-sized, well-glazed windows. People seem to have discovered an intimate connexion between physical and intellectual light, imagining probably that there is some kind of a filter in the brain, by which the eye-blinding stream is converted into a yet more subtle fluid—the inner light, that it is shockingly transcendental to furnish with a name. Our school-house, which was fifteen feet square, was furnished with eleven full-grown windows; from some one of which a pane of glass was always broken, and its place supplied by hat or shawl. Between two of these windows was the mouth of the little den, and, all around it, the walls were ornamented with carved work, displaying the artistic developments of many a youthful master of the jack-knife.

You must not imagine that none but very small children attend the district school; for the winter brings together a motley assemblage of all ages, from the sturdy little chap in his linsey-woolsey and checked apron, to the merry maiden of sixteen, who decorates the parlor of a Sunday evening for the reception of a lover, and the comely youth whose strong arm in summer guides the plough and swings the scythe. It is a happy place, that district school; overflowing with the genuine cream of fun; gay, busy, mischief-hatching, and gloriously mischief-executing. A very happy place is it; and I cannot imagine what creates the undefinable longing for the “last day,” which seems to be the prevalent feeling among the young tyros, any more than I can imagine why, in our highest state of happiness, we are ever looking forward to the morrow. Whatever may be the reason, the arrival of the “last day” is carefully watched for; and, despite the old adage, it comes at last; while, with smoothed aprons and cleaned faces, and all bedecked in holyday finery, the future

statesmen and (provided success attend some of the reformers of the present day) stateswomen, sally forth to the place of action.

I have hitherto neglected to describe the interior of the Maple Bush school-house; but while the young belles are peeping at each other over the tops of their books to see which is best dressed, the beaux penning their last döggerels, and the younger lads and lasses alternately sitting bolt upright, toes to the crack and arms twisted on the breast, like a Holland dough-nut, and lolling half over to the floor in forgetful laziness, we may get time for a glance.

Yet, now that I think again, you will not need a description, for I am on an old theme; and the ranges of seats, the schoolmaster's throne, with its "might-makes-right" corner, appropriated to crumbled ginger-bread, half-eaten apples, broken jack-knives, strings, whip-lashes, tops, and spring-colored love-letters, the pine floor which is scrubbed twice a year, the evergreens, the ferule, and the rod are no new things to you, particularly if you have ever happened to meet with "The District School as it Was." One thing, however, has been changed since those days. The old-fashioned fire-place, which formerly yawned on one side beneath the stick chimney, has within the last dozen years been superseded by a rusty, smoking stove, on the top of which the children roast the apples and cheese for their dessert. You would wonder, if you were acquainted in the Maple Bush district, how such an innovation was ever admitted into a place where all are such sticklers for ancient customs. It was done, as most things are in this world, whether good or bad, from a spirit of opposition. Nobody had a stove, or dreamed of having one, until an old man of our vicinity, who had been paying a visit in town, happened to get into a rage one day about "these new-fangled notions for picking honest folks' pockets." Then, as in duty bound, to prevent a man's storming for naught, and wasting his eloquence on the empty air, there rose up a number of his neighbors to oppose, and thereby *test*, his opinions. It became, therefore, absolutely necessary for

every man of the stove party to be in possession of the article in question ; and so absolutely did these men bear sway, that at last the offensive stove found its way even to the very school-house. Never was there a greater warfare about old and new measures than was carried on in this case ; but the stove men had strong limbs and powerful voices, and, above all, their chief speakers had, if not full purses, full granaries ; so they came off victorious. The result was, the anti-stoveites gave due notice that they should withdraw their patronage from the school ; kept their word ; and, in process of time, removed to some more congenial neighborhood, where, if they were obliged to look now and then upon a stove, nobody would know that the sight was at all offensive.

Well do I remember my last day at the Maple Bush school. The grand event had been anticipated for a long time previous ; and, for a whole month, scarce anything had been talked of but the last day, and what would be fitting and proper for it. We had conned the spelling-book, grammar, and geography, till the contents of our juvenile works were at our tongues' ends, and could be rattled off as a pedler rattles over his assortment of "pins, needles, scissors, thimbles, gloves, silks, laces, black ladies' hose, shoe-strings," &c., &c. Not that we pretended to know the *meaning* of the words which rolled over our pouting lips so glibly : we had never dreamed that *written* words were "signs of ideas." A class of young mathematicians had managed, without the aid of the now essential black-board, to show a passable acquaintance with Daboll's Rules ; (rules, by the way, not intended to explain the after process, but set up to be explained when practice had made their meaning deducible ;) the "first class" had read for the twentieth time, "Address to the Young," and "Oh, solitude, romantic maid !" from the English Reader ; and the principal spelling-class had practised on "Michilimackinac," "phthysic," and the changes of "ail-to-be-troubled-table," until quite out of breath. But Jack Winslow and Peter Quim ! ah, they were the boast of the school, and to their histrionic powers the proud heart of Mr. Linkum owed its highest swellings. Nothing could

equal the grace with which they flourished hands and feet, or the grenadier style of their strut, as they paraded up and down the little corner which had been allotted to their scenic performances. To be sure it was a very small corner, but then it required fewer blankets to partition it off, and much less time and talent to decorate it with proper scenery. Never was a school better prepared for the final ordeal; and never was a teacher better satisfied with the success of his drilling than our honored Mr. Linkum.

Fond of mental display as we were, it is not to be expected that we should neglect every other kind; and, for more than a week, we had employed every leisure moment in decorating the walls with evergreens, consulting with each other how our simple furniture should be arranged, and practising bows and courtesies. Anxiously had we watched the clouds for many days, fearful of a March storm; but with what joyous heart-boundings did we hail the morning of our gala-day. The air had that rich, pleasing softness, which, although it makes the earth seem about to melt away beneath our feet, we welcome so gratefully, loving to feel its delicious kiss on cheek and forehead. Here and there the snow had melted off, exposing little patches of faded green, where nestled the spicy blossoms of the trailing arbutis, amid piles of withered leaves, blown together by the winds of the preceding autumn. Then, on one knoll peculiarly favored by the sun, the little pink-eyed *claytonias* had actually congregated in tribes, and amid the moss in the centre — no, I was not mistaken — the *hepatica* itself! That snowy white, variegated by the faintest tints of pink, and blue, and purple, was more familiar than the alphabet; for it was in that fragrant alphabet that I had taken my first life-lesson. Oh, that bright, rich March morning! Gladness was in the sky, and on the air, and upspringing from the earth. And those were light hearts, indeed, which came out to welcome it.

The sun had crept up the sky but a little way before we were congregated about the door of the school-house at the corner of the woods; and the commingling of merry voices,

if not quite as musical as that of the summer birds, was certainly as glad. And what was the source of all this gladness? We loved dearly to be together, loved our good Mr. Linkum, loved our sports, and some of us loved our books—and we had come together for the purpose of parting. How could we be glad? Oh, a bright day was before us, and it was quite too early to begin to grieve. Surely children, with their determined joyousness, in the face of shadows, and tears, and death itself, are the true philosophers of this world. A kind Providence has so mingled our cup that the sweet is always beside the bitter; the wise man sips at the bitter, and murmurs constantly; the child drinks down the sweet, and never looks at the other.

The “last day” passed pleasantly with us all. Fathers and mothers, older sisters and brothers, fond, chuckling grand-papas, and aunties still more fond, came crowding in, and listened with rapt attention to the doings of the youthful prodigies. Then two grave gentlemen rose slowly from their seats and made some flattering remarks; suggesting, however, as ballast for their praise, that the girls might have read a little louder, and the boys a little slower, and that by the copy-books they had discovered a prevailing propensity for crooked-backed t’s, and finger-prints done in ink. This accomplished, the company retired, and then the grand treasure was unlocked. Did you ever, dear reader, *did* you ever stand on the tip-toe of expectation, the blood tingling in your veins away down to the tips of your fingers, and your eyes sparkling with the brimmings of a heart crowded with pleasure, while the blue, and red, and green, and yellow treasures were scattered among your companions? Then, when your own turn came, and the bow and “thank you, sir,” were given with shame-faced exultation, and you had lifted the cover and found precisely the thing you were hoping for! “Little Red Riding Hood,” perhaps; or maybe the “Children in the Wood,” all done in the quaintest of rhymes, with the quaintest of cuts to illustrate them—ah! do you recollect that day? and do you ever expect or wish to be happier?

In addition to the gifts usually made on such occasions, it had been the practice of teachers at the Maple Bush to award a prize to the pupil who had made the greatest proficiency. This plan is doubtless ill-judged, being productive of many evil consequences; but it was formerly extensively practised, and may be none the less so now. The result of the harmful spirit of rivalry thus excited, is usually a period of contention, and finally a settled dislike, which strengthens into hatred, for the successful candidate. This hatred is often too deeply rooted to yield to the influence of time; and with some it mingles as a bitter ingredient in the cup of their after life. It was not, however, so at the Maple Bush; though justice and equity had but little to do with keeping off the evil. We very well understood (no disrespect to our half-year monarch, whose taste and judgment cannot be too highly commended) that the prize was not awarded to literary merit — for somehow the good schoolmaster, by a process of reasoning unknown to some of us then, though we are all wiser now, contrived to have some favorite bear away the prize. I say the process was unknown to us then; for we had not learned how strangely a pretty face (or even a face that is not pretty, if one can only imagine it is) distorts the mental vision, and invests those favored with our partiality with all the qualities we wish them to possess.

Dolly Foster, a dark-eyed, roguish-lipped, merry-hearted specimen of bright sixteen, with more mischief in her than erudition, and more of kindness than either, had so often won the prize at the hands of admiring schoolmasters, that it had become quite a matter of course; and certainly no one had reason to suspect a failure on the part of the belle of the Maple Bush this season.

“I wonder what the prize will be — something nice, of course.”

“Ah, catch Mr. Linkum giving anything not nice — eh, Dolly?”

And then Dolly would blush; and then *such* a shout! Laughing is healthful; and I have no doubt but the founda-

tion for many a good constitution was laid in that school-house at the Maple Bush.

The winks and inuendoes by which pretty Dolly Foster was so nearly demolished, were not altogether the result of a love of teasing. There was something to tease "little cherry-cheeks" for. Every girl and every boy in our school remembered how, on one occasion, a whole party of disobedient sliders had been most unexpectedly forgiven; and when, in a state of pleased wonderment, they looked about them for the cause, there stood Miss Dolly, the foremost of the transgressors, close by the soft-hearted Mr. Linkum, looking up, oh so pleadingly! and he, the drollest combination of would-be severity and embarrassed relenting that ever was seen. The little community *said* nothing; but there was an instantaneous illumination of countenance, as though an idea worth having had flashed in upon them; and henceforth Miss Dolly became a sort of scape-goat for the whole.

Then, on another occasion—ah! Dolly had dared too much then; it was an act of downright disobedience, and could not be tolerated. She took her stand beside the master's desk with a kind of abashed sauciness; confident, yet timid; evidently a little sorry that there was quite so much roguery nestled in the curve of that pretty lip of hers, or that being there it could not keep its niche without creeping down to the naughty little fingers, and at the same time pleased with the opportunity of testing her power. At first she called to her aid her ever-ready wit, and endeavored to turn the whole affair into ridicule; then she pouted, trotted her little foot in anger, and looked sulky; but Mr. Linkum, though evidently distressed, was not to be thus baffled. My readers must remember that some dozen years ago, "government by moral suasion" was not so fashionable as at the present day; and no age or sex was exempt from birchen-rod or cherry ferule. Dolly could go a little further than anybody else; but there were bounds even to her liberty, or the dignity of the schoolmaster would be sadly compromised. Dolly must be punished, that was certain—and neither laughing nor

pouting could save her. The poor schoolmaster, the greater sufferer by far, was not the only one in the room who would have taken a hundred blows to save her pretty hand one; and, as we saw him eyeing his huge ferule with evidently murderous intent, a strange silence reigned throughout the circle. Even the girls, after slightly fluttering the leaves of their books, and shuffling their feet carelessly, as much as to say, "Who cares? What better is her slim little contrivance of a hand than ours?" seemed to partake of the general interest. Mr. Linkum eyed the ferule sternly—a kind of desperate sternness like that the timid sheriff feels when he adjusts the fatal knot; then seized it resolutely, and petrified us all by the low, terrible words—"Give me your hand!" All were petrified but Dolly herself; she, poor child, was meekly, hopelessly heart-broken. Timidly the pretty hand was extended; but there was a heart-throb in every dear little finger, which poor Mr. Linkum must have been insane to think of withstanding. Oh, there is a witchery in a hand, *in some hands*; and the soft, beseeching touch of Dolly's, all quivering as it was with agitation, went (I cannot say precisely how, but doubtless Neurologists might tell) to Mr. Linkum's heart. He suddenly turned very red, as though that delicate touch had pressed all the blood from his heart; then very pale, as though it had called home the crimson tide and buried it there—and the hand clasping the raised ferule dropped helplessly by his side. Sweet little Dolly (her head had been drooping on her bosom for the last half minute) raised her soft blue eyes pleadingly to the master's face, and the next moment they overflowed—the big tear-drops gushed from their sunny fountain and fell in a sudden shower upon her own hand and his. Poor Mr. Linkum! what a savage he felt himself! It was too, too much.

The poor fellow turned suddenly to his desk—Dolly, among the dozen seats which were offered her, sought the nearest and hid her burning face in a neighbor's apron, while a simultaneous titter went around the room; and there was a general tossing of pretty heads and ominous shakes of would-be-

wise ones. Fred Lightbody (but then Fred was a wag, and was seldom more than half believed) asserted that when Mr Linkum turned from the desk, where he stood for several minutes intently examining a book which chanced to be open at a blank page, his eye had a singular dewiness about it, and we all observed a tremulous faltering in his voice when he ordered us to our books. We remarked, too, that he did not look at Dolly again that day—and that unusual flashes of red spread now and then across his face, as though his anger were quite uncontrollable.

That was the last time Dolly Foster ever transgressed. She was just as mischievous, just as full of fun and frolicking as ever; and at the spelling-schools, singing-schools and apple-bees, she played off a thousand pranks on wise, sober Mr. Linkum—but in the day school pretty Dolly was as demure as a kitten.

All these things were called to memory on the morning of the “last day;” and who of us could doubt but Dolly Foster would receive the prize? She had won it before, when there were not half as many indications of partiality.

“I wonder what the prize will be?”

The same wonder had been expressed a hundred times that winter.

“Something handsome, of course.”

“Oh yes, *of course*.” And then a merry burst of laughter went the rounds.

“What *can* make Dolly Foster so late?”

“What *can* make Dolly Foster so late?” was echoed and reëchoed, as the hour of nine drew near. We knowing ones were of the opinion that she was detained by some toilet difficulties; that her beautiful hair had taken a fancy just now, when it should have been most pliable, not to curl, or that the mantuamaker had ruined her dress. But these were trifles to Dolly Foster, and we were confident that they would not keep her away from school. What, then, was our disappointment, our consternation, nay, our vexation, (people are always vexed when they guess wrong,) when not only on the morn-

ing but afternoon of the last day, it was found that Miss Dolly had absented herself. It was perfectly unaccountable. She was not ill, for she had been seen flying from one part of the spacious farm-house to another, by those who had passed there, as blithe and happy as a bee; and when her brother Dick was questioned about the matter, he laughed and looked at the master, while the master blushed and looked out of the window.

As I have said before, the last day passed off finely, except that Mr. Linkum made some mistakes, such as calling Fred Lightbody *Dolly*—and when he was asked the time, saying eight o'clock instead of three. And, as I have *not* said before, the prize was this time really a reward for application. It was won by Abraham Nelson, the great awkward but perseveringly studious son of Nelson, the day-laborer; and Abraham Nelson was persecuted forever after. It was not strange. Vanity is undoubtedly everywhere the same reprehensible thing; but the vanity of a pretty girl has something rather fascinating in it, while that of a great lubberly boy is unendurable. Abraham Nelson's vanity took on the most disagreeable form, and so both parties were sufferers.

Mr. Linkum was a general favorite, notwithstanding his partiality in a particular case, and I believe the "big boys" of our school (that is, all the *hopefuls* between fourteen and twenty-one) never felt more inclined to be sadly serious than as the hour of four drew near on that long-expected, long-desired March holyday. They gathered around the master—each one dreading to give the good-bye shake of the hand—and I remember that for one I felt exceedingly vexed by his seeming indifference. He was evidently embarrassed, he half wished to appear serious, as became the dignity of his station; and yet there was a look of mirthful exultation surmounting all, which made the expression of his face irresistibly comical. He saw that all were imbibing his spirit, and finally he broke away from the circle with a "Never mind, boys, we will have fine times yet;" and jumping upon a passing sleigh, he was carried out of sight. Mr. Linkum did not promise without cause.

There was a wedding at the Maple Bush that evening—a quiet, cozy, family affair; and the pretty belle of the district, though quite as pretty and quite as mischievously attractive, was a belle no longer. Bright, witching Dolly Foster! what a dear little neighborhood blessing she had always been, with her sunny face and sunny heart and open hand! And what a charming little bride of a Madam Linkum she made! How everybody loved her! How the old ladies praised her docility and teachableness! and how the young ladies doted on her as a model of taste and socialness! Oh, Dolly Foster was the flower of the Maple Bush; but bewitching Mrs. Linkum was its gem—its lamp—its star.

NOT A POET.

I AM a little maiden,
 Who fain would touch the lyre
 But my poor fingers ever
 Bring discord from the wire.
 'T is strange I 'm not a poet ;
 There 's music in my heart ;
 Some mystery must linger
 About this magic art.

I 'm told that joyous spirits,
 Untouched by grief or care,
 In mystery so holy
 Are all too light to share.
 My heart is, very gladsome ;
 But there 's a corner deep,
 Where many a shadow nestles,
 And future sorrows sleep.

I hope they 'll not awaken
 As yet for many a year ;
 There 's not on earth a jewel,
 That 's worth one grief-born tear.
 Long may the harp be silent,
 If Sorrow's touch alone,
 Upon the chords descending,
 Has power to wake its tone.

I 'd never be a poet,
 My bounding heart to hush
 And lay down at the altar
 For Sorrow's foot to crush.

Ah, no ! I 'll gather sunshine
For coming evening's hours ;
And while the spring-time lingers,
I 'll garner up its flowers,
I fain would learn the music
Of those who dwell in heaven
For woe-tuned harp was never
To seraph fingers given.
But I will strive no longer
To waste my heart-felt mirth ;
I will mind me that the gifted
Are the stricken ones of earth.

TWO NIGHTS IN THE "NIEUW NEDERLANDTS."

It was on the night of the 25th of February, 1643, that a middle-aged man, with an honest, frank, sun-browned face and a powerful frame, sat and warmed himself by the kitchen fire in the Governor's house at Fort Amsterdam. He was singularly uneasy; every now and then clenching his fist and moving his nervous arm as in angry gesticulation; while his fine eye turned from one object to another with a kind of eager dread, and his naturally clear, open countenance was drawn into a scowl compounded of various strong emotions. He was alone, and bore himself much as though belonging to the household; for he certainly could not have been greatly inferior to its master in point of dignity. All within doors was perfectly silent—painfully so, it seemed to the stern watcher—and within, the heavy, monotonous tread of a sentinel, at a little distance, gave the only evidence that the pulse of the young city had not ceased its breathings. At last the man drew from his pocket a massive "*Nuremburg egg*," and held it up to the light.

"Twelve o'clock—five—almost ten minutes past! Thank God, if their hellish plan has miscarried!"

A long, loud, terrible shriek, as of a multitude of voices combining their agony, came up from the distance even as he spoke; and, dropping the watch upon the stone hearth, the listener sprang with an exclamation of horror to his feet.

"God forgive me, if I curse my race and nation! It is a deed worthy of the devil—and they call themselves men and Christians!"

He strode up and down the long kitchen, his brows knit and his hand on the hilt of his sword, muttering as he went,

“Without the consent of the committee!—in the face of my protestation as its head!—the bloody-minded littleness of the assassin!—creeping upon the defenceless at midnight!—why, their savage doings at Swanendael and Staten Island were Christian deeds to this! If evil come, if evil come of it, Wilhelm Kieft, thou shalt be the first sufferer, if there be strength in the hand of Pieterszen de Vries to push thee from thy kennel. Dog! base dog! Nay; I belie the brute to name thee so, cowardly blood-sucker that thou art!”

He opened the door, and, walking forth, mounted the parapets. The cries of suffering and terror had entirely ceased; but the noise of fire-arms came from Pavonia, and gleams of light flashed from the opposite shore and gilded the waters of the bay.

“A mighty feat, indeed! ‘worthy the heroes of old Rome!’ Noble Kieft! thy employers shall have a full account of these brave doings.”

The speaker felt a hand upon his shoulder.

“Ha, De Heer! I am glad to see you.”

“But you should have slept, my good Lilier; you will have cause to think lightly enough of your adopted home, without seeing this.”

“What means it, De Vries?”

“Our gallant Director is desirous of making himself famous; and so has concocted a piece of villany that no buccaneer captain on the high seas would stain his honor withal.”

“I thought an enemy had been surprised, and—”

“An enemy! no, Lilier, a friend! Let us go in—the air smells of murder, and I cannot bear it.”

‘I do not understand you. What is it?’

“Treachery. More than one hundred of our friends and neighbors, Indians from Tappaen and Wickquaesgeck, lay down in sight of the fort to-night, never dreaming of harm; and they have all been murdered in their sleep.”

“Not by white men?”

“By Kief’s soldiers.”

“Dastardly! Such things should not be suffered.”

“How are they to be avoided? The Company care but little for our interests, farther than our prosperity has a bearing on their commercial enterprises.”

“They ought to be made to listen; for if a better and more prudent man be not selected to take charge of the colonies, the abuses of Van Twiller, as you used to recount them to me in Holland, will find more than a parallel.”

“Wouter Van Twiller was a thrice sodden fool; yet he had a man’s heart in his bosom, and his errors were the result of weakness, not vice; he had no taste for lapping up human blood. We have *men* to govern us in the East Indies, but here they give us nothing but blockheads and serpents.”

By this time the two men had gained the kitchen fire, and the light was shining full upon their faces. The companion of the patroon was a very young man, of slight figure and delicate features, and withal a high-bred air, which denoted his patrician origin. His leading characteristic seemed to be extreme gentleness; and certainly there was nothing in the large blue eyes and bright golden curls that fell about his neck, instead of being gathered into a queue after the fashion of the Hollanders, (if the observer could but shut his eyes on an occasional drawing in of the lip and swell of the nostril,) indicative of superior manliness. Yet, (and the bold voyager knew it and loved him for it,) in that very bosom slept materials for a hero. So might have looked the voluptuous king who dallied away his time among fountains and flowers and singing girls; but became a lion in the hour of peril, and, building his own funeral pile, clung to his throne till both were ashes. Yet the comparison is not a fair one, for Lilier, if gentle as a girl when there was no cause for the exercise of deeper qualities, was also as pure. With a spirit deeply imbued with religious feeling, he had early embraced the sentiments of the Huguenots; and when a mere boy had turned to Holland, the asylum of the persecuted of all creeds and nations. There he had met with De Vries, then master of artillery in the service of the United Provinces, and afterwards the hardy voyager and discreet colonist. There was

something in the bold chivalrous character of this enterprising man, to whom, as the historian Bancroft has it, Delaware owes its existence, that made him a kind of lion-hearted Richard to the Frenchman. Hence a warm friendship sprang up between them; for which the impulsive romance of the one and the steady sternness of the other, offered ample materials. De Vries seemed ever ready to regard his young friend with the affectionate interest of a parent; while, at the same time, particularly in the presence of strangers, he preserved towards him a deference of manner which men were ready enough to set down to the account of high birth.

The Hollander had spread open his broad, tough palm to the genial blaze, and was watching in gloomy silence the flickering light coquetting with the rafters above his head, apparently without a thought of his companion, who leaned pensively against the pictorial tiles in the chimney, when the door was suddenly pushed open, and two persons sprang into the centre of the kitchen. The first was a tall savage, nearly naked, his face painted with colors of red and black, a snake-skin bound around his forehead, a tuft of coarse plumes on his head, and tomahawk in hand; the other was a female. She cast a timid glance about her as she entered, and glided quietly into the shadow of the chimney, as though shrinking from the bold glare of the light. Not so the man. Recognizing the patroon, he planted himself at once before him and unhesitatingly claimed his protection. They had come from beyond the Tappaen, he said, he and his brother warriors, with their women and children, and encamped at Pavonia; but the Maquas, their enemies from fort Orange, had come upon them in the night, and murdered all while sleeping.

"No! by heaven, Lickquequa," exclaimed the honest patroon, "you shall not so belie the Maquas. The fort is no place for a skin of the color that you wear; you have run your neck into the trapper's noose. It is the Swannekins themselves that have murdered your warriors."

The Indian laid his hand upon his tomahawk, and his eyes glittered.

“Do you understand me? Your enemies are here—within these very walls—they will send you to a better hunting-ground than Wickquaesgeck.”

“Lickquequa will take a scalp with him,” said the Indian, with a grim smile.

“Ay, take it!” answered the patroon, lifting a mass of grizzled hair from his forehead, and showing a tempting line of white that presented quite a contrast to the bronzed complexion below, “take it, and avenge the foul wrong you have suffered to-night.”

The muscles in the face of the Indian relaxed just sufficiently to evince his admiration, without compromising his reputation for dignified indifference; but Lilier had too little knowledge of Indian character to read the emotion correctly.

“You are mad, De Heer,” he exclaimed earnestly; “*you* never consented to this murder; you are the Indian’s friend, and will get this man in safety from the fort. Come, we will convey him through the back door, and along——”

“We will convey him openly. Lickquequa is my neighbor, and entitled to my protection. I will not skulk and creep about for fear of Kieft and his blood-hounds; I will go out openly, with this man beside me; and, if any one attempts to interfere, I will shoot him.”

The Frenchman saw that it would be useless to dispute the point, for De Vries’ blood was heated; and he followed the two men in silence. As they passed out, and were about closing the door, the woman who had escaped with Lickquequa, slid silently through the opening and crept along in the shadow cast upon the ground by the group before her. The young man beckoned her to draw nearer, for it was prudent to make the party as small as possible; and, shrinkingly, the woman obeyed. That was a beautiful face which raised itself beaming with gratitude to Lilier’s, but in the next moment it was nearly hidden in the embroidered mantle folded over her bosom; for the Indian maiden was either very modest or very timid. The gate was unguarded, and they passed on without a challenge.

Lilier's sympathies had at first been strongly enlisted in the cause of humanity; and now that cause was scarce likely to lose anything by uniting youth and beauty with it. There was a deep cast of romance in his character, and this incident had sufficient romantic interest in it, to combine with the witching hour and the glittering moonlight in giving to his thoughts a color which he would have been ashamed to show De Vries. Thus it was that his manner to the fugitive Indian girl, while studiously attentive, yet put on a delicate reserve, which would have been peculiarly appropriate had an honorable cavalier suddenly found himself the escort and protector of one of the fairest dames of Europe. Human nature is everywhere the same, of whatever hue the cheek may be; and understands the language addressed to it, though the tongue may use a strange jargon; but it was difficult to discover whether the courtly manners of the young Frenchman were in this instance appreciated.

When they had crossed a corner of the woods and set their fugitives safely on their way to Tappaen, De Vries proposed taking leave of them and returning to the fort.

"Go," said Lickquequa, coldly.

The maiden raised again her finely-sculptured head, and as she did so, a bright moonbeam came glancing downwards, revealing the rich complexion, the large, mournful eyes, the finely-arched brows, and the luxurious lips. It was immediately lowered again, and she followed in the track of Lickquequa.

"She must not go alone, so unprotected," exclaimed Lilier, looking at De Vries for approbation.

The patrolon smiled.

"She is a *woman*, and the Indian takes no notice of her."

"She does not want his notice, nor ours. She is in her own palace now, and is growing quite the queen. Look! see how freely and proudly she steps. She does not crouch *now*, and would laugh at the very word protection. See! her path leads away from Lickquequa's. God grant that she has no father's, or brother's, or lover's death to avenge; for,

Lilier, it is proud blood that flows in those veins, and, if she would, she might light a train with it that Nieuw Nederlandts would feel to its centre. I know by her dress that she is the daughter of one of their sagamores."

"But woman's words have no weight in the council."

"Certainly not. These people, however, have such broad ears when the cry is for vengeance, that a word whispered in the wigwam may call into action a thousand tomahawks."

Lilier looked after the retreating figure of the Indian maiden, and thought of Zenobia; then he remembered the glimpses he had of her face, and he walked back to the fort by the side of De Vries without speaking a word.

The treachery of the whites, as might have been anticipated, met with a deadly vengeance. The exasperated savages scoured the whole country from Nieuw Amsterdam nearly to fort Orange; and houses, barns and haystacks made merry bonfires for them in the dead of winter. Grain and cattle were destroyed; men stripped of their scalps and left bleeding at their hearth-stones; and women and children dragged, shrieking, from the ruins of their homes and the corpses of the slain, to encounter cold, fatigue, and not unfrequently death, with their unfeeling captors. In this state of things, De Vries applied to the governor for soldiers to protect his estate, but received only a promise.

"I will go myself," said the indignant patroon to his friend; "one arm without dishonor is worth more than a score of these paid murderers; and though they only obeyed orders, poor fellows! I believe an honest man's hearth is better without them. Come with me, Lilier, in God's name, and we two shall be enough for Vriesendael."

A long and unsatisfactory conversation with the governor delayed the departure of De Vries beyond the appointed hour; but, at last, all was arranged, and the two friends set off in a little boat together. The sun was brightly beautiful, winter though it was. The trees, all decked out in trappings of crystal, set off with brilliants of every hue, leaned over the bank

to see themselves in the mirror below ; and pencils of light, seemingly splintered by contact with the cold air, scattered showers of scintillations on the sheets of ice that bordered the little sea, on the shivering water, and the snow-covered shore. Evening came on, and the boat, notwithstanding a floating block of ice that now and then threatened to upset it, shot like a winged bird over the crisp water. A dip, a glimmer of silver as the moonlight came to kiss the uplifted pinion, a broken chain of pearls — and down again went the disappointed wing, to bear up with it the same shattered treasures, and again and again to seek them, till that little boat, with its steadily plying oars, became a struggling, living thing, bearing within it a restless human spirit. On sped they thus, till about the time of midnight's coming, they shot into the swifter current formed by the mingling of the waters. Rounding a miniature cape covered with gigantic trees, they came suddenly in sight of Vriesendaël.

“ Good God ! ” burst from the lips of the patroon ; and, leaping from the boat, he dashed through the water, and sprang, sword in hand, upon the bank. Lilier was scarce a step behind him.

“ Hold, De Vries ! stay ! listen — listen to reason, De Heer ! ”

“ Reason ! and my property on fire, my people murdered, and perhaps my own family ! Curses on the bloody policy of Wilhelm Kieft ! It is his own hand that has set fire to Vriesendaël. ”

A fearful conflagration was indeed sweeping over the little valley. The houses of the tenants, barns, haystacks — everything combustible was now in a broad blaze ; and, with the crackling of the flames, the crash of falling timbers, and the occasional discharge of fire-arms, mingled the triumphant yell of the maddened and revengeful savages. The first impulse of De Vries lasted but a moment, and then he collected all the energies of his powerful mind, and looked upon the scene with the eye of a brave man accustomed to danger, and prepared to meet just such a crisis as this. The fury of the savages

was now all directed towards his own dwelling, a strong block house with embrasures; and, from the firing, it was evident that some of his people had taken refuge there. If this could be reached, under his direction the vengeance of the foe might be baffled; and to reach it unobserved, and effect an entrance, became now the all-important object. Keeping within the shadow of the woods, they crept along, nearer and nearer the glaring light, and nearer the yelling savages, treading down the frozen snow and snapping the brittle twigs fearlessly; for it must have been a heavy sound indeed that would have attracted attention at that terrible hour. As they passed a jagged rock, casting a deep shadow on the ground, a light tread, scarce heavier than that of a squirrel, attracted the attention of De Vries; and, at the same moment, he felt a gentle touch on his shoulder.

“White chief, stay! no — no go! Lickquequa — he save; stay — stay!”

There was plenty of light to see the beautiful face of the Indian girl, as these words with difficulty broke from her lips; her warm, dark eye, with all its pleading earnestness, turning from one face to the other; timidity, everything but the touching interest of a grateful heart, entirely banished; and her whole countenance eloquent with truth and nobleness of purpose. De Vries half paused to answer; but as he did so, a shriek rang out from his own dwelling — a woman's voice. In the same instant a glittering tomahawk glanced past him; there came a savage yell, and two dark forms sprang into the red glare cast at his feet by the burning buildings. He heard the wild, terrified scream of the Indian girl, a groan, and a crackling of the underbrush as of something falling; and then with two or three bounds he left the whole group far behind him. That other shriek! — the voice was dearly familiar, and it drowned, for the moment, every thought of the mere friend.

The tomahawk, that had caught the eye of De Vries, struck the temple of Lilier. He reeled, clutched with both hands at the vacant air, and plunged into the crusted snow, stunned

and bleeding. In a moment his foes were upon him in all their savage fury; but the heart of a friend is quicker and stronger than the vengeful hand of an enemy, even though there be a broadsword in it. The arms of the grateful Indian girl were thrown about him — a beautiful defence; and her cheek, crimsoned with his blood, rested protectingly upon his forehead. How earnestly simple was the tale she told, her soul-full face looking up from the hair all matted with the red gore! And how eloquently she pleaded for her saviour. The savages paused, with their hands uplifted, clutching fast the instruments of death; and bestowing a single glance on the girl, turned in astonishment towards the block-house. The firing had entirely ceased, and not a single savage yell was to be heard. In his own opened door stood, strongly relieved by the full light, the herculean figure of the hardy and courageous patroon; and before him, within arm's reach, an Indian, seemingly engaged in a parley. The strange silence also arrested the attention of the girl. She raised her head, and a cry of joy broke from the lips, and left them parted with a bright smile.

“Go!” she said in her own musical tongue, “go! it is Lickquequa, and the white men are saved.”

She was right. The Indian, whom De Vries had led from the fort on the night of the massacre, had represented the patroon as a friendly chief, who loved his red neighbors; and the Indians had already slung their bows over their shoulders, and lowered their tomahawks by their sides. The two savages looked again on the scalp of the wounded man greedily; but it was half-sheltered by the beautiful person of his protectress; and they turned away and joined silently the dark body retreating from the besieged house.

As soon as they were gone, the girl bent tenderly over her charge, putting her cheek close down to his lips, to see if she could catch a breath upon it, and trying to win, by the pressure of her slight fingers, a single answering flutter of the heart. It came at last — a light, faint tremor; and radiant was the flash of joy that lighted up her face, radiant, and yet half-sub-

duced, as though the breath of a smile might be too strong for the faltering wing of the half-reluctant spirit just poising itself upon the outer verge of life. Hastily she unbuckled the sword at his side, slid his head from her knees, and stole up the hill-side, among jagged rocks and broken wood and crusted snow, till her practised eye recognized the spot she sought. Then kneeling down and digging with her unwonted weapon into the bank, she labored patiently until she reached the ground. It was covered with green leaves; and snatching a handful hastily, she hurried back with them to her charge. Again raising his head to her bosom, she washed the wound with the soft snow gathered from beneath the crust; and, warming the leaves between her hands, laid them gently upon it, and bound them with her own girdle of wampum. Then removing the mantle from her shoulders, she folded it softly about his; and now clasping his icy hands, now watching the uncertain breath that seemed every moment ready to flit from his lip, she bent over him as tenderly as a mother over the cradle of her first-born. And her care was rewarded; for, long before De Vries could leave his alarmed family and go out in search of the corse of his friend, the languid eyes of the awakened Frenchman had turned helplessly to the dark, tearful ones watching his slumbers; and he had closed them again, more than content with his resting-place. He slept, to dream of that same beautiful face; and she looked upon his closed lids and dreamed too; such dreams as our first mother must have had when she opened her eyes on Eden. It was not an easy thing for the poor girl to resign her charge when the white men came and took him from her; for she felt as though she had a claim upon that life which her tenderness had won back to earth after the last cord was loosened and the spirit's wing lifted heavenwards.

Two centuries have passed, and the colors of by-gone events are so blinded and dimmed, and in some instances glossed over by modern falsehood, that little more than the crimson may be recognized. The heart of truth, the eye of love, and

the brow of beauty, are things that fade from the earth, to write their names on the pages of heaven. So is a holy lesson lost; for though truth and purity yet dwell with us, there is a poison in the breath of the world that keeps them forever hidden. Thus two beings who lived long

“Mid trees and flowers and waterfalls,
And fountains bubbling from the moss,
And leaves that quiver with delight,
As from their shade the warbler calls,”

who lived and loved in a luxurious wilderness, and passed in the golden autumn of their days, like the beautiful, rich things about them, can find no historian. Let their memories rest with them—the halo has fallen on some heart. Yet would any look upon a quiet, simple picture, let them spend a day among the Helderburgs. I have seen there a doting old lady, who loves to talk of the flowery dell where she was born, and the happy generations that have moved among those flowers. If you could induce her to pass down the river with you, she would point you to an ancient tree, beneath whose young shade a French Huguenot, of high birth and higher virtues, plighted his faith to the daughter of a proud Sagamore living among the hills. And the old lady loves well to boast of the French and Indian blood in her veins.

LUCY DUTTON.

It was an October morning, warm and sunny, but with even its sunshine subdued into a mournful softness, and its gorgeous drapery chastened by a touch of the dreamy atmosphere into a sympathy with sorrow. And there was a sorrowing one who needed sympathy on that still, holy morning—the sympathy of the great Heart which beats in Nature's bosom—for she could hope no other. Poor Lucy Dutton!

There was a funeral that morning—a stranger would have judged by the gathering that the great man of the village was dead, and all that crowd had come out to do his ashes honor—but it was not so. Yet the little, old-fashioned church was filled to overflowing. Some there were that turned their eyes devoutly to the holy man that occupied the sacred desk, receiving from his lips the words of life; some looked upon the little coffin that stood, covered with its black pall, upon a table directly below him, and perhaps thought of their own mortality, or that of their bright little ones; while many, very many, gazed with cold curiosity at the solitary mourner occupying the front pew. This was a young creature, in the very spring-time of life,—a frail, erring being, whose only hope was in Him who said, “Neither do I condemn thee—go, and sin no more.” There was a weight of shame upon her head, and woe upon her heart, that together made the bereaved young mother cower almost to the earth before the prying eyes that came to look upon her in her distressing humiliation. Oh! it was a pitiful sight! that crushed, helpless creature's agony.

But the year before, and this same lone mourner was considered a sweet, beautiful child, whom everybody was bound to protect and love; because, but that she was the pet lamb of a doting old woman, she was without friend and protector.

Lucy Dutton was the last blossom on a tree which had boasted many fair ones. When the grave opened to one after another of that doomed family, till none but this bright, beautiful bud was left, she became the all in all, and with the dotting affection of age was she cherished. When poverty came to Granny Dutton's threshold, she drew her one priceless jewel to her heart, and laughed at poverty. When sorrows of every kind compassed her about, and the sun went down in her heaven of hope, another rose in a holier heaven of love; and Lucy Dutton was this fountain of love-born light. The old lady and her pretty darling occupied a small, neat cottage, at the foot of the hill, with a garden attached to it, in which the child flitted all day long, like a glad spirit among the flowers. And, next to her child-idol, the simple-hearted old lady loved those flowers, with a love which pure natures ever bear to the beautiful. It was by these, and the fruit produced by the little garden, that the twain lived. Many a fine carriage drew up before the door of the humble cottage, and bright ladies and dashing gentlemen sauntered beneath the shade, while the rosy fingers of Lucy adjusted bouquets for them, her bright lips wreathed with smiles, and her sunny eye turning to her grandmother at the placing of every stem, as though for approbation of her taste. Not a child in all the neighborhood was so happy as Lucy. Not a child in all the neighborhood was so beautiful, so gentle, and so good. And nobody ever thought of her as anything but a child. Though she grew to the height of her tallest geranium, and her form assumed womanly proportions, nobody, not even the rustic beaux around her, thought of her as anything but a child. Lucy was so artless, and loved her dear old grandmother so truly, that the two were somehow connected in people's minds, and it seemed as impossible that the girl should grow older, as that the old lady should grow younger.

Lucy was just booked for fifteen, with the seal of innocence upon her heart, and a rose-leaf on her cheek, when "the Herman property," a fine summer residence that had been for years unoccupied, was purchased by a widow lady from the

metropolis. She came to Alderbrook early in the spring, accompanied by her only son, to visit her new possessions, and finding the spot exceedingly pleasant, she determined to remain there. And so Lucy met the young metropolitan; and Lucy was beautiful, and trusting, and thoughtless; and he was gay, selfish, and profligate. Needs the story to be told?

When the Howards went away, Lucy awoke from her dream. She looked about her, and upon herself, with the veil taken from her eyes; and then she turned from all she had ever loved; for, in the breaking up of those dreams, was broken poor Lucy's heart.

Nay, censor, Lucy was a child—consider how very young, how very untaught—oh! her innocence was no match for the sophistry of a gay city youth! And young Howard stole her unthinking heart the first day he looked in to purchase a bouquet. Poor, poor Lucy!

Before the autumn leaves fell, Granny Dutton's bright pet knelt in her little chamber, and upon her mother's grave, and down by the river-side, where she had last met Justin Howard, and prayed for death. Sweet, joyous Lucy Dutton, asking to lay her bright head in the grave! Spring came, and shame was stamped upon the cottage at the foot of the hill. Lucy bowed her head upon her bosom, and refused to look upon anything but her baby; and the old lady shrunk, like a shrivelled leaf, before this last and greatest of her troubles. The neighborhood had its usual gossip. There were taunts, and sneers, and coarse jests, and remarks severely true; but only a little, a very little, pity. Lucy bore all this well, for she knew that it was deserved; but she had worse than this to bear. Every day she knelt by the bed of the one being who had doted upon her from infancy, and begged her blessing, but in vain.

“Oh! that I had laid you in the coffin, with your dead mother, when all around me said that the breath had passed from you!” was the unvarying reply; “then my gray hairs might have gone down to the grave without dishonor from the

child that I took from the gate of death, and bore for years upon my bosom. Would you had died, Lucy !”

And Lucy would turn away her head, and, in the bitterness of her heart, echo, “ Ay ! would that I had died !” Then she would take her baby in her arms, and, while the scalding tears bathed its unconscious face, pray God to forgive the wicked wish, and preserve her life for the sake of this sinless heir to shame. And sometimes Lucy would smile—not that calm, holy smile which usually lingers about an infant’s cradle, but a faint, sicklied play of the love-light within, as though the mother’s fond heart were ashamed of its own throbbings. But, before the autumn passed, Lucy Dutton was fearfully stricken. Death came ! She laid her last comfort from her bosom into the coffin, and they were now bearing it to the grave,—she, the only mourner. It mattered but little that the grandmother’s forgiveness and blessing came now ; Lucy scarce knew the difference between these words and those last spoken ; and most earnestly did she answer, “ Would, would that I had died !” Poor, poor Lucy !

She sat all through the sermon, and the singing, and the prayer, with her head bowed upon the side of the pew ; and when at last they bore the coffin to the door, and the congregation began to move forward, she did not raise it until the kind clergyman came and led her out to take a last look at her dead boy. Then she laid her thin, pale face against his within the coffin, and sobbed aloud. And now some began to pity the stricken girl, and whisper to their neighbors that she was more sinned against than sinning. Still none came forward to whisper the little word which might have brought healing, but the holy man whose duty it was. He took her almost forcibly from the infant clay, and strove to calm her, while careless eyes came to look upon that dearer to her than her own heart’s blood. Finally, curiosity was satisfied ; they closed the coffin, screwed down the lid, spread the black cloth over it, and the procession began to form. Minister Green left the side of the mourner, and took his station in advance, accompanied by some half dozen others ; then four men fol-

lowed, bearing the light coffin in their hands, and all eyes were turned upon the mourner. She did not move.

“Pass on, madam,” said Squire Field, who always acted the part of marshal on such occasions; and, though little given to the weakness of feeling, he now softened his voice as much as it would bear softening. “This way—right behind the—the—pass on!”

Lucy hesitated a moment, and many a generous one longed to step forward and give her an arm; but selfish prudence forbade. One bright girl, who had been Lucy’s playmate from the cradle, but had not seen her face for many months, drew impulsively towards her; but she met a reproving eye from the crowd, and only whispering, “I *do* pity you, Lucy!” she shrunk back, and sobbed almost as loud as her erring friend. Lucy started at the words, and, gazing wildly round her, tottered on after the coffin.

Loud, and slow, and fearfully solemn, stroke after stroke, the old church-bell doled forth its tale; and slowly and solemnly the crowd moved on with a measured tread, though there was many a careless eye and many a smiling lip, turning to other eyes and other lips, with something like a jest between them. On moved the crowd after the mourner; while she, with irregular, labored step, her arms crossed on her bosom, and her head bent to the same resting-place, just kept pace with the body of her dead boy. Winding through the opened gate into the church-yard, they went trailing slowly through the long, dead grass, while some of the children crept slyly from the procession, to pick up the tufts of scarlet and yellow leaves, which made this place of graves strangely gay; and several young people wandered off, arm in arm, pausing as they went, to read the rude inscriptions lettered on the stones. On went the procession, away to the farthest corner, where slept the stranger and the vagabond. Here a little grave had been dug, and the coffin was now set down beside it, while the long procession circled slowly round. Several went up and looked into the dark, damp cradle of the dead child; one observed to his neighbor that it was very

shallow ; and another said that Tom Jones always slighted his work when there was nobody to see to it ; anyhow, it was not much matter, the child would stay buried ; and another let drop a jest, a hard, but not very witty one, though it was followed by a smothered laugh. All this passed quietly ; nothing was spoken above a low murmur ; but Lucy heard it all ; and, as she heard and remembered, what a repulsive thing seemed to her the human heart ! Poor Lucy Dutton !

Minister Green stood at the head of the grave and said a prayer, while Lucy leaned against a sickly-looking tree, alone, and pressed her cold hands against her temples, and wondered if she should ever pray again— if God would hear her if she should. Then they laid the little coffin upon ropes, and gently lowered it. The grave was too short, or the men were careless, for there was a harsh grating against the hard earth, which made Lucy start and extend her arms ; but she instantly recollected herself, and, clasping her hands tightly over her mouth, lest her agony should make itself heard, she tried to stand calmly. Then a handful of straw was thrown upon the coffin, and immediately a shovelful of earth followed. Oh ! that first sinking of the cold clod upon the bosom we have loved ! What a fearful, shivering sensation, does it send to the heart and along the veins ! And then the benumbing faintness which follows, as though our own breath were struggling up through that damp covering of earth ! Lucy gasped and staggered, and then she twined her arm about the body of the little tree, and laid her cheek against its rough bark and strove hard to keep herself from falling.

Some thought the men were very long in filling up the grave, but Lucy thought nothing about it. She did not, after that first shovelful, hear the earth as it fell ; and when, after all was done and the sods of withered grass had been laid on, Minister Green came to tell her, she did not hear his voice. When she did, she pushed back the hair from her hollowed temples, looked vacantly into his face, and shook her head. Others came up to her—a good-natured man who had been kind to her grandmother ; then the deacon's wife, followed by

two or three other women; but Lucy only smiled and shook her head. Glances full of troubled mystery passed from one to another; there was an alarmed look on many faces, which those more distant seemed to comprehend; and still others came to speak to Lucy. It was useless—she could find no meaning in their words—the star of intellect had gone out—the temple was darkened. Poor, poor Lucy Dutton!

They bore her home—for she was passive and helpless—home to the sick old grandmother, who laid her withered hand on those bright locks, and kissed the cold cheek, and took her to her bosom, as though she had been an infant. And Lucy smiled, and talked of playing by the brook, and chasing the runaway bees, and of toys for her baby-house, and wondered why they were all weeping, particularly dear grandmamma, who ought to be so happy. But this lasted only a few days, and then another grave was made, and yet another, in the poor's corner; and the grandmother and her shattered idol slept together. The grave is a blessed couch and pillow to the wretched. Rest thee there, poor Lucy!

M Y S T E R Y .

LIFE is all a mystery. The drawing of the breath, the beating of the pulse, the flowing of the blood, none can comprehend. We know that we are sentient beings, gifted with strange powers, both intellectual and physical; capable of acting, thinking, feeling, comparing, reasoning, and judging; but we do not know by what means we perform these different functions, not even so much as to comprehend how the simplest thought is originated. The mind of an idiot—of one of the lower animals even—is a study too deep for us. “The goings forth of the wind,” the “balancing of the clouds,” the living leaf bursting from the dead brown stem, all processes of nature however common or simple, are beyond the grasp of human intellect. Each of us is a mystery to self and to the friends that look upon us. We raise an arm, and we know that in that simple movement a thousand little assistants are required; but we do not fully understand the philosophy of their application; and we are totally ignorant of the grand principle, without which they are cold, unfeeling clay. Our friends, too, are complete mysteries to us. They are always acting as we were sure they would not; and they move about complete embodiments of mystery; with hearts almost wholly unexplored, heads full of strange theories, and natures subject to incomprehensible impulses and caprices. Within, without, around, we can comprehend nothing; we cannot solve even the simplest thesis of nature, whether written on the human constitution, or this earth builded by the great Architect for our use. The past to us is chaos; the present is a waking dream, in which “seeing we see not, and hearing we hear not;” and the future is wrapped in the deepest, the most impenetrable obscurity. We know neither how

nor for what purpose we exist; nor what is to be the destiny of that principle within us which every heart-throb proclaims to be eternal. When we pause to think, our own shadows may well alarm us; and when we turn our dim, weak eyes on our own ignorance, even to our partial selves so palpable, we shall not dare to sneer at the wildest vagary that the human mind has ever engendered. Sneer! why, what know we, poor, puny, imbecile creatures that we are! of truth or falsehood, save that moral truth which stamps us the offspring of the Eternal; that unswerving *trust* which is our only safety—our anchor while drifting on these dark, unknown waters? There is none to solve the deep mystery of the things about us; but we feel in the darkness the clasp of a strong Hand. Oh, may we never strive to cast that Hand from us! In the far, far distance burns one Star. Oh, may we never raise a cloud between its light and our bewildered eyes! May we never, never forget, in the midst of the mystery by which we are encompassed, that “we are not our own,” that we are not gifted with the power of guiding ourselves; and may we yield the trust of childhood to the sure foot, the strong arm, and the all-seeing eye of Him who made us what we are, and is leading us to the place where we may learn what we have been and shall be.

THE PRIEST'S SOLILOQUY.

AN EXTRACT.

It is even so, thought the good old man, as the door closed behind the misguided misanthrope; this is a beautiful world of ours, but it is the gilded cage of many a fluttering spirit that, nevertheless, would shrink from freedom if it were offered. Keyling is miserable, more miserable than the poor wretch crouching amid rags, and filth, and loathsomeness, (for such suffering can bear no comparison with mental agony,) and yet he knows not why. What matters it to him that the earth is green, and the heavens surpassingly magnificent? He knows that the impress of his foot will ere long disappear from the one, and his eye close upon the other. He knows that the flowers will bloom, the birds sing; that summer will flush the fields, and winter bring in turn its peculiar attractions, when his heart is pulseless and his tongue mute; but he does not know that in the dissevering of the silver cord is gained the freedom for which the spirit pants. This world is too narrow for his soul to expand in, and he feels cramped and chained; yet, if the door of his cage were flung open, he would tremble at sight of the unknown space beyond, and would not venture out, but cling to the gilded wires until torn away by the resistless hand of death. Earth never satisfied an immortal mind; the "living soul," which is nothing less than the breathing of Deity himself, can be satisfied but with infinity—infinity of life, action, and knowledge. Its own feeble glimmer is enough for the fire-fly; and its wing and voice, with the free heavens and beautiful earth, for the bird; they were formed by the Almighty's hand, but their life is not an emanation of his life, and their little spirits "go downward to the earth." But what can satisfy the deathless

soul immured in a clay prison, with but clouded views of the finite beauties around it, and wholly unconscious of its divine origin and final destiny? No wonder Keyling is miserable; for he is blinder than the untutored savage who "sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind." For years he has been struggling for a meteor; while it receded, he never paused or wearied; but, when his hand closed over it and he grasped a shadow, the truth dawned upon his spirit; and, in the bitterness of its first perception, he cursed himself and cursed his destiny. He hates the world, and himself and mankind, and talks madly of the death-damps, the grave, and the slimy earth-worm, as though superior to their horrors; but yet he is in love with life, as much as the veriest devotee of pleasure in existence. It is this panting for immortality, this longing for a wider range, that makes him sometimes imagine, in his impatience, that he is anxious to lie down to his eternal rest and never wake. If his spirit could but understand its heavenward destiny, if he would learn to look beyond these narrow boundaries, if, in despising the worthless, he would properly estimate the high and imperishable, poor Keyling would find that even on earth there are inexhaustible sources of happiness. Alas for the weakness of human nature! What a very wreck a man becomes when left to his own blindness and folly! The loftier the intellect, the higher its aspirations, and the more comprehensive its faculties, the lower does it descend in darkness, if the torch of religion has never been lighted within. It is misery to feel the soul capable of infinite expansion, and allow it a range no wider than this fading, ever-changing earth; to taste the bliss of life, mingled with the bitter draught of death; to love the high and holy, and never look toward the fountain of holiness—deep, deep, and mingling in its pure tide the richness of all wisdom and knowledge. Oh, how depressing must be the loneliness of such souls! How awful the desolation! Too high for earth and knowing naught of heaven! Even the good in their natures is perverted, and adds to the chaos of darkness within. When they see the strong oppress

the weak, vice triumph over virtue, innocence borne down by care and poverty, and guilt elevated to a throne, they say this is enough to know of Him who holds the reins of such a government; and, in their folly, deem themselves more merciful than the Father of mercies. Making this world the theatre of life, and the years of man its sum, they fix upon this inconceivably small point in comparison with the whole; and, from such a limited view, dare to tax the Ruler of the universe with injustice. Unable to comprehend the policy of the divine government, and misapprehending the object and tendency of earthly suffering, they lose themselves in the mazes of sophistry, and become entangled in the net their own hands have spread.

Poor Keyling! he has drunk of the poisonous tide of infidelity, and every thought is contaminated the moment it springs up into the heart. This gives its coloring to the earth and sky, to life and death. It breaks the chain that binds the world of nature to its Creator, dissolves the strongest fascination of the beautiful things around us, and renders meaningless the lessons traced by the finger of God upon everything he has made. It removes the prop from the bending reed, and the sunlight from the heart; it binds down the wing of hope, and turns the upraised eye earthward; it offers only "the worm, the canker, and the grief," and points the fluttering soul to a grave of darkness and oblivion.

AUNT ALICE.

To people who look on one side of Aunt Alice's character, she appears a saint ; sinless as those who have gone home to heaven ; a ministering angel of light. To people who look on the reverse of the picture, and see spots of this shining through, all distorted by the unhappy medium, she is a miserable, canting hypocrite. Both are wrong ; Aunt Alice is neither, though much nearer saintship. A third class of people, having a wholesome contempt for extremes, and intending to be very generous in their estimate, call Aunt Alice a singular character ; and, moreover, affirm that she loves to be singular, and pursues her somewhat eccentric course more for the sake of attracting attention and exciting remark, than from a love of it. They, too, are wide of the mark. That Aunt Alice performs a vast amount of good is not to be denied ; and that she goes about, her left hand often destroying her right hand's work, is equally certain.

Aunt Alice is a widow ; and, all her children being married, she has nothing to detain her from what she considers her duties. Is there a sick bed in all the neighborhood, she is there. Her own hand administers the cordial ; her own bosom supports the sufferer's head ; her own lips whisper consolation, and breathe balm upon the wounded spirit. Then, Aunt Alice *is* a ministering angel ; and, to see her untiring devotion, her ready self-sacrifice, and her humble piety, you would wonder that she was left upon the earth where she had not a sister spirit. She holds the dying infant in her arms, receives its last sigh, wraps it in its little shroud, and lays it in the coffin. Then she turns to the bereaved mother, and tells her that her cherished bud is only transplanted to be better watched over and cared for ; and Aunt Alice never goes away until she sees a clear light breaking through the tears in the

mourner's eye, and knows that the stricken spirit has learned to love the Hand that but bore its treasure before it to Paradise. But it is only to the poor — the wretchedly, miserably poor — that Aunt Alice goes thus. It is only to them that her hand is extended, and her purse and heart opened. The rich have many friends; she knows they do not need her, and she cannot waste her precious time upon mere civilities. So deeply is this impressed upon the mind of Aunt Alice, that she too often neglects the lesser charities of life — the ready smile, the encouraging word, and the kindly glance, so expressive of sympathetic interest — and thus incurs distrust, and builds up a high wall for her own influence to pass over before it can reach the heart of the worldling. Moreover, she has seen so much of real suffering — that which tears the heart, shrivels up the muscles, and withers the spirit within the bosom — that the sorrow which cannot be traced back to a cause, and an adequate one, (some real, palpable cause, whose length, breadth, and entire bearing she can measure,) meets no sympathy from her. She feels a contempt for those minor ills born of delicacy and nursed in the lap of luxury. She does not know how deeply the cankering iron may eat into the spirit, when she cannot see it protruding beyond; she does not know that the Angel of Woe has a seat which he *sometimes* occupies by every hearth-stone, and that his visitation is always heaviest when he comes disguised. So Aunt Alice never pities those who cannot write down some fearful calamity; never even does she pity those who *can*, and are not willing to deserve her pity by opening to her its most secret fold. Sensitiveness she calls pride, and pride is one of the faults which she never forgives. Yet, Aunt Alice is very forgiving; her charity, indeed, "covereth a multitude of sins." The most sinful, those who have widest erred — the poor, forsaken victim of shame and misery and guilt, she ever takes by the hand, whispering kindly, "This is the way; walk ye in it." Among those whom crime has made outcasts from society she labors unceasingly; and many rescued ones can point to her as the parent of their better natures. Yet there is no one so

severe on foibles as Aunt Alice. Does her neighbor wear a gayer bonnet than pleases her taste ; is any one so dazzled by the fascinations of society as to err in world-loving ; are men entangled in the net of pleasure and lured to sin, instead of being pushed into it by want and woe ; for them Aunt Alice has no sympathy.

Yet, again, a current saying among the poor is, that the good lady has no clasp upon her purse ; it is told by others that she has a hard and griping hand. In truth, Aunt Alice values money highly ; but she values it only so far as it gives her the means to benefit her fellow-men. From every penny appropriated to another purpose she parts grudgingly. She studies economy for the sake of the suffering ; and, not content with economizing herself, she endeavors to compel those with whom she has dealings to do so also. Aunt Alice will bandy words a half hour with a tradesman for the sake of a few shillings ; and, turning round, she will double those shillings in charity. It is not that she prefers generosity to justice, but her view of things is contracted. Her errors are of judgment, not feeling.

I do not wonder that people call Aunt Alice a hypocrite — but I *do* wish that they could look into the bosom where rests the meek and quiet spirit which they falsify. Oh ! Aunt Alice has a true and generous heart — a heart panting to be like His who loved the sinner, while hating *all sin*. A generous heart has she ! Pity that it should be curbed, half its fervor checked, and many of its best pulsations hushed, by the narrow mind which is its guide and governor !

MY FIRST GRIEF.

AN EXTRACT.

I LAUGHED and crowed above this water, when I was a baby, and, therefore, I love it. I played beside it, when the days were years of summer-time, and the summers were young eternities of brightness, and, therefore, I love it. It was the scene of my first grief, too. Shall I tell you? There is not much to tell, but I have a notion that there are people above us, up in the air, and behind the clouds, that consider little girls' doings about as important as those of men and women. The birds and the angels are great levelers.

It was a dry season; the brook was low, and a gay trout in a coat of golden brown, dotted over with crimson, and a silver pinafore, lay, weather-bound, on the half-dry stones, all heated and panting, with about a tea-spoonful of lukewarm water, turning lazily from its head, and creeping down its back at too slow a pace to afford the sufferer hope of emancipation. My sympathies—little girls, you must know, are made up of love and sympathy, and such like follies, which afterwards contract into—*n'importe!* I was saying, my sympathies were aroused; and, quite forgetting that water would take the gloss from my new red morocco shoes, I picked my way along, and laying hold of my fine gentleman in limbo, succeeded in burying him, wet face and all, in the folds of my white apron! But *such* an uneasy prisoner! More than one frightened toss did he get into the grass, and then I had an infinite deal of trouble to secure him again. His gratitude was very like that of human's, when you do them unasked service

When I had reached a cool, shaded, deep spot, far adown, where the spotted alders lean, like so many self-enamored narcissuses, over the ripple-faced mirror, I dropped my apron, and let go my prize. Ah! he was grateful *then!* He must have been! How he dived, and sprang to the surface, and spread out his little wings of dark-ribbed gossamer, and frisked about, keeping all the time a cool, thin sheet of silver between his back and the sun-sick air! I loved that pretty fish, for I had been kind to it; and I thought it would love me, too, and stay there, and be a play-fellow for me; so I went every day and watched for it, and watched until my little eyes ached; but I never saw it again. That was my first grief; what is there in years to make a heart ache heavier? That first will be longer remembered than the last I dare say.

THE MIGNIONETTE.

A FABLE.

I KNOW there is an angel in some bosoms—an angel which the Redeemer leaves to guard his own peculiar jewels—which will touch most delicately the keys of love and truthfulness, whatever nets the world without may be weaving to cripple its pure wings. But, in general, we are imitative creatures, and we copy from our surroundings. We catch the tricks of the leaves, and the breezes, and the flower-buds, when we make our homes among them; and, when we congregate on hot pavements, the air we breathe is searing to the spirit, however you may tell us it affects the spirit's casket. It is better to be a "God-make" than a "man-make," as the little deaf mute, Jack, would say; and men will re-fashion God's doings, even in our own natures, if we do not prevent them. For this reason, it seems to me not only peculiarly silly, but wicked, to transplant the early spring violet from the brook-side to your conservatory. A gay, fashionable man, with a touch of poetry, and more of worldliness about him, attempted it a few years ago; but he spoiled his flower. Poor Minna Gray! She was a pure, gentle creature; but when she was removed from the influences of home, with so much to attract, so much to wonder at and bewilder, was it strange that her young heart should grow stagnant to any but the thrilling touch of the magic world that accorded so well with her dreams of fairy-land? No; if the world-weary man would have the wild violet in its fragrance, and freshness, and purity, he must go and live beside it; it is well worth the sacrifice, and will droop in any other soil. We have a strange notion in this strange world, of fashioning pure things to our own hands, instead of fashioning ourselves to them.

In the days when all the moveless dumb things on the earth talked and walked about, a Thistle grew down in the corner of a neglected garden, in the midst of other Thistles, all proud of their purple blossoms and brave defences. But there was one thing about the porcupine-like armor of the Thistle family, which did not quite please this gallant knight. They were all bristling with prickles; and they could not draw near each other with the loving confidence displayed by the little bed of Mignonette close by; so, in the midst of kindred and friends, the Thistle felt alone. Perhaps, if he had cast off his own armor, and wheedled from the air some of the sweetness it had rifled from his fragrant neighbors, the others might have imitated him; but, instead of that, like many a poet of the present day, he stood up in all his exclusiveness; and, from dawn to dew-fall, sighed for companionship. At last he began to throw loving glances towards the Mignonette; and one little, fragrant, dewy blossom saw him, and blushed, hiding her meek head behind her companions. From that day the knight resolved to woo the little trembler, and fashion her beautiful spirit for his own happiness. "She shall grow close beside me," he said to himself; "her roots shall twine with mine down in the dark earth, and her slender, delicate stem I will support and train upwards, and she will cling lovingly to me forever." So he expended a few more tender glances, and sent some gallant speeches by the little wind-messengers; and at last pretty Mignon stepped from the midst of her sisters, and laid her fragrant head on the bosom of her mettlesome wooer. For a little time, whose life so bright as that of Knight Thistle? But sometimes the sharp thorns in his armor wounded his gentle bride, and then came tears and chidings; sometimes, when he bent his head to touch her bright lip, there seemed a strong scent of the Thistle in her breath, instead of the fragrance which had made the whole garden rich; and sometimes, at midnight, when the wind was a little noisier than usual, and the tall Thistle-heads hissed a response, he fancied that another hiss arose close beside him, and he did not

love his Mignon more for growing so like himself. Finally, after a year or two had passed, the Thistle found, to his dismay, that the roots of the Mignonette were so interwoven with those of her stout neighbors, that they were in no wise distinguishable ; then thorns grew from her sides, and wounded as his had done ; she put a purple crown upon her head, and became a Thistle. It was not very strange, for she had lain upon his heart, and its throbbings were not good for her ; she had listened to his whispers, and in them had forgotten the pure, sweet converse of her sisters, though her fainting spirit longed for it ; and she had breathed the air that the Thistles breathed, until her whole nature was contaminated.

But from that day to this, the whole family of Thistles (which has since become very numerous, and does not always wear the purple) declare the modest little Mignonette to be no purer, no gentler, no sweeter or more loving than themselves ; and they firmly believe that there are no such virtues as these in the wide world, and those who seem most to practise them, are only the most adroit deceivers.

Ah ! pretty Mignonettes, sweet Violets, bright Minna Grays ; beware of the world—nestle in your seclusion—guard well your simple, trustful hearts ; your innocence is no match for the strong continual influence which always enters by the purest door of your natures to desecrate your treasures.

MINISTERING ANGELS

MOTHER, has the dove that nestled
 Lovingly upon thy breast,
 Folded up its little pinion,
 And in darkness gone to rest ?
 Nay ; the grave is dark and dreary,
 But the lost one is not there ;
 Hear'st thou not its gentle whisper,
 Floating on the ambient air ?
 It is near thee, gentle mother,
 Near thee at the evening hour ;
 Its soft kiss is in the zephyr,
 It looks up from every flower.
 And when, Night's dark shadows fleeing
 Low thou bendest thee in prayer,
 And thy heart feels nearest heaven,
 Then thy angel babe is there.

Maiden, has thy noble brother,
 On whose manly form thine eye
 Loved full oft in pride to linger,
 On whose heart thou couldst rely,
 Though all other hearts deceived thee,
 All proved hollow, earth grew drear,
 Whose protection, ever o'er thee,
 Hid thee from the cold world's sneer,—
 Has he left thee here to struggle,
 All unaided on thy way ?
 Nay ; he still can guide and guard thee,
 Still thy faltering steps can stay :
 Still, when danger hovers o'er thee,
 He than danger is more near ;

When in grief thou 'st none to pity,
He, the sainted, marks each tear.

Lover, is the light extinguished,
Of the gem that, in thy heart
Hidden deeply, to thy being
All its sunshine could impart?
Look above! 't is burning brighter
Than the very stars in heaven;
And to light thy dangerous pathway
All its new-found glory 's given.
With the sons of earth commingling,
Thou the loved one mayst forget;
Bright eyes flashing, tresses waving,
May have power to win thee yet;
But e'en then that guardian spirit
Oft will whisper in thine ear,
And in silence, and at midnight,
Thou wilt know she hovers near.

Orphan, thou most sorely stricken
Of the mourners thronging earth,
Clouds half veil thy brightest sunshine,
Sadness mingles with thy mirth.
Yet, although that gentle bosom,
Which has pillowed oft thy head,
Now is cold, thy mother's spirit
Cannot rest among the dead.
Still her watchful eye is o'er thee
Through the day, and still at night
Hers the eye that guards thy slumber,
Making thy young dreams so bright.
O! the friends, the friends we've cherished
How we weep to see them die!
All unthinking they're the angels
That will guide us to the sky!

THE RAIN A THOUGHT-MAKER.

WOULD you believe it, "Bel" — that there is poetry in a woodpile — genuine, unmitigated poetry, dipped up from the very heart of Helicon? Would you believe it? Well, there is; and, what is better still, it is not a moth born of the sunshine; but a genuine bird of Parnássus, dashing rain-diamonds from its wings, and weaving rainbows, and turning rain-clouds into — whatever you choose — the friar's cowl and gown, or the ermine and velvet of St. James, as your taste suggests. But it is a Niobe; or rather a Venus bathing in an upper sea; for the muse of the woodpile, you must know, is a rain-divinity. To illustrate. We have had a week — O, *such* a week! If I possessed any mechanical skill it would have made a Noah of me, six days ago. Drizzle, drizzle! patter, patter! from darkness to darkness; for the day is one continued twilight, the damp light coming in and going out at its usual hours, as though it acted only from a sense of duty — sick and dizzy enough, meanwhile, to prefer being alone. The night, too — but nights never hang heavily on my hands, thanks to the little people from Dreamland.

Did you ever spend a rainy day in the country, "Bel?" You will say, yes; for now I have asked, I recollect one or two when you were with us. But Walter was here then; so, of course, your sun shone. Once imagine those rainy days without a lover, "Bella;" and then think of seven of them all in a row, so near alike that you cannot distinguish one from its twin; and you must keep an almanac in your hand to prove to yourself that yesterday has not come back again to cheat you into living a stale day. By the way, what a fresh life we have of it; forever using new time, moments just coined from stray fragments of eternity, soiled by nobody's breath, and thrown by as soon as tarnished or embalmed by

ours. Not quite thrown by, either. They are following after us, a line of strange things strangely broidered over, to buoy us heavenward, like the tail of a kite, or drag us down, a chain of lead. "*Revenons a nos moutons.*"

The woodpile. There it stands, with the water drip, dripping from it — all motionless, and meek as Mooly "midway in the marshy pool;" (you admire musical sounds, "Bel;" and there is alliteration for you, worthy of the fair Laura Matilda herself.) Drip! drip! there's something chiding in that woodpile — a dumb reverence for what is, which makes me ashamed of wishing for the ninety-ninth time, as I was on the point of doing, that the rain "*would* be over and gone." Resigned to the decrees of Providence! O, it *is* a hard thing, "Bel." Think of our hopes, as they are first formed, with a heart-throb in every tiny bud; then think of them as they begin to expand, blushing, brightening, bursting out from the envious green, fresh and glorious — our gay, gorgeous hopes; think of them in their glad beauty, and watch the coming of the rain-storm. How they strive to stand, poor perishable things! How they wave, and quiver, and wrestle! and then see their bright petals swept downward and scattered, gemming the wet ground, before one sun-ray had given them a baptismal kiss. Lost before named! Poor hopes! Pitiable hoppers!

Not poetry, did you say? Well, it is philosophy, then, and I am by no means sure that there is the difference of a maple and an elm stick between the two. I am inclined to believe that the same divinity presides over both. To be sure, poetry shows the dimpled foot, mantled only by the hem of a lady's robe; while philosophy strides off in buskin and hosen; but you may see them step behind the scenes at any moment, and exchange attire.

I have gained quite an affection for that woodpile, since I have had nothing else to look at; and it went to my heart this morning to have a heavy armful transferred to my room, for the purpose of correcting the dampness of the atmosphere. I felt as though committing a kind of sacrilege; worse still,

burning my monitor, because perhaps its teachings chid me. And then, when the wild flames were all raving around it, how could I help, "Bel;" unclasping a clasp, and looking into the morrow of a little trembler, who would fain cling a life-long to the present? My life has been one track of roses; I have imbibed their freshness, and drunk their perfume; my smiles have been heart-born, and every tear has had a rainbow in it. I have led a happy, happy life, "Bel" — thank God! who has granted every blessing to a hoping mother's prayers. But a wiser than the hoping has said, "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many." Not entire darkness, "Bel;" for I know of stars that will always sparkle, of lamps that will always burn; but still there are days of trial awaiting me — perhaps in the distance, perhaps very near, even at the door. I cannot die till my lip has pressed the bitter. Heaven help me, then! and not me alone, but all of us.

I wish you could sit by me this morning, and see my fire burn. There is John Rogers himself, with his picket fence of little people, to keep him from running away, just as he stands in the primer; and there is the veritable hero, Jack-the-giant-killer, if I am to judge by the enormous club he carries, three times the size of himself; and there — there, as I live, is your own Broadway, the genuine article, the shops all tricked out in finery, and the passers-by in the same way bedizened — all walking show-cases. And now the fire-scene changes, and I look into a magnificent palace, — my foot is aching just to press that gorgeous carpet, and — there, a stick has rolled down upon it, and my palace is in the condition of many another one that I have builded. That big stick of maple seems to me like a martyr, suffering for opinion's sake. Certainly it is the very stick that I saw yesterday turning its bleached face heavenward with a submissiveness which had no sigh in it; and, with its last year's green for a text, it preached me a long sermon. It was not a very agreeable one, however. Shall I tell you a few things it wrote on my heart?

I never afflicted myself much at the decay of empires—never gave half as many tears to the downfall of all the mighty mourning places of the old world combined, as I shed over the grave I dug in childhood for a poor broken-winged robin I had striven to win back to life. My heart is not big enough for that kind of sympathy; and there is no use in trying to convince me that there is a place in the world of quite as much consequence as Alderbrook. If I should wake some of these mornings, and find the houses all turned into stacks of chimneys, (we have few Grecian pillars, and such like un-necessaries, so our ruins would not be very romantic,) and the direction of the only nice street we have, such a disputable thing that the antiquarians of Crow-hill would wrangle about it forever after; I say, if I should awake and find changes like these, I should probably weep a few such tears as have, during the lapse of centuries, bathed the ruins that claim the world for mourners. But, after all, it would be nothing in comparison with seeing a new grave dug over the white stile yonder, among the cypresses. The decay of life, the extinguishing of the lamp lighted by the hand of God,—O, there is something in that which I can feel! I do not know what kind of life there was in that maple-tree last summer—how high, how glorious, how much like this which is now swelling in my veins and bubbling at my heart—but I do know that there was life in it. And life, of whatever kind, is a mysterious, a fearfully mysterious thing. But it is gone now; and the living tree, which gloried in the sunlight, and wrestled with the winds of heaven—that had veins and arteries, through which the life-current wandered as through mine, is degraded to the impassiveness of the stone—below the stone in its early perishableness, as the human frame is below that in a more revolting dissolution. Sometimes I fancy, as the stick lies smouldering in that crust of gray ashes, that the principle of life has not yet departed from it; for, the unwilling yielding to the flame, the occasional brightening up, as though a hoping soul looked through it, the half-mirthful crackle, and the low, mournful song, like its own requiem, all

seem to speak of an inner life, which the axe of the woodman failed to reach. I observe, too, as I watch it, fragments crumbling back into ashes; while, above, floats off a blue wreath, waving and curling—winging its way heavenward with all the gladness of an emancipated spirit. Will you believe with me, “Bella,” that this is the same spirit which animated the living leaves of the maple tree, when they coquetted with the summer sun-light, and folded the wind genii in their green arms, and whispered, with their fresh lips, of things, which, I suppose, the birds know more about than we. Why should it not be? I have no objection to the Indian’s plan of taking dogs, and horses, and other lovable things, to heaven; though I am not sure that I should like to see him chase the “spotted Fömen,” or put a veto on the flourish of bright wings; but I think all these will be a study for us there. Our natures have become contracted in this cramped-up breathing-place, where we are hustled about, and jostled against each other, till self-protection—*self, self-everything*—is the one chord vibrating to our every breath. We have arranged a book of nature, and put ourselves in as a frontispiece; (*the picture—other living things, only the border*;) but the whole may be reversed in heaven.

“— Just as short of reason he may fall,
Who thinks all made for one, as one for all.”

And what egotism to believe our own the only deathless spirits to pass from this bright earth to a brighter Paradise! Ourselves alone gifted with the true life—all things else cursed with a mockery, a semblance, like the iris-hued bubble to the sun.

But, “Bell,” I do hope this maple stick is as insensible as it seemed on the wood-pile yesterday; for I have no great fancy for playing the executioner, though it did teach me an ugly lesson. What that lesson was, I have only hinted at yet; it is scarce a thing to repeat to one so bright and joyous as you are. Perhaps you never think of the dark phantoms that trouble the existence of other mortals—but O, “Bell,” death ~~is~~ a thing to dread! And then it is such an ever-present thing,

we are so reminded of it every moment of our lives! There is no hour so sacred, no place so secure, but we cast a look over the shoulder at the fearful shape following us. At dawn and at dew-fall, at noon-tide blaze, and in the star-broidered midnight, it is all the same.

When day is dying in the west,
 Each flickering ray of crimson light,
 The sky, in gold and purple dressed,
 The cloud, with glory all bedight,
 And every shade that ushers night,
 And each cool breeze that comes to weave
 Its dampness with my curls — all leave
 A lesson sad.

Last night I plucked a half-shut flower,
 Which blushed and nodded on its stem;
 A thing to grace a Peri's bower;
 It seemed to me some priceless gem,
 Dropped from an angel's diadem;
 But soon the blossom drooping lay,
 And, as it withered, seemed to say,
 We're passing all!

I loved a fair-haired, gentle boy,
 (A bud of brightness — ah, too rare!)
 I loved him, and I saw with joy
 Heaven's purity all centred there;
 But he went up, that heaven to share;
 And, as his spirit from him stole,
 His last look graved upon my soul,
 Learn thus to die!

I've seen the star that glowed in heaven,
 When other stars seemed half asleep,
 As though from its proud station driven,
 Go rushing down the azure steep,
 Through space unmeasured, dark, and deep;
 And, as it vanished far in night,
 I read by its departing light,
 Thus perish all!

I've, in its dotage, seen the year,
 Worn out and weary, struggling on,
 Till falling prostrate on its bier,
 Time marked another cycle gone;
 And as I heard the dying moan,

There is so much in this dear, beautiful world, too, for the heart to cling to! What is there in the sad catalogue of human suffering like wrenching away

—That holy link which first
 Within the soul's rich mine was moulded;
 When life awoke, and love's pure wing
 Another nestling close enfolded?

We turn to the hearth-stone in the hour of pain, and nestle back upon a mother's bosom; and we say, we cannot leave it — we cannot die! A father's proud eye is on us — ambition blossoms in our hearts beneath it; and then, how stiflingly steal over us thoughts of the coffin and the grave! How *can* we die in the dew of our morning, with all those glowing visions unrealized! How can we pass in age, when the thousand chains which we have been our life-long forging, are all linked to the bright, beautiful things here, which we can but love! Father in heaven, teach me trust in Thee! As these chords, which Thou hast strung, lose tone, and canker against thy cunning workmanship, gather them into thine own hand, and attune them anew to accord with the harps of angels. Teach me trust in Thee; that when the coffin-lid shuts out the sunshine, and the green-bladed grass springs between my breast and the feet of the living, I may still be in the midst of light, and joy, and love — love measureless as eternity.

I had quite forgotten that I was writing a letter, "Bel," and have jotted down the thoughts as they came tumbling to the point of my pen, with a merciless lack of consideration for you, who are probably basking in the mirth-giving brightness of a sunny morning. But by this you will discover that a rainy day in the country is not without its uses. It gives us thinking-time, and that lengthens our lives; — none live so fast and have so few way-marks as the butterflies. Besides, thought is the father of action — so, to that great sheet of mist, and the dripping rain, and the beaded grass, and the streets, many a good deed may owe its parentage. But now my stick of maple is nearly charred, and my eyes are trying to hide

themselves behind pairs of fringes which are nearing each other for an embrace. I will to sleep, "Bel," with a looking-glass in the window, to give me intelligence of the first strip of blue that disengages itself from the prisoning clouds. Adieu, my bright cousin! All good attend you, and no more rain visit New York than may be needed as a *thought-maker*.

G E N I U S .

THERE is a melancholy pleasure in turning over the records of genius, and familiarizing ourselves with the secret workings of those minds that have, from time to time, made memorable the ages in which they lived, and ennobled the several nations which gave them birth. But it is not the indulgence of this feeling which makes such a study peculiarly profitable to us: from these records we may learn much of the philosophy of the human mind in its most luxurious developments. Genius seems to be confined to no soil, no government, no age or nation, and no rank in society. When men lived in wandering tribes, and could boast no literature, the bright flame burned among them, although wild and often deadly its ray; and the foot of oppression, which crushes all else, has failed to extinguish it. Hence it has rashly been inferred that this peculiar gift, possessed by the favored few, may be perfected without any exertion on their part, and is subject to none of the rules which in all other cases govern intellect; but that, uncontrolled and uncontrollable, it must burst forth when and where it will, and be burned up in the blaze of its own glory, leaving but the halo of its former brightness upon the historic page. This inference, however, is alike erroneous and dangerous. Though genius be an unsought gift, a peculiar emanation from the Divine Mind, it was not originally intended as a glorious curse, to crush the spirit which it elevates. Perchance the pent-up stream within the soul *must* find an avenue; but he who bears the gift may choose that avenue,—may direct, control and divert; he may scatter the living waters on a thousand objects, or pour their whole force upon one; he may calm and purify them, by this means rendering them none the less deep, or he may allow

them to dash and foam until, however they sparkle, the dark sediments of vice and misery thus made to mingle, may be found in every gem.

Let us turn to the oft-quoted names of Byron and Burns — names that can scarcely be mentioned by the admirers of genius without a thrill of pain. To the poor ploughman on the banks of the Doon was sent the glorious talisman, and with it he unlocked the portals of nature, and read truths even in the flower overturned by his ploughshare, unseen by common eyes. But mark his veering course; think of his (comparatively) wasted energies. He could love the wild flowers in the braes and the sunlight on the banks of his “bonny Doon;” he could, at least at one time, smile at his lowly lot; and he ever contended against fortune with a strong and fearless hand. But while the polished society of Edinburgh owned his power, and he swayed the hearts of lads and lasses of his own degree at will, he could not control *himself*; and many of those light songs, which are now on gladsome lips, might, could we enter into the secrets of the poor bard, be but the sad way-marks of the aching heart, as it grew each day heavier till it sank into the grave. Burns, the light-hearted lover of his “Highland Mary,” and Burns, the care-worn exciseman, were very different persons; but neither outward circumstances nor the genius that characterized both alike, was the cause. The world has been blamed in his case; but the world, after it first noticed, could have done nothing to save. The poet, had he known his moral strength and cared to exert it, could have saved himself, as his superiority to many of the foibles and prejudices of human nature and his manly independence on many occasions evinced.

Byron, like his own archangel ruined guiding a fallen son of clay in his search after mysteries, has delved among hidden treasures and spread before us the richest gems of Helicon; but scarce one of these but is dark in its glory, and, although burning with all the fire of heaven-born poesy, sends forth a mingled and dangerous ray. But had a mother whispered her pious counsels in his ear in boyhood; had a friendly finger

pointed out a nobler revenge when that first cutting satire was penned and had a better, a holier sentiment than the mean passion of revenge urged him on to action and governed his after aspirations, think you that the archangel of earth would have stood less glorious? No. Byron's spirit had a self-rectifying power, and he could have used it, but he did not; and, although he has well won the laurel, a poison more bitter than death is dropping from every leaf.

It was not an ungrateful public that spread the death-couch of Savage in a debtor's prison, or dug the suicidal grave of "Bristol's wondrous boy." They were themselves ungrateful; they guarded not well the gift they bore, and fell victims to their own misdirected powers.

The common mind, never tempted, may wonder at the waywardness of genius and despise the weakness of its possessor; and the generous one that sees the struggle and mourns the wreck, may pity and apologize; and both are in some degree right. While we admire and pity, we must wonder at the weakness of the strength that, subduing all else, failed beneath its own weight. We know that the gifted ones of earth often have stronger passions, more irresistible wills, and quicker and more dangerous impulses than other men; and for this very reason should they cultivate more assiduously the noble powers by which these passions and impulses are governed. Each individual possesses them; but they *must be cultivated*.

It is our conception of the mysteries of this gift which leads us to look back with such peculiar interest upon the infancy of a man of genius, expecting there to discover at least some flashes of the divine ray which lighted up his after life. The dusty memories of nurses and village oracles are ransacked for anecdotes, which oftentimes neither the additions suggested by pride and partial affection, nor the transforming medium of the past, through which they are viewed, can swell into anything like superiority to the sayings and doings of other children. He who will watch an intelligent child through one day, will be astonished at the bright flashes of untaught intellect which, could they be abstracted from the

childish notions in which they are almost entirely buried, would be thought, by any but him who found them in such amusing vicinity, the sure precursors of greatness.

True, real genius often shows itself in childhood; but that it always does, or that such a development is desirable, may be seriously questioned. The child who writes verses at six, or gives other indications of a genius surpassing his years, may be wondered at and admired as a prodigy; but the parent ought to tremble to observe the premature fruit bursting through the petals of the not yet unfolded bud. There is an evidence of disease in this, which, in one way or another, almost always proves fatal. This unnatural power wears out itself or the frame of its possessor; either the mind or the body must fail under such a rapid development.

The village pedagogue in his old age may look about him wonderingly; for it is not unlikely that the least promising of all his flock takes the highest stand, while his bright, ever-ready favorite, that he was sure would become a *great man*, does not rise above mediocrity. There is nothing strange or capricious in this. It is the sure result of natural causes, and has its counterpart in all the works of nature—even in the human frame. Rapid growth produces weakness in the bones and sinews; and, in some cases, this growth has been so rapid as to become an actual disease, and carry its victim to the grave. Many are the instances of intellectual growth so rapid as to weaken the mind and sink it even below mediocrity, or, on the other hand, to produce premature death. For examples of this last result we need not go to the tombs of the early dead in the old world, nor is it necessary to visit the banks of Saranac, where drooped the fairest buds that ever shed the fragrance of heaven upon earth. We can find them in our own midst. Many are the gifted little beings, who, after basking in the sunshine and rejoicing among the flowers for a few short summers, pass away all unknown to the world—leaving only the frail memorials of their early genius to soothe, yet sadden even in the moment of soothing, the hearts that cherished them

It would be going too far to censure those who have the guidance of such minds; but it would save worlds of disappointment, did they know that such promises are deceitful and deserving of but little confidence. And sometimes, doubtless, the poor victim might be saved years of pain and disease, and, perchance, be spared to the world through a long life, were not the powers of the mind forced by unnatural means to expand too soon—before either the mind or body had acquired the strength and hardiness necessary to its own healthy existence. Many have seen this evil, and endeavored to remedy it by checking such unnatural growth; but this is perhaps the most fatal error that could be committed. The mind, when it first becomes conscious of its own capabilities, puts no limits to them, and will only be urged onward by each barrier thrown in its way; but a judicious hand may direct its course, calm its turbulence, soothe its sensitiveness, and teach it to be its own supporter, without endangering in the least degree its freshness and originality. The power of controlling its own impulses does not render a nature *tame*; but as it is necessary to every person, how much more so to him who has a strong, high spirit, that cannot be subdued by others; that, spurning the control of him who should be its master, over-masters him, and is left unprotected.

LILIAS FANE.

ABOUT five miles from Alderbrook there is a handsome red school-house, with a portico in front, shaded by an immense butternut; white window-shutters, to keep out rogues at night, but of no use at all during the day; and a handsome cupola, in which is a bell of sufficient power to be heard, particularly on still days, all over the district. This specimen of architecture, being intended to serve the double purpose of church and school-house, is the pride of the little community; and, indeed, it well may be, for there is not its equal in the whole country round. When the school-house was first built, the neighbors all resolved to support a "first-rate school;" and, for many years, they employed teachers who came well recommended, and claimed a large salary. Squire Mason said no pains were spared,—everything was done that man could do; yet, somehow, no teacher seemed to give general satisfaction; and so many left, either in indignation or disgrace, that "the Mason school" gained the reputation of being the most ungovernable in the county. If truth must be told, this was not without reason; for people who build new school-houses must, of course, listen to new doctrines, and most of the families in "the Mason district" had imbibed somewhat extensively the notions prevalent among reformers of the present day, who think that Solomon was only joking when he recommended the rod. At last, after some renegade youngsters had summarily dismissed, with a broken head, a dark, square-shouldered, piratical looking man, who, in a fit of desperation, had been chosen for his enormous strength, people became quite discouraged, and the principal men of the district, old Farmer Westborn, Deacon Martin, and Squire Mason, called a meeting to discuss affairs. Some proposed whipping all the boys round, and commencing

a new school; others thought it best to shut up the house entirely, and set the young rebels to cutting wood; while Deacon Martin was of the opinion that if some of the "worst ones" could be kept at home, there would be no difficulty with the rest. Upon this hint others spake; and the meeting at last decided on obtaining a female teacher to take charge of the little ones, the "big boys" being entirely voted out. Squire Mason himself had a son who was considered a "rollicking blade," up to all sorts of mischief; and of the half-dozen shock-headed Westborns, there was not one that had failed to give the former master blow for blow. Affairs were, however, now to assume a calmer aspect; and the meeting proceeded forthwith to appoint a school-committee, consisting of Deacon Martin, who had no children of his own, and was consequently expected to take a great interest in those of his neighbors; Mr. Fielding, a quiet bachelor of thirty-five or thereabout; and one or two others, who were selected for the sake of making the numbers strong, and not for anything that they were expected to do. The principal duty of the *acting* part of the committee was to obtain a teacher; but they were also to manage all other affairs thereunto pertaining.

Luckily, a lady had been recommended to Deacon Martin, during the preceding autumn, as a perfect prodigy; and, as our school-committee men were quiet sort of people, who did not like to make unnecessary trouble, a letter, superscribed "*Miss Liliās Fane,*" was thrown into the post-office box, which, in due time, brought as favorable an answer as could be desired.

It was a cold, stormy morning in December, when the public stage-coach set down the new schoolmistress at the door of Deacon Martin's house. A bundle of cloaks and blankets rolled from the opened door into the hands of the good deacon, who was obliged to support, indeed almost to carry, an invisible form into the house, where his good dame stood ready to divest it of all unnecessary incumbrances. At first, a large blanket was removed, then muff and cloak, and yet shawl, hood, and veil remained; and Mrs. Martin could not help

conjecturing how precious must be the nut which was blessed with so much shell. The task of untying strings and removing pins being accomplished, a volume of flaxen ringlets descended over a pair of tiny white shoulders, and a soft blue eye stole timidly from its silken ambush up to the face of Mrs. Martin; but meeting no sympathy there, it retreated behind the drooping lid; and little Miss Fane, blushing up to the pretty flaxen waves that just shaded her forehead, smiled, and courtesied, and then crouched by the blazing fire like a petted kitten. Mrs. Martin retreated involuntarily; and the deacon parted his lips, drew up his eye-brows, and shrugged his shoulders, between astonishment and contempt. What! that child assume the duties and responsibilities of a school teacher and, above all, in such a school! Why, Susan Harman could put her out of the door with one hand, and the very littlest boy overmaster her. There sat the new schoolmistress, and there stood the deacon and his dame, gazing at her, perfectly speechless, when Mr. Fielding drove up to the door; it being considered his especial duty to introduce new teachers, and particularly lady teachers, to the school-house. Now the bachelor had some very fine notions of tall, elegant figures, and dignified manners; indeed, he had a rule for everything, stepping, looking, and even thinking; and, consequently, he was taken quite by surprise when his eye first lighted on the unpretending little school-mistress. Her figure was slight, and exceedingly fragile, and her face the very perfection of infantile sweetness. This was all that Mr. Fielding had an opportunity to observe, as she stood before him in graceful confusion, replying to his very formal salutation, and answering his still more formal questions about the weather, the state of the roads, and the time of her arrival. The bachelor, however, was confident that Miss Fane was a very incompetent school-teacher; and Miss Fane was quite as confident that the bachelor was a very incompetent beau. First, he gave her what the little lady considered an impertinent stare, as a school-committee-man has a right to do; then he made a great many common place remarks, as a man that wishes to appear very dignified

will do ; and then he desired to see Deacon Martin in private, as a man when he wishes to let you know that he is about to discuss your character should do. Poor Liliās Fane ! with all her simplicity she was not deficient in discernment, and she felt piqued at the manners of the people, particularly Mr. Fielding, whose real superiority she instantly detected, despite of the clumsy awkwardness behind which he managed to hide himself. So, tossing back her sunny curls, and calling for hood and shawl, in spite of all Mrs. Martin's entreaties to the contrary, she was half-way to the school-house before the gentlemen decided that they could do nothing less than give her a trial. It was with the utmost surprise that the bachelor heard of the flight of his bonny bird ; for he was the greatest man in the district, and every one was but too much delighted to gain his notice. He owned a fine cottage close by the Maple Grove, with beautiful grounds about it, and every elegance that wealth could command and taste dictate within ; and there he resided, with his mother and a little nephew, in very enviable quiet. It was evident that his knowledge of the world was thorough, and he had, probably, at some period of his life, taken a part in its tumult ; but the retirement of private life best suited him, and he had for several years buried the most perfect specimen of a gentleman of the old school extant among the rural luxuries of Grove Cottage. Here, however, none of the punctilios, on which he set so high a value, were omitted, for he was too thoroughly a gentleman to throw aside the character when behind the scenes ; and all honored him for his strict integrity, as well as intellectual superiority. Mr. Fielding had not a particle of misanthropy in his composition ; so, notwithstanding a secret touch of exclusive feeling, arising probably from a consciousness of possessing but little in common with those around him, he mingled with the people of the neighborhood as though nothing but a certain degree of coldness and personal dignity prevented him from being on a perfect equality with them ; and he exhibited so much real interest in all that concerned their welfare, that he possessed their entire confidence.

When Mr. Fielding learned that the little lady had gone away alone, he looked surprised; but, recollecting how bashful she had appeared when standing in his august presence, he at once saw the matter in a more pleasing light; so, calling on Deacon Martin to bestow his burly corpus in the seat intended for pretty Liliás Fane, the two committee-men proceeded leisurely toward the school-house.

In the mean time poor Liliás was trudging through the snow, her nether lip pouting after the most approved style of angry beauties, and her little heart throbbing with a variety of contending emotions, none of which were actually pleasurable, except the one excited by a little pile of silver which she saw in prospect—the fruit of her own labor. At thought of this, she brushed away the tear that sparkled on her lashes, and, drawing up her slight figure with an air of determination, stepped boldly and decidedly into the portico and placed her hand on the latch of the door. This done, she paused; the little heart, but a moment before so resolute, fluttered tumultuously, the head drooped, the eyes brimmed over, and the fingers extended so firmly, now quivered with agitation. Poor Liliás Fane! what would she not have given to feel her mother's arms about her, and weep on her sympathizing bosom.

Farmer Westborn, and Squire Mason, and the rest of the school-meeting men, were in earnest when they decided that the "big boys" should not be allowed to attend school; but they had been in earnest a great many times before; so the boys knew perfectly well what it meant, and were now on hand, preparing for the reception of the new teacher. Little did poor Liliás Fane imagine what stout hearts awaited her entrance, or her courage would not have been prompt to return; but the thought of home, her widowed mother, and helpless little brothers and sisters, in connection with the all-important salary, nerved her up. Again she erected her head and wiped away the tears; then, throwing open the door, she walked quietly and firmly into the room. What a spectacle! children of all sizes, from the little aproned chap, hardly yet from the

cradle, up to the height of the new schoolmistress, and youths towering far above her, in almost the pride of manhood, turned their faces toward the door, and stood gaping in silent astonishment. There were Susan Harman, and Sally Jones, and Nabby Woods, all older than the schoolmistress, and several others who were larger; and at the extremity of the room stood Alfred Mason, a man in size if not in form, surrounded by the six shock-headed Westborns, Bill Blount, Philip Clute, and Nehemiah Strong, all school rowdies of the first water. Well might they stare, for such a vision never met their eyes before; and well might bright Liliás smile at the locks of wonder that greeted her at every turn. A smile, if it is a perfectly natural one, full of mirthfulness, and slightly spiced with mischief, is the best of all passports to a young heart; and not a face was there in the whole room but caught the infection, and answered with a bashful grin the twinkle of the little maiden's eye and the curl of her lip. Oh! sadly did naughty Liliás compromise the dignity of the schoolmistress; but what she lost in one respect was more than made up in another. Nabby Woods went about brushing the slippery dried peas from the floor, lest the smiling fairy of a new school-dame should be made their victim, as had been duly planned for a week beforehand; and Philip Clute, first glancing at Alfred Mason for approbation, stepped awkwardly forward and put a whole chair in the place of the broken one that had been stationed before the desk for the benefit of the new teacher; thus making himself the first to receive her cheerful salutation. Philip had never been known to shrink before birchen rod or cherry ferule; but Liliás Fane, with her merry blue eye and face full of kindness and gentleness, half-hidden in the mirthful dimples which played over it—sweet Liliás Fane was a different thing. She could not be looked upon with indifference, and poor Philip twisted himself into as many shapes as a cloud-wreath in a tempest, or a captured eel, and turned as red as the blood-beets in his father's cellar. On passed the bright-faced Liliás around the room, nodding to one, smiling to another, and addressing some cheerful remark to those who

seemed a little afraid of her, until she reached the group over which the redoubtable Mason presided. By this time she had gained all hearts; for hadn't she said *we* when talking to the "big girls," as though she didn't feel herself a bit above them? and hadn't she patted the heads of the younger ones with her pretty little hand, in a way which proved beyond the possibility of a doubt, that she was a decided enemy to hair-pulling? Alfred Mason had seen it all, and, to prove to the new schoolmistress that he was a little superior to the West-borns & Co., he advanced three steps and made a bow as much like Mr. Fielding's as he could. This done, he passed his fingers through his shining black hair, twitched his shirt-collar, and elevated head and shoulders after a very manly fashion, as though silently resolving not to be afraid of anything this side of fairy land, though appearing in the shape of Titania herself. But bewitching, roguish, naughty Miss Fane did bewilder him notwithstanding; for, having always considered himself a rascally scape-grace of a boy, bound to do as much mischief as he could, he suddenly found himself transformed into a man; and a beautiful creature, with a child's blushes and a woman's smiles, asking him questions in the most respectful tone, hoping that she should be seconded by the young gentlemen before her in all her efforts, and insinuating, very gracefully and very sweetly, how much she relied upon them for success in her present undertaking. The smile, the tone of voice, the manner, combined with the flattering address, were perfectly irresistible; and Alfred Mason, after perpetrating another bow, addressed a few whispered words to his companions, and walked away to a seat. His example was immediately followed by the whole school, and Miss Fane was left standing in the midst of subjects as loyal as any sovereign would care to reign over. At this agreeable crisis the door opened, and it may well be believed that in every dimple of Liliat Fane's young face lurked a roguish smile, as her eye lighted on Mr. Fielding and Deacon Martin. The bachelor observed it, and he was "the least bit in the world" disconcerted, while the deacon raised his eye-brows

and shrugged his shoulders more emphatically than ever, but not contemptuously. If the two committee-men had been astonished before, they were doubly so now; and it was with a much more respectful air than he had at first assumed, that Mr. Fielding saluted the little lady, and apologized for his previous neglect.

"You have undertaken a very heavy task, Miss Fane," he remarked, in a tone which, from the proximity of the audience on the seats, was necessarily low, and thus seemingly confidential.

Thoughtless Lilies! she shook her head and smiled. "It is a dreadful responsible station," chimed in the deacon.

A shade of seriousness flitted over the face of Lilies, and then she smiled again.

"Our school is considered a very difficult one," observed the bachelor.

"I apprehend no difficulty at all," Lilies replied, in a tone of gayety.

"But, Miss Fane," persisted the deacon, "it is my duty to undeceive you as to the character of our school."

Still the little lady smiled confidently.

"Very difficult to manage, I can assure you," added the bachelor.

Lilies glanced around the room with a triumphant, incredulous air, as much as to say, "It seems to me just the easiest thing in the world," (the saucy little gypsy!)—but she did not say it. Her only reply was to beg the privilege of consulting two such able advisers, should she chance to meet with unexpected difficulties. The deacon received the compliment graciously, not probably observing a touch of sarcasm, more discoverable in the dancing blue eye than in the voice; but Mr. Fielding looked displeased, bowed stiffly, and, after a few formal words, took his leave, followed by the worthy deacon.

"I should n't wonder," remarked Deacon Martin, after they were seated in the sleigh, "I should n't wonder if this little Miss Fane made a pretty good teacher after all. It's wonderful that the children should be so orderly this morning."

Mr. Fielding gave his head a twitch, something between a shake and a nod, and looked knowing. It was evident that he could say a great deal if he chose. This non-committal movement is Wisdom's favorite cloak; and so much in vogue is it, that it sometimes even passes current when the *cloak* is missing.

For that day at least Liliás Fane was happy. She smiled and was smiled upon. And she began to think it was just the pleasantest thing in the world to be the presiding genius of such a place, exercising uncontrolled power, dispensing smiles and sunshine at will, beloved and loving. But her day of darkness was to come. Scarce a week had passed before there were indications of a revolt among some of her subjects; and she was alarmed to find that there were difficulties which a smile and a loving word could not heal. At home, her dear delightful home, she had been taught to believe them a universal balm—oil for the wildest wave, a hush for the deadliest tempest. But yet, never was schoolmistress idolized like darling Liliás Fane. Even the hearts of the West-borns began to melt beneath the glances of her beaming eye, and Alfred Mason was her never-failing friend and champion. Poor Alf Mason! Sad was the reputation he bore in the district; and nobody would believe he was in earnest when he behaved properly; but he was in reality more given to mirth than malice, fonder of fun than real mischief—and he could see no fun at all in annoying sweet Miss Fane. But she was annoyed nevertheless, not so much by her pupils, as by remarks which were constantly reaching her concerning her youth, inexperience, and consequent inefficiency. It was said that she was a child among the children; and so she was, but how could she help it—the bright pet Liliás! Scarce sixteen summers had burnished her fair locks, and her heart was full of childish impulses. It was said that she had no dignity of manner, and stood among her pupils as one of them—faults which she was but too conscious of possessing. As well might you look for dignity in a humming-bird, or a fawn, as in Liliás Fane—the darling! She loved her pupils

dearly, and could not but betray her interest. She had too many sympathies in common with them to stand aloof in joy or sorrow; and in the loved and the loving were merged the teacher and the taught. It was even said that her voice had been known to mingle in the merry shout that sometimes arose from the school-room; and there must have been some truth in the report; for her pupils could not have had the heart to laugh when she was serious. In truth, Liliās Fane was a strange teacher; though she may have taught the lore most needed — those heart-lessons, richer than all the theories of all the schools united. In her other lessons she was capricious. She taught what she loved, and that she made her pupils love; but what was dry and difficult she passed over, as in studying she had been allowed to do by her too indulgent governess. Yet she was unwearied in her efforts, and never thought of self when the good of her pupils was concerned; and so, despite the faults in her system of education, her school made rapid improvement. But no degree of improvement was sufficient to satisfy those who detected these faults; and soon the war of words ran high for and against the poor schoolmistress, whose only offences were too much beauty, too immature youth, and a too kind heart. These things could not occur without Miss Fane's knowledge; for her young friends, in their mistaken zeal, repeated every word to her, and she (poor simple-hearted child!) was undignified enough to listen to their representations, and receive their expressions of sympathy. They were all the friends she had. Thus passed one third of Liliās Fane's term of service, in alternate storm and sunshine, till at last Farmer Westborn took a decided step; and, in spite of young shock-heads' remonstrances, removed all of his six children from school. Sad was the face poor Liliās Fane exhibited on this occasion; and all of her flock were sad from sympathy. Looks, some of sorrow and some of indignation, were exchanged among the elder pupils; and the younger ones gazed in silent wonder on the flushed face and tearful eye of her, who, nevertheless, would now and then give them a smile, from sheer habit.

At last the day ended, and sad, and low, and kinder even than usual, were the *good-nights* of the sympathizing group, as, one by one, they disappeared through the door, till the poor little school-mistress was left alone; and then she covered her face with her hands and wept.

“I wouldn’t mind it, Miss Fane,” said a timid, but sympathizing voice close by her ear.

“How can I help it, Alfred?” asked weeping Liliás, without raising her head; “Mr. Westborn must have a sad opinion of me, or he never—”

“Mr. Westborn is a fool! the meanest man—”

“Alfred!”

“You don’t know him, Miss Fane, or you would say so too. But don’t cry any more—don’t; come over and see Mary—you have true friends, Miss Fane—you—they—” and here Alfred stopped short; for, although particularly anxious to console Miss Fane, he seemed to be suffering under a most painful embarrassment. The gentle, indeed touching tone of voice was not lost on poor Liliás; although there seemed to be some reason why she should not listen to it; for she raised her head, and, with more calmness than she could have been expected to command, replied, “You are very kind, Alfred, and I thank you, but—”

“I understand you, Miss Fane,” interrupted the youth, somewhat proudly; “kindness should not be too obtrusive.”

“No, Alfred, you mistake me. I prize the sympathy of my friends but too highly; and it is gratifying to know that all my pupils, if no others, are of the number.”

“Yes, they all are—yet—Miss—Miss Fane—,” and Alfred stammered on, more embarrassed than ever.

“I can assure them that their kindness will be remembered most gratefully, and their friendship warmly returned,” added Miss Fane, with a gentle dignity, which prevented familiarity, while it soothed.

Alfred Mason stood for a few moments irresolute, and Liliás resumed. “To you, in particular, Alfred, am I deeply indebted. You have defended me in my absence, assisted

me in school, both by your example and counsel; and have performed the thousand little services which have contributed thus far to make my time here among strangers pass so agreeably. I shall never forget you, kind, generous friend that you are! And Mary, too—my own brother and sister could not have watched more carefully over my comfort and happiness. I have much to say to you of this, but not now. To-night I have subjects of thought less pleasant, and must be alone.”

“I shouldn’t like to trouble you, Miss Fane, but I came to tell you there is to be a school-meeting to-night. Oh, how I wish I were a man! in influence, I mean, for I know that I have a man’s soul, a—”

“What is the school-meeting for, Alfred?”

“Oh, Mr. Fielding—cross old bachelor!—but I won’t tell you anything about it—it’s too provoking!”

“I shouldn’t expect any good from Mr. Fielding,” said Lilias, with an unusual degree of acrimony. Why so exceedingly indignant at him, when, if he had not sympathized, he surely had done thee no injury, gentle Lilias?

“He! no danger of his doing good anywhere—though he says he ‘pities the young lady’—*pities!* But who do you think he wants to get in your place?”

Lilias stood aghast, for in all her troubles the thought of losing her situation had not occurred to her; and now they had actually planned her removal, and were about appointing a successor. “Who, Alfred?” she gasped, tremblingly.

“Would you believe it, Miss Fane—that ugly, cross, vinegar-faced Miss Digby—it is too bad! At any rate, they will rue the day they get her here. What is the matter, Miss Fane? you are as pale as death.”

“Nothing—go now, Alfred—you shall tell me more to-morrow.”

Well might young Lilias Fane turn pale, poor child! at this intelligence; for at that very moment she held her mother’s last letter in her bosom; and in that letter had the fond, hoping mother rejoiced over the bright prospects of her darling, called her the guardian angel of the family, and hoped

that through her efforts, comfort might again be restored to their little home. And now to be obliged to return in disgrace, disappoint the expectations of that doting parent, and become a burden where she should be a helper, was too much—more than she could bear. Alfred obeyed her, and retired in sorrowful silence; and poor Liliás, pressing one small hand upon her aching head, paced the floor in a bitterness of spirit that she had never felt before. We may be angels while love makes an Eden for us; but when we go out among the thorns, we find another spirit rising up, and learn, alas! that we are not yet all meekness and purity. The disheartening lesson was embittering still more the spirit of Liliás, as she paced up and down her deserted room. But why should Mr. Fielding be so unkind? how had she offended him? These questions puzzled her most painfully; and then, heavily and hopelessly, came thoughts of the future. What should she do? She was sure of the sympathy of good-natured Mary Mason; but such a friend was scarce sufficient for the exigency. There was no one to advise her, no one who, acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, could say what was for the best; no one even who could be made to comprehend her feelings. And she longed to pour out all her troubles in some friendly bosom. Once the thought of Alfred Mason crossed her mind, but she only muttered, blushing even there, “kind, silly boy!” and again recurred to the one grand question—*what should she do?* In the midst of these reflections, a footstep sounded on the threshold, and before she had time to wonder who was there, Mr. Fielding stood before her. The surprise seemed mutual; but Liliás, probably from her sense of injury, was the first to recover her presence of mind. She crushed a whole shower of bright crystals that were in the act of descending, elevated her head, and with a slight courtesy, was proceeding to adjust her cloak, when Mr. Fielding approached her.

“Excuse me, Miss Fane, for this intrusion; I did not expect to find you here, but since I have, perhaps you will favor me with a few moments’ conversation.”

"With pleasure, sir, in a proper place," said Liliás, keeping down her anger with a strong effort. "I presume Deacon Martin will be happy to see you?"

"It is you that I wish to see, Miss Fane, and for that, I shall have no good opportunity at Deacon Martin's."

"Your communication must be of consequence," said Liliás, endeavoring to assume an air of carelessness.

"You are right — it is of some consequence to you, and so, of course, to your friends."

"Among which, I am well aware, that I have not the honor to reckon Mr. Fielding," said Liliás, provoked beyond endurance, by this seeming duplicity. The bachelor was evidently the most imperturbable of mortals. The little maiden's eye flashed, and her cheeks were crimson with indignation; but not a muscle of his face moved; he neither looked confused nor angry, but in his usual tone, replied, "I will not contend with you upon that point, Miss Fane, for mere professions are empty things. However, it is my wish to act the part of a friend by you now."

"You will have an opportunity to exhibit your friendship in the school-meeting, this evening," said Liliás, with a curling lip; "and, if I am rightly informed, it is your intention to do so."

Strange to say, Mr. Fielding was not yet demolished, but with increasing *sang froid* he replied, "If you had received less information from injudicious persons, it might have been better for you, and most assuredly would have saved you much unhappiness."

The little lady trotted her foot in vexation, for she knew his remark to be true; meantime, muttering something about even injudicious friends being preferable to the most punctilious enemies.

"There I beg leave to dissent," said Mr. Fielding, with perfect coolness; "honorable enemies—"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Liliás, losing all patience "I am not in a mood for discussion to-night, and you — it is almost time for the school-meeting."

“The school-meeting has been deferred.”

“Deferred!” Miss Fane’s young face brightened, like the sky with an April sun-flash, for what might not a little more time do for her? and she extended her hand involuntarily, while a “forgive me” hovered on her smile-wreathed lips.

“It will not take place till next week; and in the mean time,” continued Mr. Fielding, hesitatingly, “it would—if I might—if you would but have confidence in my motives, Miss Fane, I would venture a piece of advice.”

“To which I am bound to listen,” said Liliās, gayly, and turning upon the adviser a face radiant with happiness; for the week’s respite had quite restored her fallen spirits.

“Bound?”

“From choice, I mean,” said Liliās, with a smile which made the bachelor quite forget that she had been angry.

“Then I will talk freely as to a friend—a sister,” and Mr. Fielding spoke in a low tone, and hurried his words, as though the ice might be beginning to thaw. “Your position must be a very painful one. You have, I know, gained all hearts, but the judgments of many are against you, and the prejudices of more. You have many professed friends, and they do indeed feel kindly toward you; but each has some petty interest to serve, some feeling of rivalry to gratify, and there is not one among them, in whom you can place implicit confidence.”

“I know it! I have felt it all, only too deeply, too bitterly. but what can I do? Oh, if my mother could be here!” and, overcome by the sudden revulsion of feeling, Liliās burst into tears.

“Then go to her, Miss Fane—go to-morrow—her disinterestedness you cannot doubt.”

“Nor is there room for doubt in the case of another person,” retorted Liliās, in a tone of bitterness. “You have at least the merit of dealing openly, Mr. Fielding.”

“You distrust me without cause, Miss Fane,” said the bachelor, warmly; “it is to save you pain, that I recommend this course; and it was in the hope of inducing you to with-

draw, that I persuaded them to defer the meeting. We have coarse natures here, and *you* must not come in contact with them. Allow me to advise you, and do not enter your school again."

Poor Liliās Fane! the net was about her, and flutter as she would, she could not get free. "Then they intend to dismiss me?" she asked, despondingly.

"If you give them the opportunity, I fear they will."

"What have I done, Mr. Fielding, to deserve this?"

"Everything that is good and praiseworthy; but a district school is not the place for one like you. A school-teacher must not be too sensitive—she must know how to endure, to return buffetings."

"Oh, Mr. Fielding, I am sure it is not necessary for a school-teacher to be bad or heartless. I know what unfits me for the place—I have too little character—too little self-dependence;—but I should improve—I am sure I should. I *cannot* leave my school until I am obliged to leave it; as perhaps even you will do me the justice to believe, I would have undertaken it only from necessity. Even a week is of importance to me."

"I have not felt at liberty to inquire your motive, Miss Fane, but I have felt assured that it was no unworthy one, and your partial failure is attended with no disgrace. Indeed," and there was so much sincerity in Mr. Fielding's words, that he did not think how warmly he was praising, "I have watched your patience, your industry, your gentleness and sweetness, with admiration; and it is to the very qualities most admirable, that your want of success may be traced."

"And so I must go!" exclaimed Liliās, with a fresh gush of feeling. "My poor, poor mother! Indeed, Mr. Fielding—but you must be my friend, and I will do as you bid me, for there is nobody in the world to say just what I ought to do."

The bachelor was almost as much agitated as poor Liliās Fane. Fresh interest seemed to be gathering around the little school-mistress, and yet he had too much delicacy to

press inquiries, which at any other time would seem impertinent. There was, however, a better understanding between the school-committee-man and the lady-teacher; and so another half hour was passed in conversation without a single angry word, after which, the two emerged from the school-house together, and taking a seat in the sleigh, proceeded toward Deacon Martin's.

That night, bright young Liliat Fane, for almost the first time in her life, went to her pillow with an aching heart, though caused by a seeming trifle in comparison with her other sources of sorrow. Nurtured in the lap of luxury, made beggars by the death of a husband and father, who was an object of almost idolatry to a loving, helpless group; visited by disappointment, neglect and sickness, the little family had struggled on and been happy. They had stemmed the torrent together. But Mrs. Fane's exertions were wasting life. Liliat was the eldest child, and her only dependence. What could the delicate, fragile young girl do, to be useful? Plain sewing yielded but slight recompense to fingers too little accustomed to its mysteries, and, in the retirement which Mrs. Fane had chosen, ornamental needle-work found no market. True, Liliat knew something of drawing and music; but she had never thought of either as a profession, and she felt conscious that her knowledge of both was too superficial to turn to account. Little did Mrs. Fane or Liliat know of a district school, particularly in the winter; but they knew that teaching was considered a respectable employment; so the trial was made, and bitter to Liliat was the result.

The next morning the children assembled at the school-house as usual, but they were soon dispersed by the sad intelligence that Miss Fane had been called suddenly home; which information caused quite a sensation throughout the district. Alfred Mason kicked over the breakfast table when he heard the news, declared that it was Mr. Fielding's work, and he ought to be hanged, and chopped wood furiously all the rest of the day.

Some people thought it quite strange that Miss Fane did

not go home in the stage-coach, as she came, and there was some little gossiping on the subject; but Mrs. Martin said Mr. Fielding had convinced her that his sleigh, with the buffalo robes, was much more comfortable, and warm, and safe, and had talked so much of the inconveniences of stage-coach travelling, that the good dame declared she should "be afeared of the ugly things all the days of her life."

In the mean time, the lady and gentleman were pursuing their way very sociably, if not very happily; and Liliias found, to her infinite astonishment, that Mr. Fielding, when he threw off the school-committee-man, and had no unpleasant point to gain, (such as telling a lady she is mistaken in her vocation,) could be vastly agreeable. He even went so far as to draw a picture of her successor, the vinegar-faced Miss Digby, at which Liliias laughed so heartily that she could not help wondering the next moment what had become of her sadness. Looking for sadness, or any other unwelcome visitor, (vide the old adage,) is the very way to bring it to your presence; and so Mr. Fielding felt himself called upon to play the agreeable to an unusual extent; and Liliias wondered how she could be so happy, until she was obliged to explain the cause of her misery, just for the sake of refreshing her memory. And then Mr. Fielding was sad too—oh, *so* sad! And then he said something in a very low tone—doubtless to let her know how much he pitied her; but it must have been awkwardly done, for Liliias blushed a great deal more than when she was angry with him. Mr. Fielding blushed, too, and both looked as though they were quite ready to quarrel again. What a lucky circumstance that they did not arrive at this crisis before, for now Liliias exclaimed, joyously, "Oh, we are home!" and the sleigh drew up before Mrs. Fane's door.

It would be impossible to say whether Mrs. Fane felt more gladness or surprise at sight of Liliias; and the little ones gathered around her, "all clamorous," not "for bread," but kisses.

Mr. Fielding glanced from the noisy, happy group to the

pale, thin face of the mother, and then around upon the scanty furniture; and, callous old bachelor as he was, he felt his heart swelling in his throat, and the moisture in his eye made him ashamed of himself.

Mr. Fielding did not return home that day, for his horse had lost a shoe, which it was necessary should be replaced; and the next day there came a snow-storm, which only a madman would brave; then the third day, I do not quite know what detained him, but it must have been something of importance, as he was the last man in the world to exchange the comforts of home for the inconveniences of a village hotel, without sufficient reason. On the fourth day, however, toward night, he was so fortunate as to undertake his homeward journey; but, before this, he was closeted a long time with the again radiant Liliás, and afterward, with her mother; and he finally quitted them, with a face so brimming over with happiness, as to show — *perhaps* — how glad he was to get away!

Early the ensuing spring, the cottage down by the Maple Grove had a new mistress; and another, close by, was purchased and fitted up tastefully, for a pale, sweet widow and her bright-eyed children; the eldest of whom, Alfred Mason declares a vast deal prettier than her sister Liliás.

THE TWO FLOWERS.

A FLOWER peeped out from the folds of green
 Which had long about it lain ;
 A dainty thing in purple sheen,
 Without a blight or stain.
 A brighter bud ne'er burst, I ween,
 In bower, on hill, or plain.

And the breeze came out and kissed its lip,
 And the sun looked in its eye ;
 And the golden bee, its sweets to sip,
 Kept all day buzzing by ;
 There chose the grasshopper to skip ;
 There glanced the butterfly.

A human soul from that young flower
 Seemed glorying in the light ;
 And when came on the mellow hour,
 The blossom still was bright ;
 And then there crept around the bower
 A dark and solemn night.

Gay dawn her portals open flung,
 But the floweret looked not up ;
 There on its light-poised stem it hung,
 A tear within its cup ;
 Close to its heart the woe-drop clung ;
 And the floweret looked not up.

The winning breezes whispered round ;
 Warm sun-rays came a-wooing ;
 And bright-winged, bliss-born things were found
 Beside its petals suing ;
 But the flower bent lower to the ground,
 Those petals on it strewing.

And when I saw the blossom dead,
 Upon the dewy sod,
I thought of one whose bright young head
 Is pillowed by the clod ;
Who stayed one sorrowing tear to shed,
 Then bore it to her God.

RUG RAFFLES.

SOVEREIGNS of the olden time had their jesters; and the "sovereign people" on this side the water have revived the fashion, with several other useful things dug up from the rubbish of the past. Every circle constituting a court, every individual of which is a king, has its "queer genius;" and every little village has its privileged quizzer, its regularly installed jester. It is this important personage who goes about, at night changing signs; leaving the barber's pole at the door of the merchant most renowned for shaving; putting "turning" on the county Surrogate's office, and "fancy goods" on the young ladies' seminary. The same enterprising gentleman pastes a little slip of white paper over the M, when the hand-bills announce that there is to be a *mass meeting*; sews up the top of his bed-fellow's hose; rings door-bells on his way home from a pleasant spree at midnight; and imitates most successfully the inarticulate language of every animal, from the tremulously vain crow of the novice cock, up to the roar of the infuriated bull! Oh, what a terror the humor-loving wight is to adventurous children and housemaids in search of recreation!

We are not without our jester at Alderbrook, of course; as well dispense with hot coffee and muffins at breakfast. Ruggles Raffles, the gentleman who officiates in the capacity of mirth-maker general to their majesties the sovereign people of Alderbrook, is a fat, jolly personage, with a peculiarly *funny* rolling gait when he walks, and a way, quite as peculiar and quite as funny, of putting up his feet or hands when he sits. There is a laugh nestled in every curve of his big, ugly fingers, whether they exercise their muscles in expressive gestures, or lay themselves away to rest on his knee; and the knee itself crooks a little differently from any other mortal

knee, so that you mechanically pinch your lips together when you look at it, to prevent an unseemly explosion. Some say Rug Raffles never does any harm with his mischief; while others as decidedly declare that such doings never come to good. If our jester really occupies the innocent state of betweenness ascribed to him, he is better off than most of us. I do not know whether the sin of neglecting to do good finds a fair offset in the virtue of neglecting to do evil; but I fancy that it is rather difficult to find a nearer balancing of accounts. Well is it for us all that the balancing is not in the hands of blundering mortals, who, with the wise solemnity of apes, look us in the face, and call evil good and good evil. I think that Rug Raffles, after all, is not a man to be despised, though his calling be not of the highest order.

If our jester would but confine his pranks to undignified people and to six days, he would be rather more popular with the respectables; but propriety (or rather tact) is one of the things for which Rug Raffles lacks the genius. So he sometimes exposes himself to the severity of Deacon Palmer's mental love-pats, which he receives with all due humility. I have in my memory now an occasion of this kind. There was a time when some of us wearied of our good old parson Brown, and desired something more modern than his pious, homely simplicity. Parson Brown exercised the law of love to a great extent; and this was made to appear a crime by some uneasy spirits, who thought the go-ahead system might be made to operate in the church at Alderbrook as in the church and world elsewhere. So our wisely gentle pastor was pushed out of the place that he had occupied since Alderbrook was a forest, to make room for a successor. A more suitable man, was the first cry; but, anything for a change, soon became the rule of action, though it was not exactly bodied in words; so in reality the new pastor owed his entire popularity to being, as Deacon Palmer ventured to whisper, "a new broom." A tall, stiff, formal man, with a loud, monotonous voice, and a manner of mingled pomposity and severity, came among us, to edify our elders with abstruse theories, and throw a shadow

on the hearts of us little children, who had been fed by lessons of love from his predecessor. I do not know how the congregation at large looked upon the new pastor; but the children and the Rug Raffleses clung with all their hearts to the old *régime*, and hated most cordially "sour parson Lawsley." Besides the Browns were almost broken-hearted at the indignity done them; to say nothing of the respectable living which they had lost, thus throwing them unexpectedly upon the slender resources of uninitiated money-makers. And who should pity them, pray, if we did not? And how should we ever expect pardon for our ingratitude, if we could find it in our hearts to take kindly to one we believed their enemy? We could not, and we would not; and so there was nothing left us but to wage an uncompromising war with parson Lawsley. To be sure it was little that we children could do but get tired and rustle our dresses and rattle our feet about in church; but Rug Raffles was a man of means. Many were the lettered strips of board which came to label the parsonage in the night time, now proclaiming there was "pig iron" within, and now "white-washing done" by the master of the mansion; but still the Rev. Mr. Lawsley walked with the same air of consequence up and down the village side-walk, till Rug Raffles wished himself a fly, and thought very highly of nose-tickling. Sometimes he managed to pin strips of paper to the Rev. gentleman's coat, with rather gay scraps of songs upon them; but these were soon removed, and, strange to say, without an abatement of dignity.

Our church is an old-fashioned one, with a good fat weathercock (that wheezes when the wind blows, as though it had the asthma) upon the belfry, and big, plain glass windows, guiltless of shutters, commanding a view of the whole village and the farm houses upon its skirts. There is a large gallery extending all around the inside, the front of which is occupied by a very fine-toned organ (purchased in honor of the new pastor) and a half score of vocalists, and the back, just behind the pulpit, by the "boys and loafers." Among this motley company Rug Raffles reigns king. Not that *he* exactly classes

himself with either; but other people do it for him. The respectables call him a loafer, and the boys are very sure he belongs to them. One morning, parson Lawsley walked into the pulpit as usual, read a portion of Scripture and then a hymn, and sat down to examine his notes. Immediately above him, peering over the gallery with a most waggish expression of countenance, leaned Rug Raffles, his fat arms folded beneath his chin, and his round head wagging from side to side, as though there had been a thought in it disinclined to quiet. There was a striking contrast between the long chin, hollow temples, cadaverous cheeks, and severely serious face below, and the puff-cheeked, peaked-eyed, mirth-lipped visage peering down upon him with a ludicrous expression of mock gravity which sent a smile to many a lip. Soon the hymn was ended, and the preacher rose and leaned upon his cushioned desk to pray. The heads of the more reverent part of the congregation were bowed, while Rug Raffles entertained the rest. He pulled a line from his pocket, disentangled a fish-hook from his waistcoat, and, attaching it to the line, began to lower it towards the sofa in the pulpit. People stared and smiled, for it was scarce to be expected that Rug Raffles would make a good "fisher of men." But this was not his object. After he had angled for some time on the sofa, his eye suddenly brightened, the corners of his mouth retreated toward his ears, and with a nod and wave of triumph, which very nearly convulsed the waiting congregation with laughter, he suddenly brought his prize to light. He had managed to catch his hook upon a thread, and the Rev. Mr. Lawsley's sermon was fast approaching the gallery. An involuntary titter caused Deacon Palmer and several others to raise their heads; but Rug Raffles was carefully conning his notes, and the cause of the untimely mirth was undiscoverable. The prayer ended, another hymn was sung, and the preacher began to look about him for his sermon. He thrust his hands first into one pocket and then in the other, examined the contents of his hat, turned over the leaves of the Bible with irreverent haste, again rummaged his pockets,

looked upon the floor, and then paused to wipe the heavy perspiration from his brow, little dreaming that his lost manuscript was far above his head. But if he had turned an eye upward, he would have seen nothing but Rug Raffles gazing down inquiringly upon him, as though wondering if the imperturbable parson Lawsley had really gone mad. As for the congregation, some were enjoying the joke without compunction, while others, according to their different dispositions, had their sympathies enlisted in behalf of the distressed clergyman. But both classes found it difficult to restrain their laughter. At last the preacher, in evident despair, opened his Bible, turned over the leaves handful after handful, and, finally, in a strange state of nervous excitement, paused as though to calm his thoughts. Rug Raffles spread the sermon before him, donned a pair of horn-mounted spectacles with the glasses out, and began to look important. Parson Lawsley announced his text, and Rug Raffles nodded approbatively. The preacher commenced his exordium, and Rug nodded again, with a patronizing air, which said as plainly as words, "Good boy! good boy! he has his lesson nicely." In a moment, however, the preacher began to extemporize, and Rug frowned and shook his head violently. It was too much for the gravity of the initiated part of the audience, and there was a half-smothered burst of laughter, which startled even themselves, and put parson Lawsley to the torture. He was not accustomed to speaking extemporaneously, and he fancied he had excited the laugh by his awkwardness. The preacher went on, hesitatingly and tremblingly; Rug Raffles frowned and shook his head, now and then giving a quick nod of approbation; and the audience was a most irreverently smiling one. At last the strange sermon ended, and the preacher leaned over his desk to pray. Immediately Rug Raffles commenced operations again. He drew a piece of twine from his pocket, and tying it loosely around the pilfered sermon, began lowering it toward the sofa. Down, down, slowly and carefully it came; then there was a sudden jerk, and the disengaged line was gathered up and stowed away in the pocket of the jester.

The clergyman ended his prayer, and turned to the sofa. There lay his lost sermon, in the very spot where he had placed it. He started backward with astonishment, and, unfortunately being nearer the side of the pulpit than he had imagined, lost his balance on the top stair, and turned a somerset to the bottom. That parson Lawsley had surely gone mad was the general impression, and the congregation scattered, leaving Rug Raffles in the vestibule, chuckling over the success of his feat. After this everybody took occasion to tuck a smile to the name of parson Lawsley whenever it was mentioned, and in six months' time our dear old pastor was reinstalled in his office and we have never wearied of him since. When Deacon Palmer first heard the truth of the Lawsley story, he gave Rug Raffles a serious reprimand and—presented him with a new coat! This was an era in Rug's life. His seedy, thread-bare habiliments had tried severely the affection between warp and woof; and though he was never weary of caressing the friends that had stood by him through weal and woe, he was in truth far from heart-broken at the thought of a separation from them.

But the deacon had not thought of one thing—that the new coat would need shapeliness—and Rug was quite above carrying about with him such tradesman-like things as dollars and cents. Besides, there was not a tailor in Alderbrook who would trust him. Nothing daunted, however, our hero shouldered his cloth and marched to every door. It was of no use; every shop was overstocked with work, and poor Rug was in a quandary. But at last a bright thought came. He would n't have his coat made by a clumsy awkward man, not he. Women's delicate fingers were far nimbler, and there was not a prettier woman within fifty miles of Alderbrook than the pale, sweet creature, who occupied the tiny cottage at the foot of the hill near the toll-gate.

Beautiful, indeed, was young Nelly Tinsley: more beautiful now than when, decked in the gayest finery the shops of Alderbrook afforded, she moved among us without a shadow on her brow. Now sad thoughts had drawn lines upon her

face painfully intelligible; the blue veins crossed her temples with unusual distinctness; her eyes were dimmed with night-watching, and her small hand had grown thin and half-transparent. How had the blithe, ruddy daughter of farmer Bly changed; Nelly Bly had been a bright, fun-loving girl, who was petted and indulged until she grew wilful and spurned every rein but that of love. She yielded to her father because she loved him; but when a stronger love came to her heart she forgot her obedience to the first. Young Arthur Tinsley smoothed back her hair, and told her how dear was every golden thread to him; pressed her pretty hand between his own; looked into her eyes until they grew dreamy as his; kissed the smile from her bright lip; and finally unlocked a fountain of delicious tears which had till now slumbered deep down in her nature. Who would not grow familiar with tears must never love; who would not love must barter all the wealth of the measureless depths of the human heart for the bubble which dances on its surface. The bubble went from Nelly's heart, the glitter from her lip; and up, gushing from the rich depths below, came a fountain never more to be sealed, not even in eternity. Love made the spirit of Nelly Bly meek, but it made it strong too. So when the stubborn old farmer told her that if she became the wife of the beggarly artist, Tinsley, his door should be forever closed against her, she turned, and, with a touching, beautiful faith, added her hand to her heart's gift. What a holy thing is that love which, closing the eyes upon a brilliant future, turns to lowliness and clouds, and whispers to the beloved one "only thee and heaven!" I know there are men of cold theories who would prove to me that Nelly Bly acted far from right, and I should be speechless before them; but when they are away with their arguments I cannot remember what they have said; and so I find myself pronouncing the love of our meek-eyed, white-browed neighbor, a beautiful and a holy thing.

Farmer Bly had no other child, and so, after Nelly's marriage, the great farm-house became a desolate place, and he so surly and ill-natured that children ran and hid themselves

at the sound of his voice. At first Nelly Tinsley was very proud of her husband, for she knew well how to appreciate his genius; and she was delighted to find that she could aid in its development by soothing and encouragement. But soon pride began to lose itself in anxiety. Trials were in the way, and he grew irritable; trials increased, and he bent beneath them; still others came, and health and spirits yielded. A strong man could scarce have wrestled with such a fortune; but Arthur Tinsley had the helpless simplicity of a child and the sensitiveness of a woman. For a while poor Nelly struggled on cheerfully and uncomplainingly; and then, as uncomplainingly, but with a heart-ache written in every line of her face, she came with her sick husband and dying child back to Alderbrook. Oh, how changed was that bright young face with the merry heart-glow lighting up either cheek! Could that pale, fragile creature be Nelly Bly? The rugged old farmer turned from her despairing cry, and shut the door against her with an oath; and for an hour did poor Nelly lie, like one dead, at the roots of the white rose-bushes among which she had spent her bird-like hours before she knew sorrow. At last she arose and reeled back to the village; not quite broken-hearted, for her husband was yet left to her; and though he was now but the wreck of the impassioned, enthusiastic, heartfelt Arthur Tinsley, that shattered wreck was far dearer to her than the noble, scatheless structure. Her heart had grown to him in their humiliation. Was she not his world as he was hers? Immeasurably blest was young Nelly Tinsley even in her misery; and as she knelt by the sick couch of her husband that night, and soothed his aching head, and listened to his low tones, sometimes querulous, sometimes melting with tenderness, there was not one act of her life toward him she would have recalled. Some people made mention of the fact that there had been no parental blessing on the union, and shook their heads, remarking that "such things were always punished sooner or later;" but Nelly would have stared at them in bewilderment. Surely there was nothing like punishment in her lot. She had certainly

suffered very deeply, but it was *with him*; and could all her father's lands buy a single hour of that time made invaluable by love? Why, there was a blessedness in her very sufferings, consecrated as they were to a holy affection; and while she was wearing out life in poverty and lowliness, she would not have exchanged for a diadem her sacred wealth of heart. Where the shadows rest the violets spring freshest and sweetest. If the sunlight must needs kiss the perfume from my violets, Heaven keep me ever in the shadow. We are wayward children, and do not always know what is good for us; but we have a Father above, who, when he takes from us the dross and tinsel, blesses us with such things as the angels have. When our first mother went out of Eden in sorrow, she carried an Eden in her heart; there are some who live in an Eden now, but their hearts are barren.

Nelly Tinsley found a home with an old woman, to whom she had been kind in better days; and the villagers buried her child; and then she was comparatively forgotten. Her husband sometimes rose from his couch long enough to toy a little with his pencil, but the most trifling efforts were usually repaid by long, dreary days of illness; then he would become peevish, talk of starving and of doctor's bills, beg them to let him die, for he was all that kept Nelly from wealth and happiness, and bitterly bewail his folly in ever having deprived her of a home. Nelly answered cheerily every murmur but the last; but that scarce sincere regret was always dissipated by her tears. Then came the words of tenderness, which turned Nelly's sad heart into a habitation of subdued, sorrow-shaded bliss. The old woman with whom Nelly had found a home, supported herself by her needle, and so the young wife was soon initiated into its more substantial mysteries.

Rug Raffles had no hope of inducing dame Gaskill to make his coat, for he was quite aware that his credit was not very high with her; but Nelly Tinsley probably had many dreary, unoccupied hours; and he argued, as he wended his way to her humble door, that he should be doing her a great favor by furnishing her with employment.

“Nothing like industry to keep trouble away—so I’ve heard say;” soliloquized Rug Raffles, as he trundled his burly corpus over the little strip of tan-bark at the road side. “Industry! ha! ha! That’s why *I* don’t have trouble, I suppose. Ho! ha! A little job for the squire to-night, just to keep him from sublimating on the top of his big stilts—um! only a trifle;” and Rug Raffles winked and nodded, and looked about him as though he had been making confidants of the fence and bushes. “Well, *I am* a philanthropist; there’s no disputing that. Parson Brown is a pretty good—a pretty good man—but he would n’t crawl out of his bed of a dark night to benefit the public in the way I do, I reckon. Yes, the *public*—that’s the word—I’m a PUBLIC BENEFAC-TOR, ha! ha! They say a laugh is the best medicine. I make everybody laugh, and so I’m the biggest doctor in Alderbrook. So, so—this is the house. Not quite a palace, for sure. Wonder if Miss Nelly Bly don’t want to get back into the old farm-house—seems to me that was rather more comfortable.”

When Rug Raffles made known his errand, he found, as he had anticipated, dame Gaskill quite overstocked with work.

“Can’t make it, dame?”

“No; my customers—”

“Rayther queer!” and Rug regarded the empty table and work-shelf, with an expression peculiarly quizzical.

“But my customers—”

“Supposing I should wait a week or two?”

“Oh, it would make no difference; I have pile on pile of work; and my customers—”

“Well, now, Dame Gaskill, could you find time to make it next year?” interrupted Rug, fixing his peaked eyes on her with a kind of mesmeric stare, and puffing out his full cheeks; “I like your work amazingly, dame, and I am willing to be accommodating, I am.”

“I think *I* can make it.” The words came in soft, tremulous tones, from the farther end of the long narrow room, which Rug immediately whispered himself was occupied by

sweet Nelly Bly. The speaker was leaning over a couch, with one thin hand resting caressingly on a brow even thinner and paler than itself; and, as she turned her face to speak, Rug, careless as he was, discerned the traces of tears on her now flushed cheek, and knew by her eager tones that his favor was duly esteemed.

“You!” exclaimed dame Gaskill. “Why, you never made a coat in your life! Think of stitching the collar, and working the button-holes, and pressing it off, and all that. No, no! *You* can’t make it.”

“If—if you would show me,” began Nelly, hesitatingly, “if you would show me, perhaps—”

“But I can’t show you—I shall have no time for showing you.”

“I should like to do it, indeed!” burst from the lips of the poor wife, as she clasped her pale hands helplessly over her face, and the tears gushed like a shower of precious gems—less precious they than those pure heart-jewels!—from between her attenuated fingers.

“And you *shall* do it!” exclaimed Rug, setting down his foot emphatically.

A look of gratitude and a sob was the answer.

“Stitching the collar,—” began the unrelenting dame.

“The collar need n’t be stitched. There is no use in spoiling the young woman’s eyes stitching collars. Who ever looks at *my* collar, I should like to know?”

“And the button-holes,—” continued the pertinacious dame.

Don’t want button-holes—won’t have button-holes—button-holes always break out and make a great bother. Button-holes are among the ornamentals, and I’m principled against ornamentals.”

“Lud-a-mercy, Mr. Raffles!”

“It’s no use, dame. Right about face! hands and eyes down! The young woman shall do it.”

“But, Mr. Raffles—”

‘I tell ye she shall do it!’

“It will never do to give it up so,” thought Dame Gaskill; though, to tell the truth, she had been watching in great anxiety all the morning for a customer; and so she rose and joined Nelly at the other end of the room. Rug did not hear the first remarks; but, after a few moments, entreatingly and deprecatingly came the words, “Oh, it *is* necessary—it *is* and he could n’t have the heart to keep back the money from me.”

“Certainly not if he had it; but Rug Raffles has n’t known the color of a coin this many a day, I’ll warrant me.”

“It is a solemn fact, dame,” whispered Rug to himself, at the same time fumbling in his empty pockets.

“He will get the money, I am sure he will; he looks good-natured, and I will trust him; I am certain he will get it.”

“If he only could, mistress pretty-lips,” was the aside of Rug. “but where in the name of old shoes and ragged elbows, is it to come from? That’s what I should just like to know.”

“You will lose it,” pursued the dame.

“Heaven forbid! and he so ill, and so worried when I take the needle.”

“It is a great pity you should worry him.”

“Oh, I will not. I will do it while he sleeps. He always has a long sleep after midnight.”

“And kill yourself?”

“Oh no, I am *so* well and strong!”

The dame sighed; and Rug drew the cuff of his coat across his eyes—probably to shade them from the sunlight.

“But you do not need this money just now; you paid the doctor’s bill yesterday, and there is plenty of arrow-root left for these two or three days yet; of course there is no danger that you and I will starve. Just wait patiently and some job will come worth having before you need the money.”

Nelly looked around to assure herself that the invalid slept, and then answered softly, “He asked me for paints this morning, and it was a hard thing to deny him. I never have done that before. Medicine may drive the pain away, but he

will go wild if poverty keep him from the exercise of his art. The paints are worth more to him than medicines."

"Why, he could n't use them, if—"

"No matter for that, he *must* have them, if I go out into the streets and beg."

"Nonsense, child! I have no patience with you. You will kill yourself to indulge his whims. You got this terrible cough sitting up in the cold room to earn the money for that canvass; and then the ungrateful fellow pushed his foot through it just because some of his figurations didn't suit him. There, don't cry, child—don't cry! I did n't mean to hurt your feelings. Sick folks must be indulged, I suppose, and Mr. Tinsely is n't always so; but I must say you are a nice creature to take his high-handed doings so sweetly, when he is put out. And I must say it is rather hard for you to kill yourself for a whimsey."

Rug Raffles had found his chair rather uncomfortable during the conference of the two women, and particularly since in their earnestness they had allowed their voices to rise to a hearing pitch. He put the right leg over the left knee, then the left leg over the right knee, trotted his foot, drummed with his hands on the crown of his hat, hitched, fidgetted, whistled, and finally, in the midst of a pathetic remonstrance from Nelly, sprang to his feet outright.

"I'll tell you what, young woman—ahem! young woman—mistress pretty-speech—I tell you, I don't want that coat. I hate new coats; they always pinch and set a fellow up, like a pound of starch, and—I should feel like a gentleman in a new coat, and I object to being a gentleman; I could n't condescend."

By the time Rug had delivered himself of his speech he was at the door.

"But the cloth, Mr. Raffles! Don't go away without the cloth," exclaimed dame Gaskill, following her queer customer with the package.

"Don't bother me with the cloth, dame. D'ye think I'm an errand boy to be running about the streets with bundles? Out of my way, and take the cloth back into the house! But

look'ee, old woman, some folks say I'm the devil, so look out how you put your fingers inside that bundle. It's—it's," and by this time Rug Raffles was clambering up the hill, very nearly breathless, "it's for Nelly Bly to buy paints with."

"A new coat!" soliloquized Rug, as he seated himself on the front steps of the nearest grocery: "a new coat must be a terrible bore. I should n't sit down so easy-like in it as I do in you, old friend;" and he hugged his seedy satine^t as in all probability he would have hugged a sweet-heart. "How strangely my elbows would feel in a new coat, poor things' as fixed-up as I used to feel when grandmamma took me a-visiting; and my shoulders, too—they are free-born citizens and never could submit to being put in the stocks, not they. But what a villain old Bly must be! The girl would actually have got the blind side of *me*, if I would have let her—but then it is n't in the nature of us laughing philosophers to mind much about the weepers. Poor thing! how pitifully she talks of that rascally husband of hers; and he leads her a dog's life, I've no doubt. It's a fancy some husbands have to beat and bruise about, as though there was nobody in the big world but themselves; and I'm glad I've kept clear of 'em. I'm glad, I mean, that I don't happen to have a wife to tyrannize over; for I should be a shocking bad fellow in that case, I know I should. Wouldn't I flourish my shil-lalah, though? Hurrah!"

After making a grand flourish, and explaining to the inquisitive bystanders that he was only cudgelling Mrs. Ruggles Raffles that was to be, our hero again seated himself on the steps and immediately fell into a state of profound meditation. Rug was apt to be contemplative when he was not uproariously social; and, as the result of his ponderings was sure to follow close on the heels of their indulgence, no one ever offered even a penny for his thoughts. When the half hour was passed, Rug arose and shook himself like Samson. Probably he was satisfied that his strength was with him; for immediately his face put on all its waggery; his half-shut

pointed eyes looked as though made to pilfer sermons; his mouth, which grew astonishingly wide, held a merry thought in each corner; even his large nose had an expression about it which added not a little to the comic drollery of his phiz; and he alternately rubbed his hands and hugged himself with infinite satisfaction. As soon as his first self-congratulations were over, he began trundling himself along the street, his heavy locomotives seeming to find the utmost difficulty in keeping pace with him.

Farmer Bly had been more gruff since the return of his daughter than ever. He was obliged to employ men-servants, (or rather gentleman helps,) within doors, for no woman would stay in his kitchen; and both house and field were often witnesses of desperate quarrels between employer and the employed. On this day he was going his usual rounds among his workmen, when, as he chanced to draw near a forest, his attention was arrested by hearing his own name.

"I say, uncle, I should like to own this farm of old Bly's."

"Yes, it is a fine farm; but little good does it bring to the owner. He is the most miserable old wasp in existence; for, fool-like, he thought to sting his daughter, but instead of that he stung himself, and has been smarting ever since."

"But he has a grand farm for all that."

"Yes, a grand farm; but what good will it do him? They'll shovel his old bones into the grave one of these days, and his hard earnings will go to those who will be glad the old pest is out of the way."

"Probably his pauper daughter will come in for a share then."

The listener ground his teeth and clenched his fist. Perhaps he was enraged at the thought of his money going to poor Nelly. Perhaps the idea of *his* daughter's being a pauper was new to him.

"Not she," returned the other voice; "she's pretty much done with money and pauperism both, I reckon; and he'll soon have her ghost to worry him out of the world, I can tell

you. She won't come near him now though she's starving, poor thing! but bones which have been in the grave are not so nice about such matters. She will haunt the old knave, night and day, I'll warrant me."

"What a pity the miserable old Jew has n't a grandchild, since he's resolved to disinherit his daughter."

"Ay, he might have had. A finer boy never gladdened mother's heart than little Harry."

Farmer Bly gave a sudden start, and his face changed to an ashen hue.

"It was a strange thing enough for her to name him after one who had treated her so shamefully; but women will have queer notions, and he was the very picture of his rascally grandfather. That was enough to make Nelly hate him; but instead of that, she only loved him the more. Wolves and tigers take care of their little ones, but old Bly left his to starve. It is well though that the baby died; for the sooner such a race becomes extinct the better."

"And do you think Tinsley is really dying?"

"No doubt of it. Three murders are a pretty heavy load for one man's conscience."

Farmer Bly unconsciously uttered a groan; but the conversationists, who seemed in no wise disturbed by the sound, continued:

"I have heard that he actually refused his grandson a shroud."

"It is true; and I should n't wonder if that very deed condemned his own bones to rot above ground. Such things do happen sometimes."

"Think of pretty Nelly Bly's being a beggar in Alderbrook! There was a time when the Blys carried their heads as high as the highest; but now they are quite down in the mouth. Only two left; the one disgraced in everybody's eyes by his unnatural hard-heartedness, and the other a pauper! Well, it is one comfort to us poor fellows to know that we all come out about the same in the end. Any way, I would rather be in *my* grave than old Bly's."

“ Old Antoine’s would be a palace to that, I fancy.”

“ Does Mistress Nelly ever speak of her father ?”

“ Yes ; when she hears him called a villain, as everybody does call him, she takes on dreadfully, and says he was a good father to her once, and she will love him now for what he has been. Women are always fools about these matters, you know.”

“ And Tinsley ?”

“ Oh, he must indulge his pretty wife, of course, and would swear that the old rascal was an angel if it would only win a smile from her. They say he even painted a portrait of him, from memory ; and, savage as the old rebel is, made him look quite amiable. They sold everything else when they were starving, but they would n’t part with that.”

A loud sob burst from the overcharged bosom of farmer Bly ; he leaned for a moment against a tree, and then hurried forward with almost the bound of a boy.

“ He, he ! ha, ha, ha !” The laugh was smothered, but it evidently came from a very merry heart. And oh, what a face was that peering above the clump of dog-wood bushes ! Rug Raffles had never looked so entirely convulsed with mirth before.

“ I’ve done him ! I’ve done him ! The old fox is fast in the trap ! Hurra ! hurra ! Hip, hip, hip, hurra ! The birds don’t know anything or they’d split their throats a-hurraing and a-laughing. A’n’t I a public benefactor ?—no ; this time I’m a private one ; and should n’t have let the right hand know what thê left one did, only that they had to talk to each other. I should like to know who could do the thing up neater. Pretty well for you, Rug Raffles. Come to think Miss Tinsley, I reckon I’ll just take back that coat. You don’t seem to need it at all just now. Ha, ha ! ha, ha, ha ! I would n’t have believed that he would nibble the bait so soon, the old fox ; though I gave him two or three pretty tough morsels, to be sure. He could n’t get round that coming down of the family ; it hurt his feelings. Ah, that’s the dagger that I stabbed him with. That ‘went to the witals,’

as the saying is. And then I come it over him with the soft. Lucky enough that I heard about that picture; that was what did him at last—hurra! Hurra for fun and Rug Raffles! I'll trick dame Gaskill into making the coat, I will. As though a man was any the worse for an empty pocket! She to say it too, the old owl! and she has n't a red cent to her name! I'll trick her!" And down sat generous Rug Raffles to devote an hour of his precious time to the prudent Mrs. Gaskill.

It was a bright afternoon; and Arthur Tinsley sat up in his bed, leaning against an inverted chair. His wife, as ever, was by his side, and bending over him with mingled anxiety and tenderness.

"I *should* like some paints, Nelly, if you can get them," he said in an earnest tone.

"I will try, dear; but you must n't worry if I am two or three days about it. This hand is not very strong, and it must not busy itself too soon. When you are well again, I have a grand scheme for you."

The invalid smiled faintly, and then, in a tone of touching tenderness, answered, "I shall never be well till the sod is over my bosom, Nelly. I see how all this is to end; I am growing weaker and weaker every day; but there is one thing that I must do—I cannot die till it is done. There is but one face for me in the wide universe—if the angels in heaven do not have it, I cannot love them. I must paint your face and take it into the grave with me."

"You will not die, Arthur, you cannot die! The doctor said you would get well if I could only make you happy. Won't you be happy with me, Arthur?"

"We will both be happy when we have gone home to heaven, Nelly; but here, never. Nothing has ever prospered with us since the day of our marriage."

"We have loved each other."

"Ay, overwhelmingly. It has been thy curse, my Nelly and when I am gone—"

A tremendous knock at the door, and the remainder of the

sentence hung suspended on the invalid's tongue, while dame Gaskill's head bobbed out of the window, and was as quickly withdrawn.

"Old farmer Bly, as I live! Don't be in a flurry, children! Oh! oh! I'm a most scared out of my senses. Don't *you* open the door, Nelly; I'm afraid he has come for no good—wait a bit, wait a bit, child; I'd better open it myself. Lud-a-marcy! she has no fear of anything."

Nelly drew the latch-string tremblingly; her cheek was flushed, but her head erect. The first glance was enough, for the rough, manly face was full of eloquence.

"My father!"

The old man's arms were outspread; and the trembling daughter nestled in them like a wearied dove.

"The old house is desolate, Nelly; I cannot live there alone any longer, and you must come back to me. What, tears! you didn't cry, Nelly, when I shut the door in your face to drown what you were saying of your dead baby. But I didn't shut out your voice, I heard it day and night—day and night, in the house and in the field—I couldn't get rid of it anywhere. Don't cry any more, Nelly—don't cry! your tears make my heart ache. If you had told me that the boy's name was Harry—only told me, I might—but I don't know, I'm an old tiger. *Will* you come and live with me, Nelly?"

The daughter raised her flushed face from the pillowing bosom and pointed to the bed.

"Yes, darling; bring him with you; the house is big enough for all of us. He stole my only child, but—well, it is natural—it is natural! They say he is dying, too, but we will not let him. Money gives skill to the doctors; and you shall both be well and happy. These pretty cheeks of yours must get some fulness and color. Nelly Bly can't be an invalid, nor—nor—curses on those who have said it—a pauper! And now, Nelly, darling, bring me the picture that poor Arthur Tinsley painted, and you wouldn't part with when you were starving. Ah, you did love your old father

after all, though you left him for a stranger! That almost broke my heart, and it was the heart-break which made a savage of me; but—but you were right, and Arthur Tinsley is a noble fellow. He loved you when your own flesh and blood cast you off."

"He, he! ha, ha, ha!" No one in dame Gaskill's cottage heard the laugh, or saw the shaggy round head peering through the open window, with the eyes set corner-wise, and the lips drawn up, displaying an immense gash recognizable by all who had ever seen it, as the mouth of Rug Raffles.

"Ha, ha, ha! Hurra! hurra for fun and Rug Raffles! Taste again, old fox! Two such strawberries don't grow on every stem. Ha, ha! Mistress pretty-lips, I reckon I'll just take that coat."

THE FRENCH EMIGRANTS.

SEE, mother, see! we are coming nearer and nearer every moment. It is a beautiful town—so bright and cheerful! and everything looks so fresh about it! Oh! it does one's heart good to see the land again. And that is Fort James, perched on that high point, and looking down as though it were the guardian of the waters. We shall be very happy here, in this charming home!—You look sad, mother."

So spake a slight, dark-haired stripling, with the warm hue of a southern sun upon his cheek; as, leaning over the vessel's side, while she rode proudly into the harbor of New York, he fixed his glowing eye upon the long hoped-for asylum of the new world. The young queen of western commerce was indeed bright that morning; with the pretty fort for a crown, and skirts sweeping back into the green shadow, all jewelled over with happy hearth-stones. Indeed, never was town more finely spread out for a sea-view; and the yellow Holland brick, of which many of the buildings were constructed, and the mingled red and black tiles which covered the roofs of more, with the glow of the sunlight upon them, made it as gay as a sagem's bride. The broad banner waved and flaunted cheerily from the top of the tall flag-staff, seeming to promise protection to the stranger and the defenceless; and as the ship glided majestically over the just rippling waters, long and loud were the cheers that arose from the multitude collected on the shore; and the formal salutation from the fort met with a ready response from the hearty crew. All now was confusion on board—a glad, joyous confusion; pleased exclamations fell from one lip, only to be snatched up and echoed by another; and handkerchiefs fluttered in the air, in reply to like signals from waiting friends on the land.

‘You look sad, mother,’ repeated the boy, lowering his voice, till its soft tones contrasted strangely with the universal gayety, and turning upon her a glance of tenderly respectful inquiry.

‘If I *felt* so, I should be ungrateful, my son. God has guided us from a land of persecution to the garden which he has planted for his oppressed. But you spoke of *home*, François, and I thought of our vine-covered hills, and of the sunny valley, on the banks of the Loire, where I have left sleeping all but you.’

‘Do not think of it again, my mother.’

The woman pressed her hand for a moment against her forehead, as though stifling, meanwhile, some deep emotion; then said, in a different tone, ‘If we only had that lost-casket, François! The captain has not always been kind to us, and I dread meeting him now—he has almost seemed to doubt the truth of our story. Heaven help us! but it will be a long time before we can pay this passage money!’

‘Never fear for that, mother; money comes almost by the asking, they say, here, and I shall soon be a man, now. I will build you a little cabin under the shelter of the trees. The men have told me just how it is done, and I long to be at work this very moment. I will build you a nice cabin, and I will kill game which you shall cook for us two, and we will sit down at evening, just as we used to sit in our pretty cottage in France, before that horrible persecution, and you shall—Don’t look so troubled, mother; you are thinking of this ugly affair of the money, now. I can trade in furs, and—do—I hardly know what, but just what the other settlers do to get rich in a day. You must remember that I am not a little boy, now, but can take care of myself, and you too; and they tell me that the term Huguenot is an honorable one here. Oh! we shall be *very* happy! think you not so, mother?’

‘*Anywhere*, with thee, my noble boy!’ returned the matron, gazing fondly upon the eloquent young face turned so earnestly to hers. ‘With freedom to worship God as he has bidden, and with thee, my last earthly hope and trust, beside me, what more could I ask or desire?’

The ship had anchored in the bay, and hurriedly the sea-wearied passengers were landing. Many citizens had come on board; and, on the shore, friend grasped the hand of friend, with such cordial words of greeting as the first heart-bound carried to the lip. Among all glad ones, none were gladder than the enthusiastic French lad. With bared head, and joy-flashing eye, he stood beside his mother watching the happy throng, as though in their happiness he could forget his own exile. But that was not the source of his animation. He was looking to the future — his young spirit buoyed up by hopes as yet unintelligible to himself, but brighter for the very veil which covered them; and his heart beating with the tenderness which was all centred on one human being — his widowed, and, but for him, childless mother.

“Stand here a moment, and I will see where we can be set ashore. I am longing to plant my foot on that spot of green.” So saying, the youth mingled in the crowd, and the widow turned her eyes from the view of her new home, to follow, with the fond pride of a mother, his graceful figure as it moved, all unlike the others, about the deck. In a few moments he returned, the masses of raven hair, which had been flung back to allow the fragrant land-breezes to play upon his temples, half-shading his pale cheek, and his white lip quivering with agitation.

“François! what is it, my son? speak!”

“Oh! it is too much — too much! I shall die here, so near the land!” and the boy, forgetting his boast of manhood, leaned over the railing and wept passionately.

The mother placed her hand soothingly upon his glossy curls, which shook as though the throbbing heart below had been in them; and waited patiently his explanation.

“We must stay here, mother — and I cannot live in this horrid ship another night, I am sure I cannot.”

“We have spent many happy nights and days in it, my son,” returned the widow, softly; “but why must we stay now? Who detains us?”

“We cannot land till the ship charges are paid — so they have told me; and that will be never — never.”

A look of troubled surprise spread itself over the widow's countenance; but still her spirit was in subjection to the careful tenderness of the mother. "I am sorry for your sake, François; but cheer up, my son! It will do them no good to detain us here, and they will let us go in the morning—I am sure they will."

"If they would set me on the land, I would work like a galley-slave, but they should receive the uttermost farthing."

"We will tell them so—we will tell them so. Cheer up, François, and let us look upon the city again. It is but a little while till morning."

François seemed to make an effort for his mother's sake, and raised his head; but how changed was the expression of those two faces, as they again turned towards the land!

Only a few feet from the exiles, had stood, for the last ten minutes, a person who regarded them closely, though by them entirely unnoticed. His mild blue eyes, and fair, good-humored face, bespoke him a Hollander; and the massive silver buckles at his knees and on his shoes proclaimed him an individual of some consequence, which was farther confirmed by the deferential manner of those around him. A close observer would have detected a strange mixture of the child and the man in that face. The eye was soft and gentle as a woman's, while the mouth evinced a singular degree of firmness and decision; and, though the very spirit of benevolence rested on the retreating forehead, with its crown of half-silvered hair, the bold determination, with which the broad nostril was now and then expanded, contradicted the bare supposition of weakness. His attention had been attracted by the interesting foreigners; he had seen the boy bound, like a freed deer, from the side of his mother, and return drooping and dispirited; and he had seen that mother stifling some deep emotion for the sake of her boy. It was evident that he did not understand their language, for he watched them as though studying out the cause of their sorrow, until they turned away their faces; and then, with a look of sympathy, he left them, prob-

ably believing them to be of the number who had crossed the ocean in search of friends, to find them only in their graves.

Two days passed, and still the lone Huguenot strangers were prisoners in the ship, in sight of the green earth and of cheerful firesides.

“This,” exclaimed the widow, as she crouched in the cabin, desolate and heart-sick, “this is worse than all the rest—not for *me*—I could bear it—I could bear anything *alone*; but my poor poor boy!”

She was roused by a slow, dragging step, so unlike the elastic spring of her idol, that, but for its lightness, she would not have recognized it.

“Mother, it is decided—I have just learned our fate;” and the fragile boy sunk, like a crushed blossom, at her feet.

The widow tried to assume a tone of encouragement. “What is it, François? *anything* is better than this close ship, with the green earth and shady trees so near us. I cannot bear to see *you* droop and pine, my love—if they would but give you back the strength and pride this sorrow has stolen—if I could but see your bright head erect again—”

“It never can be, mother; better that we both were dead—dead in our graves in France! Oh! why did we ever come away? There they would give us nothing worse than a dungeon or a coffin; here they will not let us so hide ourselves—will not let us die. What think you, mother?” and now, the boy, dashing the hair back from his forehead, changed his mournful tone to one of mad energy. “In an hour or two, we are to be exposed in their market-place, in the open street—sold like their Holland plough-horses and Utrecht heifers—”

The widow’s life might have gone out from her, in that one wild scream of heart-piercing agony. She was prepared for toil—for suffering in almost every shape. She could have borne even slavery, *herself*; but her boy, her proud, high-hearted boy! the beautiful blossom that God had given to bless her bereavement! the bird, that, if but an autumn breeze shook the roof-tree rudely, had nestled in her bosom for pro-

tection!—her frail, but noble boy, so delicate, so gentle to her, yet so spirited!—should he, too, be crushed beneath a foot triple-shod with iron? Should his fair, polished limbs, through which she had so often traced the flow of the red life-current, which her lip had touched, and her loving eye admired, canker beneath the heavy chain of a life-lasting bondage? Should that eagle eye grow cold in childhood? that bright lip forget its smile? that free, gladsome heart become the grave of all its freshly budding wealth of feeling? Was there no appeal? Could she not find, in the crowd which thronged that busy city, a single human heart which she could excite to something like sympathy? that would be content to crush *her* to the earth, wring *her* spirit till every cord should snap asunder, and save her boy? Alas! what could be done by a stranger, a lone, feeble woman, confined to her prison in the ship? If she could be led forth to the haunts of men, and they would listen, those who could understand her language were fugitives like herself, and probably nearly as helpless. So the miserable Frenchwoman crouched upon the low settle in entire helplessness, and moaned as though her spirit would have passed on each breath. Minute after minute, minute after minute of slowly moving time went by; and still the sobbing boy rested his forehead upon his mother's knees; and still the mother clasped her hands, and moaned on.

There was a quick, heavy tread, upon the cabin stairs; but neither looked up. It came nearer, and paused beside them; but the woe-laden exiles moved not; they had no ear for anything but their own misery.

“I have good news for you, madam,” commenced a somewhat harsh voice, hesitatingly, “good news—do you hear me? can you listen?”

The widow raised an alarmed eye to the face of the speaker, and clung, with a desperate grasp, to her son.

The boy's apprehension was quicker. “Good news! What? In God's name, do not mock us!”

“I am sent by one, who cannot speak our language, to say—”

The man paused a moment to note the effect of his words.

“Speak on!” exclaimed François; “you torture us.”

“To say that your ship charges are paid; and you are free, free to go wherever you list.”

The widow stared in eager doubt, her hand still grasping firmly the arm of her boy. But François! the drooping blossom of the moment previous! How the eloquent blood came rushing to his cheek, and how his dark eye flashed with awakened hope! Not a single exclamation broke from his lip; but he stood like a proud young eagle pluming his wings for flight.

It was several minutes before the exiles were prepared to listen to an explanation of their good fortune. When they did, they were told simply that a benevolent merchant, endeared to the common people of New York for his many virtues, had seen them on the day of their arrival, and had found his sympathies deeply enlisted by their evident disappointment, and the sorrow it occasioned. Afterwards, he lost sight of them until the decision of the tribunal, which would have made them slaves; when, finding his influence insufficient to prevent the disgraceful proceedings, he had stepped in with his purse, and discharged the debt.

“You are now free to go wherever you like,” continued the good-natured interpreter, “but you are invited to the house of your benefactor, where you will find friends, and a home until you choose to leave it.”

“God bless the noble merchant! I will be *his* slave forever!” exclaimed François, his heart swelling with enthusiastic gratitude.

The widow’s lips moved, and warm tears, for the first time, gushed from her eyes, and rained down over her face; but her voice was too much broken by emotion to convey the sentiment she would have uttered.

By the dock stood, (his heart in his face and that all sunshine,) a blue-eyed, bright-haired youth, with the merchant’s own forehead, and a lip of lighter and more graceful mould. The young Hollander was scarce inferior in beauty, as he

waited there to perform his most grateful task, to François himself. The merchant had been too modest to appear as a benefactor in the public street, well known as he was, and he had sent his son to bring home the strangers. A snug little wagon, such as was commonly used by the better sort of Hollanders, awaited them, and they were soon seated and proceeding on their way. As they neared the market-place, and the merchant's son caught a glimpse of the crowd assembled, (some, uninformed of what had occurred, to witness the sale of the helpless strangers, and some to report and expatiate upon the generous deed of their townsman,) he instantly gave the reins to his horses, and turned his head in an opposite direction. There was at first a slight movement in the crowd, face after face turning toward the street. Then came a low murmur, swelling gradually higher and higher, till at last it burst into a mighty and universal shout, "LONG LIVE THE NOBLE LEISLER!" "LEISLER FOREVER!" "LEISLER FOREVER!"

IDA RAVELIN.

A FANTASY.

“*I SEE* nothing peculiar about her.”

Very coolly and complacently dropped the above words from lips which seemed to be totally unaware of the deed of death they were doing; crushing the rare fancies of love's weaving, with the same indifference that your horse dyes his coarse hoofs in prairie-blossoms, or the followers of the Prophet treat an inconvenient beauty to a coral pillow and a silver coverlet. A heart-swell, deeper than a sigh, a quick flushing over of the cheeks and forehead, then a closing of the slightly parted lips, a drooping of the lids, and a tenderly caressing movement of the hands, followed this confession of short-sightedness. Oh! what cold, blind, unappreciative beings fathers are! As though genius never hid itself under a baby-cap!

“*I see* nothing peculiar about her.”

The faithless father, as he repeated his observation, brushed back the hair from his full, mathematical forehead, and, casting on his wife a glance full of pity for her weakness, turned to a huge folio volume spread open on the table beside him, and resumed the business in which he had been interrupted. The mother, however, was not abashed, only silenced. She passed her fingers over the vein-crossed forehead of her sleeping child, measuring the distances on it with her lips; then took the fat little hand in her own, still following the purple current till it terminated in the rosy-tipped fingers.

“Direct from the heart,” she murmured; “God help thee, my Ida!” As she spoke, the child opened wide a pair of dark, burning eyes, and fixed them on her face with the far-reaching expression she had often observed, and which seemed to her indicative of something like “second-sight.”

“There!” exclaimed the mother triumphantly, yet without venturing to point a finger; for it seemed as though the child read her thoughts.

“Her eyes are certainly very bright; something like yours, Mary.”

“Oh! you don’t see it—you don’t see it! God help her; for genius is a dangerous gift!”

“God help her!” echoed the father with a half sigh.

He meant his wife.

And what *did* bring those two strangely assorted people together? Certainly not sympathy. It might have been a trick of Dan Cupid’s; but even he, with all his perverse blindness, seldom makes such a blunder as that. Besides, they did not look very much like turtle doves; and nothing less than entireness of idolatry, the wildest infatuation, could have bidden fate to spread the roof over heads so different. The marble-browed, marble-hearted philosopher, and the Pythoness! I never saw an improvisatrice; but I dare say that Mary Ravelin looked more like this wild daughter of passion and poesy than any being since the days of the burning-lipped Corinna. Oh! a superb creature was Mary Ravelin, with her dark, regal brow, and sloe-colored eyes, centred by a blazing diamond. And that *she*, of all peerless ones, should be the wife of the sluggish-hearted Thomas Ravelin! How *did* it come to pass? Enough that the bird of Jove does sometimes consort with the barn-yard fowl—I mean when these bipeds are minus the feathers. Plumed things keep up the natural distinctions, which the philosopher’s plucked turkey is striving with all his might to destroy. But the most vexatious part of the business was, that Thomas Ravelin never knew that he was the possessor of a double diamond; and really rated his wife below other women, in proportion as she rose above them. Did Mary submit to the *shra*ldom? Certainly. Like the generality of mankind, she did not know herself. She might, at times, have had a kind of inward consciousness that heaven had stamped her soul with a loftier seal than others; she certainly knew that she

felt unlike them; and there was a depth and intensity in her nature, a tumultuous sea of passion and pathos that sometimes broke over all boundaries, and gave her a momentary power and grandeur, acknowledged by all but one. There was something in the smile between pity and contempt which greeted her at such moments, well calculated to tame the sybil. She feared her husband; not because he was unkind, but his glance stilled her gushing heart, and cast a strange spell upon her passionate spirit. And Mary Ravelin was far from being happy. No undeveloped nature is happy. The inward stirring, the aimless restlessness of spirit—oh! we *feel* what we are, when we do not *know* it. Neither can a misplaced nature be happy: cage the sky-lark, or bring the spotted trout to your bower of roses, and see. So, though flashes of her real inner self were every day breaking forth like summer lightning, Mary Ravelin's higher nature was undeveloped; her wings had been clipped; she had been borne away out of her native element, and she was consequently miserable. Well for her that she had one sustaining, regulating principle. But even her religion was unlike her husband's. It was the deep, impassioned faith, the high-wrought enthusiasm of the martyrs. It was the only field in which her lofty nature might revel uncontrolled; in which her power of loving might be called into action to its utmost stretch; where the high and the beautiful all combined, with a harmony to which her own bosom furnished an echo. It was this which subdued the impatient soul of Mary Ravelin; made her the careful wife—I had almost said the uncomplaining slave—of a man who believed himself acting a kindly part when he drew the chain about her spirit. Who dare call this an inferior kind of martyrdom?

Ida was romping, still in baby-frock and pinafore, among the vines in the garden—now thrusting her white arm among the leaves to grasp the bared shoulders of an elder sister, now shaking the blossoms above her head till they rained down upon her like a shower of colored rain-drops, then creeping away under the deep shadows, as a hare would hide itself,

and raising her ringing voice to challenge pursuit. Ida might have been a genius, but she was no *mere* spirit-child. There was a love of the real, the actual, the earnest, breathing a world of life in every turn of her pliant limbs, and in every glance of her eye. Whatever might have been swelling and shaping itself in the deep recesses of mind, there was a world without that she gloried in, loving it all the more for the key to its wondrous wealth which she bore in her bosom. And so she frolicked on, clapping her hands and laughing, and scampering off on her chubby little feet to plunge headlong into the fragrant thicket, or tumble into the arms of her playmates, with a hearty joyousness truly refreshing. Suddenly she paused in the midst of her wildest play, pressed the tip of a rosy finger against the already fully developed corner of her forehead, and gazed fixedly into the distance. The children frolicked before her, but she did not move a muscle; they attempted to take her hand, but she uttered a cry, as of pain, and they desisted.

“There, Thomas!”

“What?”

“*She sees something.*”

“I should think not; she seems to be gazing on vacancy.”

“I tell you, Thomas Ravelin, that child has a spirit in her beyond the common. Whether we have cause to weep or rejoice, we are yet to know.”

The husband looked a little interested. “Her temperament certainly differs essentially from Ruth’s. She must be carefully educated, her tendencies checked—she must be taught self-control—”

“Taught! checked! educated! My poor Ida!”

The mother said no more. She seemed to be re-perusing leaves of her own life, long since turned over; and as she read she trembled. The child’s future presented a dismal page, for she saw it by the glooming light of her own sunless past.

“So unlike other children!” whispered the mother to herself, as she stooped among the vines, and took her idol to her

bosom. The child turned its dark eyes upon her wonderingly passed its little hand across her throbbing temples, patted her flushed cheek, twined her black tresses for a few moments about its fingers, then nestled in her bosom and slept — certainly not unlike other children.

“Don’t teach her any of your romantic notions, Mary,” said Thomas Ravelin one day, when Ida had again become the subject of conversation.

“Teach her! No, Thomas, she is taught of a Higher than I am — there is that within which may be shut, locked there, but you cannot take it away. My poor Ida!”

“Ruth is now eighteen; she is well taught and discreet, with a strong judgment —”

Ruth is my dependence.”

“You have perfect confidence in her judgment?”

“Yes.”

“Sometimes you even go to her for counsel?”

“Oh, Ruth has five times the worldly wisdom that I have.”

“Give Ida to her care, then.”

“*What!*”

“There is something in Ida’s character out of tune — let her have — let her assist you in regulating it.”

“She can’t — she can’t! Ida has more wisdom than all of us.”

“Madam,” interposed Thomas Ravelin, sternly, “this is folly. Have done with these fancies, or the ruin of your child will be on your own head. Ida must be curbed and properly trained —”

“Then her mother’s hand shall do it,” interrupted Mary with proud dignity.

“As you will, Mary; but you well know the fruits of an ill-regulated imagination.”

The mother crossed her arms on her breast, and raised her eyes upward. She was praying God for wisdom.

“He is right — I shall make her as miserable as I have been,” was the burden of her reflections that evening; “but can I give up the budding intellect to another’s watchings?”

No, no! the sweet task of guiding and pruning be mine. But I have so many faults. *He* calls me a creature of impulse, unreasoning, and Ruth is always so correct — always in the right — I *shall* need her judgment. Anything for thy sake, my Ida. I have reason to distrust myself, and Ruth shall share the dearest of all duties with me.”

Ruth did share in what should have been altogether a love labor; and little Ida, though seemingly untamable, had a system of thought and action prescribed, which, however ineffective it might have been in the case of an inferior nature, soon began to exhibit quaker-like results. Instead of developing her nature, it was repressed, as an ignorant man would try to extinguish a kindling fire by smothering it in cotton; she was carefully guarded against little outbreaks of feeling, when, instead, her feelings should have been called out, and directed in proper channels. And so, by degrees, the mother's influence was lost; and she grew afraid to take the child upon her knee, and draw out, as had been her wont, the charming little fancies which form the staple of the thoughts of childhood. She watched it tenderly and jealously, treasured all its little sayings in her heart, gazing into its deep eyes with the far-reaching sight of Cassandra; but, like those of Cassandra, her prophecies were unheeded. To all but her mother, Ida was a pretty, frolicksome child; with nothing to distinguish her from other children, except, perhaps, an unusual flow of spirits, and those strange fits of abstraction which even Ruth had not the art to cure.

“Ida! Ida! Ida!” shouted Phil Ravelin.

It was useless. Ida sat upon a mossed knoll, her hands clasped over her knee, and her bright face, with its parted lips, and eager, weird eyes, looking out from the dark masses of hair which fell, almost too luxuriantly for childhood, about her beautiful shoulders.

“Ida, are you asleep? look here, Ida!”

The boy waited a moment, and then shook her by the shoulder. Ida uttered a shriek, as though in pain.

"Ida! look up, Ida! I have something to tell you."

The little girl shook off his hand, and sprang, like a scared gazelle, to the nearest thicket.

"I won't follow her," muttered the boy, drawing the corner of his jacket across his eyes; "it is too bad; and they shan't make me hurt her again — indeed, they shall not. Poor little Ida!"

Half an hour afterwards Ida had snuggled down in the deep grass with her brother, talking with him most confidentially, but not of her strange malady. At last Phil ventured to make mention of it. There had been a long silence, and he forgot that Ida's thoughts did not probably follow in the same channel with his.

"What makes you do it, Ida?"

The little girl was plucking away with tender care the leaves of a buttercup, and she answered, without raising her eyes, "I want to find the angel in it."

"In what?"

"This."

"Why, angels are away beyond the blue, Ida. To think of an angel, with its great white wings, and may be its big harp, too, coming down from heaven to live in a poor little buttercup! Whew!"

Ida smiled pityingly, as though she knew much more about these things than her brother could know; but did not care to enlighten his ignorance.

"But what were you thinking of, Ida, when I came to you a little while ago?"

"I don't know."

"You sat looking so;" and Phil mimicked his sister as well as he could. "What did you see?"

"Nothing, I guess."

"Now, Ida!"

The little girl's cheek flushed, and her lips grew tremulous, but she made no answer.

"Tell me, Ida, dear — just me — whisper, if you don't want to speak loud. Come, put your lips close. Won't you tell Ida?"

Ida looked at her brother expressively, and seemed bewildered.

"You are not a good girl—and I will never love you any more—never—because—because—won't you tell me, Ida?"

"I—I—sometimes I see a great world, not like this, and hear—love me, Phil, love me; for it hurts me to tell. It is very strange—I have been there some time, long, long ago—and, Phil, I am not your little Ida there. Don't ask me any more, but you must love me, Phil!" and the child sank, sobbing with excitement, into the arms of her brother.

Phil repeated, at home, what his sister had said; and Ida was pronounced the victim of a temporary insanity. She was carefully watched over, and the subject never mentioned to her again.

"Not like other children!" repeated little Ida Ravelin to herself. "I have heard that before. Oh! now I remember; *she* used to whisper it over me when I was a baby. I wonder how I differ." Ida carefully examined her feet, her hands, passed her fingers along her full, white arms, bent the elbow, curved the wrist, folded the fingers in the palm, clapped her hands, shook them above her head, walked with her head erect and foot firm, skipped, danced, tried her voice, first in a shout, then in laughter at the returning echoes, then in a gush of bird-like warblings, and, finally, knelt quietly beside a clear pool, which mirrored her bright face. Little Ida might well have been startled at the rare vision in the water. A connoisseur would not have pronounced her beautiful; but yet she was exquisitely so; and she knew it, and smiled at it. A sweet answering smile, like a visible echo, came up from the water, and Ida smiled again. But the innocent vanity lasted only a moment. Her next thought was, "How do I differ? My hair is dark, and glossy, and curling, just like Ruth's; my nose, and chin, and lips, and cheeks—why, they are all like Phil's, only Phil's are a little darker, and not quite so soft; my forehead is like mamma's, and my eyes are like

mamma's, too, not so large and handsome, may be, but I am a little girl yet. I wonder how I differ? I can talk, and — may be it is the thinking. But I don't think much — I play most of the time. May be it is because I see — but she don't know that. Unlike other children! What can it mean?" and Ida shook her little head, as though it were oppressed by the weight of a great mystery. The subject did not grow to be less important to the child by constantly pondering on it. Her laughing eyes became daily more thoughtful! but yet, as she had said, she loved her play.

Ida had crept from her bed, and stood in her night dress, her little figure all bathed in the golden-hued moonlight. How like a spirit she looked, poised so lightly on her tiny feet that she scarce seemed to touch the carpet, her arm half extended, and her lips parted, as though in converse with things invisible! With a mother's inner sense, Mary Ravelin discovered that her daughter was not sleeping, and left her own couch to hover near her. Drawing toward the door, she lifted the latch, but paused, with suspended breath, on the threshold. Was that a mortal being, shrined so gloriously, or the spirit that nightly came to guard her daughter's pillow? The moonlight streamed through the open casement, and gathered about her in a flood of radiance, quivering along her white robe, striving to rest, and yet tremulous, as though drunk with its own glorious beauty, or agitated by the proximity of a yet more glorious, deathless spirit. Softly crept in the incense-laden breezes, dallying with the curls of the child, and, now and then, casting the shadow of a lifted leaf upon her. Softly and dreamily fell the shadows about the abandoned pillow; and, far off, in another corner of the room, lay heavier, darker shadows, which Mary Ravelin *knew* were naturally produced, while yet she *felt* they had a deeper meaning.

"There is a glory about thee, my child," she whispered, in her throbbing heart, "but the world is a dark, dark place for such as thou. Oh! my God! but for a talisman against this

foreshadowed misery!" A sob of agony accompanied these last words, which called Ida from heaven. She turned, and sprang to the bosom of her mother.

"Oh, mamma! I am *so* glad you have come! there are things I want to say to you."

Mary lifted the beautiful head from her bosom, and, holding it between her two hands, gazed long and fixedly into the child's spiritual face.

"I will tell her what she is," she thought; "how rarely gifted, how angelic in her nature. I will tell her what she is, and warn her of the future, I will —"

The thread of thought was cut short by remembered words. "Don't teach her any of your romantic notions." Mary shuddered, and her eyelids drooped. She could barely articulate, "What is it, my love?"

Ida felt the chill that had fallen on her mother's spirit, though she did not know the cause; and her voice became low and timid. The inspiration of a moment previous had been scared away.

"Did I ever, mamma — did I ever — do — we — come from heaven to live here awhile, and then go back to heaven again?"

"Come from heaven!" Mary shook her head.

"Where then, mamma?"

"Men spring from the dust of the earth."

"The dust we walk on?"

"Yes."

Ida mused a few moments. Then, raising her little hand, she pressed back the blood till it looked white and dead; then turned it downward, and allowed the red current to rush back again; and then looked up into her mother's face, doubtingly.

"It is very strange, mamma."

"Everything is strange in this world, my darling."

Ida was still examining the little hand that lay in her mother's. Finally, raising the other, she pressed it against her heart. "Not all of dust, mamma; what makes us live?"

"God gives the spirit."

"Where does he get it?"

"From himself, from —"

"Then," interrupted the child, exultingly, "*it came from heaven*; it has lived there with Him before, and it was in heaven I saw all those beautiful things! I knew I had been with the angels — I knew I had, mamma!"

Mary clasped the child closely in her arms, and longed to encourage her to be still more communicative; but the charge, "Don't teach her any of your romantic notions," rang in her ears, and she tried to calm her emotion, and act as her husband's superior judgment would have dictated.

"Ida, my darling, listen to me." Mary's voice was low and faltering, for she was not used to the cold part she was endeavoring to act. "Listen to me, Ida; for you are a very little girl, and must know that your mamma understands what is for your good better than you can. You must never have such fancies —"

"How can I help it?"

"You must not lie awake thinking at night —"

"How can I help it, mamma?"

"You must—you must. Oh! my Ida, try to be like Ruth. Do as she bids you. Play with the children in the fields —"

"The angels come to me there, mamma."

"Run in the garden —"

"And there."

"Play with your dolls—fling the shuttlecock—skip the rope —"

"Oh! I do all those things, mamma. I love to play, but I cannot play all the time—nobody does that."

"Well, talk with your papa and Ruth —"

"Is it wrong to think, mamma?"

"It is not best to think, unless —"

Ida waited long for the sentence to be finished; but Mary knew how incompetent she was to advise, and she scarce knew what to say. The child still gazed into her face, how-

ever, as though more than life hung upon her words. "When you are older, my Ida, you will know what thoughts to indulge, and what to repress; now strive to think only of the things about you — what you see —"

"What I see! Oh, I see everything beautiful, everything —"

"What you hear talked of, I mean. Will you try, my darling?"

Ida looked bewildered.

"But don't think of it now. Now you must sleep, and to-morrow make yourself busy with your play and your lessons. Good-night, my love."

Mary laid the head of her child upon the pillow, pressed kiss after kiss upon her lips and forehead; and, with pain at her heart, though fully believing that she had acted wisely, went away to her own sleepless couch. As soon as she was gone, a merry, half-smothered laugh burst from the parted rose-bud of a mouth resting against the pillow; and Ida clapped her little hands together and sprang out lightly upon the carpet.

"So it *was* heaven that I came from. I have found it all out now. I am glad I asked mamma. But," and Ida's lips drooped at the corners, "I must n't ask her anything more. I wonder if I was an angel and had wings up there, and if the things I see now—I wonder—but mamma said I must n't think of these things. Why must n't I think? How can I help thinking?"

Ida pressed her hand successively on her forehead and against her heart; as though feeling after some secret spring, by the moving of which she might lock away that flood of thought. "How can I help thinking?" she repeated. "When I am a woman maybe I can, but now the thoughts *will* come."

Ah, Ida! if the little germ fill the heart of childhood with its first swelling, what will it be, in flowering and fruit-bearing, to the nature which cherished it?

"When I am a woman—but—why should n't I think

now? Is it *wrong* to think? Perhaps I am very foolish—perhaps I don't—" Ida's face flushed; she stood for a moment as though perplexed, stunned, and then crouched by the bedside and buried her face in the drapery. For a long time she remained motionless; and if not sleeping, she must have been in thought, intense, perhaps painful thought, for memory is a traitor if it deny depth and intensity to the mental emotions of our childhood. At last she arose slowly, and with an expression of sadness which had never before overshadowed her young face.

"Unlike others!" she murmured. "I see it all now—it must be so. That is why they watch me so closely—they are *afraid* to leave me alone. That is why I must look at other people, and try to think as they talk. This is why everybody is so kind to me, and all that look at me seem to say, poor Ida!—they are just so to *her*. That is why mamma looks at me so sorrowfully, and the tears come into her eyes, and she breathes so hard, as though there was something strange about me, and she had strange thoughts she was shutting in. Now I know why she always said I was unlike other children, and why she seems to love me so much better than she does Phil. I wonder if Phil knows it?—he must—oh, yes! he knows all about *her*. But *she* can't talk, and I can—that is, I think I can. Maybe I don't speak the words;—she makes a sound, and I suppose she calls that talking;—they seem to understand her, too, and sometimes people look at me as though they didn't understand me. Nobody seems very well to understand me but mother and Phil, and Phil not always. Oh, yes! I know it all now—all—all—all! *I am like poor Cicely Doane!*"

Cicely Doane was an idiot!

Poor Ida's unemployed imagination had at last conjured up a phantom which it might be difficult to lay. Was it strange that she should? Why, the child had suddenly become a philosopher; and might, by a very simple process of inductive reasoning, arrive at the grand theory of Hume himself. She was only a little more modest than he—she denied simply

the existence of her own mind; he, of everybody's. So a fallacy on which a mighty philosopher could waste years of time, a child of a few summers fished up from her fancy, just between dreams on a moonlit night. And the child would be laughed at had she ventured to name her folly, while the man is followed by crowds of admiring disciples. So much for the boasted wisdom of sages, and the *gullibility* of their followers! But there was a difference. The child unfortunately believed her theory, and acted on it; the philosopher treated his as a brave man does the optical illusion which others might deem a supernatural visiter, *walking through it*.

From that night a change came over little Ida Ravelin. If she commenced speaking, she stopped in the middle of a sentence to wonder if she were understood. When with other children, she looked on their amusements with interest, but never ventured to join them, for she was sure that they invited her only from pity. A touchingly sorrowful expression, mingled with traces of premature thought, crept over her face; and while she was as much in love with life and the things of life as ever, she moved about as a mere spectator. Thomas Ravelin thought the child improving wonderfully, Ruth joyed in the fruit of her somewhat laborious instructions, and even Mary regarded the timid, quiet child with something like a feeling of relief. Little did any one dream of the silent influence that was remoulding a nature which God had fitted for high and noble purposes. To do as others did, became little Ida's constant study. But still her *mind* was not an imitator; it refused to learn the lesson. She observed, and formed an independent opinion on every subject, but never dared express it; and when a different one was given, she relinquished her own, certain that it must be wrong. She still *felt*, too, with as much freedom as ever. She loved and hated, hoped and desponded, but it seemed to her that she scarce had a right to feel; and so everything was shut closely within her own bosom. Little Ida's cheek began to lose its roundness, and her eye its rare brilliancy: for the actual was receding from her, and she lived only in

the ideal. A little world was built up within her bosom, a dear, charming, life-like world, peopled not with fairies and woodland deities, but with real flesh and blood beings, with whom the child held converse every day, when she shrank from the sight of her sister's visitors, with the firm belief that she, poor trembler, was a companion too humble for them.

"I am unlike them—all unlike them," would Ida whisper sadly to herself; and then she would smile and turn to her imaginary world, from which nothing that belongs to human nature was excluded, save the bad—turn to that and enact the queen for which she was intended originally. So Ida's mind did not feed upon itself, but grew and expanded; grew wise and lofty, yet not too much etherealized for the world that lay before her, while she shrank from contact with that world, with a sensitiveness utterly incomprehensible to those who could not take a peep behind the veil. And there the child stood on the threshold of life, rare, glorious in her spirit's beauty, but, alas! crippled in every limb. So much for trying to amend what God has made perfect, oh ye quacks of the human soul!

The windows had been thrown up, and the heavy curtains looped far back to allow free entrance to the fresh, fragrant breezes; for breath, breath was sorely needed in that house of the dying. The trembling soul still clung to its earthly altar, fanned in the moment of its fainting by the clear summer air, which swept up from its dalliance with the budding things of June, to linger on the lip and give another swell to the heart which had once gloried in its joyous ministrations. Mary Ravelin, like some superb flower broken from its stem, lay withering in her fully expanded beauty. Her eye still flashed and burned with supernatural brilliancy, fully matched by the deep crimson of her cheek and lips; but the hands, which were folded over the heaving bosom, were long and thin, and tipped with the ice of death. Across her forehead, too, wandered little violet threads, now taking on a dark, unnatural purple, and contrasting fearfully with the deep palor

of their resting-place. Her hair had broken from the confinement of the cap, and lay in rich shining folds of raven blackness about her neck and shoulders; conspiring with the crimson cheek and dazzling eye to give an intensity, a proud queenliness to her beauty, in strange contrast with the certainty of immediate dissolution. Around her gathered a group of weeping mourners; but little Ida was not with them. From time to time, at the rustle of a curtain, or some slight noise from without, the eye of the dying woman would turn itself on the door, and then the breath, which struggled up with so much difficulty from its fast benumbing fountain, would falter and quiver in agitation. At last, a light, springing step was heard, in the adjoining apartment, and gently, but eagerly, the latch was raised.

“My Ida!” whispered the dying mother.

Ida had filled her apron with flowers, and gathered up the corners in her hand; the dew-spangled buds peeping out in every direction, eloquent in their young brightness, but strangely eloquent at an hour so fraught with the deep solemnities of death. The light of love was beaming in her eye, and her thin, childish face glowed with exercise. Beautiful was the child—though not so beautiful as when we first knew her—beautiful was she, as, with the eagerness of a loving heart, her bright head peered through the opening of the door, and her sweet, dove-like eyes sought the couch of her mother. But the solemnity of the scene startled her; and she stood thus lightly poised, on the threshold, her lips parted, and her eyes full of eloquent wonder. A woman left the bedside, and taking the child by the hand, beckoned her to throw aside the useless flowers.

“Nay, bring them to me,” said a low, feeble voice from the pillow.

Ida dropped the hand of her conductor, and sprung to the bosom of her mother, scattering the flowers as she went, and crushing them beneath her little feet, till the apartment was filled with their perfume. One hand of the dying woman closed about an opening rose-bud, as though the death-stricken

fingers knew so well these beautiful treasures, loved of yore, as to select by instinct the fairest among them; and the other arm was twined lovingly about her own bud of immortality—the strangely gentle being who, year by year, had grown closely to her impassioned heart.

What she said no one could hear, for the words seemed to be pronounced rather by her struggling heart than by her lips, so faintly and falteringly they fell; but Ida heard every one; and, as she listened, instead of the sorrow which was deluging other faces, a strange, joyous light beamed in her eyes and played about her mouth.

“I know it, my mother, I know it,” at last she said, eagerly, “but no one ever told me before.”

“Then tread the earth carefully, my darling,” whispered the dying mother; “love the beautiful things which God has made—love the beings he has given you for companionship; but, Ida, Ida, shut that rich heart from every eye. Give all its wealth to Heaven—the reeds which it would rest upon here will sway and bend beneath it—there is no support for a strong, high spirit here. Keep thy treasure close, my darling, and thou wilt be happy; but once—”

The breath came gaspingly, and there was a short, severe struggle. An attendant interposed, and endeavored to remove the child, but the arm of the dying woman was too firmly about her.

“Do not let the world know the riches shut in thy bosom, Ida—they would be desecrated, stained—keep them for thine own self and the angels.”

Mary Ravelin drew the lips of the child to hers, pressed them fondly again and again, but each time more feebly, till finally there came one long, loving pressure, as though the icy lips would grow to the warm living ones, and all was still! Upon the bosom of the dead lay the fair child, her bright locks mingling with the shining black, one hand pressing the livid cheek, and the other lying, the fairest flower of them all, among the fresh roses yet sparkling with dew; there she lay in her young beauty, without a tear or sigh, but yet the sin-

cerest of mourners. At first she would not be separated from the loved clay; but when they told her that her mother was dead, and she looked into the glazed eyes, and placed her hand upon the hushed heart, and knew that it was so, she suffered herself to be led quietly and uncomplainingly away.

All that day Ida sat beneath the little clump of locust trees in the garden, and watched the window from which her mother had so often looked; while thoughts, such as seldom find their origin in the bosom of a child, crowded upon her, and left an impress upon her sweet, sad face. A change had come over Ida Ravelin since the night of the first strange fantasy which had sealed up the door of her spirit against communion with her kind. The timidity which characterized her during that year had remained and strengthened, but the self-distrust had vanished. She knew there was that within her bosom which those about her could not even comprehend; she knew of a deep mine of more than earthly wisdom, in which she daily revelled, and the existence of which no one imagined; but yet she believed herself as much unfitted for companionship with others as though she had been the idiot which she once imagined.

"I lack something," she would say to herself. "I am not like them; they never speak of the things I think about, and they find no pleasure in my words. I am not like them; they cannot be interested in me; and so I will give my love to the birds and violets."

Notwithstanding this feeling, none was more truly loved than Ida Ravelin—not by strangers, for her serious, thoughtful eyes, and full, intellectual forehead, had too little of the child about them for her years—but those who saw her daily, and penetrated beneath the covering of mingled timidity and self-consciousness in which she had enveloped herself, saw the joyous spirit, the simple, artless grace that fashioned all within, and loved her. But even they, her constant companions, did not see all. Sweetness, and love, and truth, were the qualities which attracted them; they did not see into the depths of mind and heart—the intellect and the affections

braided closely together, and growing up in rich luxuriance, budding and blossoming for the eyes of angels only. The only expression which Ida Ravelin had ever given to the inspiration lighting up the inner chamber of her soul was in song. And, but for these revealings, even the watchful, anxious mother might have been deceived; there was so little without to give a clue to the contents of the casket. Yet, strange to say, through all this Ida had preserved all her world-lovingness, her ready sympathy with whatever interested her friends; and, on all occasions, she evinced a capability of judging, and a sober common sense, seldom possessed in connection with a rich fancy and ardent imagination. So had Ida grown and expanded, though crippled still, until she reached her thirteenth summer; and now another change had come over her fortunes—a dark, dark change—for the eyes that had watched over her timidly and with trembling, but, oh, *so* lovingly! had lost their light, and the bosom which had pillowed her head when thought had made it ache, could never be her pillow again. Cold, cold was it, and hushed the heart which had beat in concert with her own, answering every throb with a throb still wilder, even while the lips were striving to belie its earnestness. Ida had been taught of the heart, not the lips, and now was she all alone; orphaned in a world to which she was a stranger, doubly orphaned in spirit.

All was still in the house of death. The mourners had gone to their pillows, perhaps with the abandon of real grief, to add the awe of darkness and the solemnity of loneliness to their already weighty sorrows; perhaps to rest their fatigued senses, but not their aching hearts, in a sleep haunted by dreams scarce less fearful than the waking reality. Two old women sat beside the vines which shaded the open window, talking in broken whispers, the meaning of which was eked out by mysterious nods, and involuntarily drawing nearer each other, as the shadows of the leaves commenced a fresh frolic with the moonbeams which peered through them, painting fantastic figures on the ceiling and carpet.

“She has not been a happy woman,” whispered one; and then she gave two distinct nods, and tucked a grey lock beneath her cap, and passed her fingers across her keen old eyes, which glittered with an intenser light than the moon itself. The other shook her head and sighed, and thanked Heaven that she was not in the place of some hard, stern people whom she might name; though, to be sure, Mary Ravelin had not been just like other women—the Lord forgive her for speaking such words of the dead, for she was sure she had always wished the poor creature well.

“Hark!” and both old women put their fingers to their lips, and drew themselves upright with a shiver; for the clock was on the stroke of twelve, and mingling with its tone was another sound. The clock ceased, but the other noise continued. There was a click, like the lifting of a latch; and then a foot-fall, which struck the frightened watchers as singularly heavy, in the apartment of the dead. They both started to their feet, and seized a light in either hand, and hurried to the door; and both paused, looked into each other’s faces, and went back again. A low, soft murmur, as of a pleading human voice, pressed down by a heavy weight of tears, stole up from the room where lay the shrouded corse, and mingled with the rustling of the leaves and the beating of their own hearts, overshadowing them with awe, till their limbs refused to support them, and their white lips strove in vain to pronounce the words of fear which struggled for utterance.

Slowly moved the fingers of the clock—so slowly that it seemed Time himself had made a pause in fear; and five minutes passed like a weary period in a night-mare dream. Five minutes more crept by—how, the frightened women could not say—but it was gone at length; and then the voice ceased, and a low, soft breathing, though they imagined it singularly heavy and sob-like in their night-time fear, took its place, and filled them still with terror. A half hour had passed since the striking of the clock; and now that nothing but the monotonous breathing had been for a long time heard, the old women gathered courage, and again proposed looking

into the dreaded apartment. They moved timidly, and opened the door with the utmost caution. At first, they started back in alarm; but then they looked at each other, and one tried to smile, while a tear crept into the cold, age-deadened eye of the other, and fell sparkling to her withered hand. The dead had found loving company. The cloth had been laid back from the face of the corse, and close beside it knelt a fair young girl, her two hands clasped over the rigid neck, and her head resting on the cold, nerveless bosom. A ray of moonlight peering through a crevice in the closed curtains, glanced from her hair to the shoulder of her white night-dress; and then, breaking and scattering itself, was spread over her like an angel's wing, or the visible promise of the protection given by the redeemed spirit to the child of her almost idolatry. Lightly and reverently crept the two old women to the spot. One of them stepped back and closed the curtain, as though the vision were too heavenly in its rare beauty for earthly eyes to look upon; but the other opened it again, and the moonlight rushed in gladly, enveloping the sleeping child in a yet more glorious radiance.

"We must take her away," said one, in a whisper; "it is a dreadful place to sleep in — ugh!" and a shiver passed over the old woman as she spoke.

"No, no; she has chosen her own pillow," said her companion, tenderly. "Poor child! I dare say she will miss it many a time. Well, God help her! If Mary Ravelin was not the best of wives — and I would never say but she was — no, no; she was a devoted mother. Poor Ida sleeps soundly — and for the last time in such a place. We will not disturb her."

Almost tearfully, moved the two old women from the sacred spot, and closed the door with care, and left the child to her holy dreams.

"But for one word — one word more!" sobbed Ida Ravelin, as she laid her head so low within the opened coffin that her brown locks rested in glossy waves upon the pall. "Oh

to be assured that she will still watch by me! My angel mother!"

But neither the anguish of the child, nor the warm pressure of the lips, nor the tears that jewelled over the midnight-colored hair, and wetted the white muslin pillow, could win one answering sigh from that cold bosom.

They took the child from her slumbering parent, and closed the coffin, and lowered it into the earth, and placed green sods upon the little mound they raised, and went away — some to mourn, others to forget.

Night followed the going down of the sun, and the morning came and went — the Sabbath dawned and waned, and gayer days rolled into its place — soon months were numbered. The golden sheaves stood up in the fields, and the white clover-blossoms and nodding grass-heads, yielding to the scythe of the mower, changed their color, and gave out a dying fragrance. Then the apple-boughs were heavily laden with fruit of various hues; the purple plum, for very ripeness, dropped down at every touch of the wind, and nestled in the fading grass; and the peach peeped from among the sheltering green, with a radiant blush on one warm cheek, while on the other was a hue more lusciously tempting still — the rich, soft, golden tint which seemed melting into the yellow sunlight of a Septemoer sky. Then the trees put on their holiday suit of gold and scarlet, flaunting proudly in their gorgeousness; the orchis and the aster bloomed beneath the night-frosts in the garden; the blood-hued lobelia looked at its face in the sparkling, babbling, tripping brooks; the violets awoke from their August slumbers, thousands of purple eyes looking up lovingly from deserted garden-plots; and the year became gay, gayer than in its childhood. The gala-day went by, and the trees put on their russet; long spires of pallid grass waved to and fro wearily; the wind awoke with a shiver, and marked its course with sobs and wailings; the brooks grew bluer and chiller; and the cold white clouds trooped off through fields of pure cerulean, obeying every impulse of the

ice-winged lord of the storm. Another change — and the bare trees were wreathed in white; the brooks lost their silvery voices, or struggled on with a death-like gurgle, amid barriers of choking ice; the wind swept freely and roughly over mountain and meadow, yet on wings of melting fleeciness; and the grave of Mary Ravelin, lost beneath the deep snow of winter, was well nigh forgotten by all but the child-mourner. She kept a path well trodden, and her pale, thin face often bent over it tearfully; for though the momentary doubt had passed, and she knew that the spirit of her lost mother was still by her, still hovered over her in the night-time, and watched her every step in the sunlight, the death mark had been drawn between them. A deep gulf, with a grave at the bottom, must be passed before the two could unite as formerly; and Ida, notwithstanding her angel guardian, was in the world all alone. But it was not always to be thus. There was a change coming, and soon Ida's dark, thoughtful eyes grew lustrous with a strange kind of happiness; and she went about as one in a dream, a blissful, soul-fraught dream, for she had found a friend. By the time the spring violets began to shake off their winter slumbers, and open their bright eyes to the wooing breezes, the world was ringing with the praise of a poet who might have been dropped down from the clouds, so full was he of the inspiration of Heaven. But long before this had Ida Ravelin known the new minstrel well. A scrap of paper had fluttered in her path one day when the wintry winds were blowing keenly, and, as she glanced it over, her eye fell on familiar thoughts. Ida tried to brush the mist from her eyes, for she believed that she saw indistinctly; but still it was the same — her own thoughts, her secret heart-thoughts, that she never revealed to mortal — the riches of her own bosom, which she had hugged to herself more closely since her mother's dying caution — spread out upon a paper, in irrevocable print! And yet she knew well that she had never placed them there. What listening spirit, what winged thing hovering near, had stolen this honey from its secret lurking-place in the deepest

recess of the soul-gifted flower, for a careless world to feast upon? Ah, Ida! there are other spirits than thine roaming the earth in loneliness; genius often has its twin. The child believed her *thoughts* had been stolen; but the breathing language, the harp-like measure, she disclaimed. These were not her own; and these betrayed not only the inspiration of the genius, but the skill of the artist. Ida stood, with her dark spiritual eyes fixed on vacancy, as though reading earnestly from a page invisible to others; then a smile, a glad, glowing, beautiful smile broke from her lips, and lighted up her pale, sweet face. Ida was no longer alone in the world; she had found a friend. And here the finger of Fate was thrust forward, and some wheels were stopped, and new ones put in motion; for the strange machinery employed in weaving the destiny of Ida Ravelin, grew more complicated. The child did not pause to reason; but one thing she knew from the day when she found the scrap of paper by the wayside. Her spirit, which could not be entirely prisoned in the little body that claimed it for a season, was not condemned to wing its way up and down the blossoming earth alone. For weal or woe—and Ida could not think of woe in that connection—she had found a companion.

Spring came. Life began to swell and breathe in the bosoms of the flower-buds, till it seemed as though each had in it a living soul, as full of energy and world-lovingness as Ida's own; the brooks leaped and sparkled, an Undine laughing from the heart of every bubble; and the winds murmured their spirit-music among the old trees, and then swept downward from their high-communion, and stooped to kiss the forehead of the child. Everywhere, everywhere, save in the world of living men, she found companions as full of life and joy as was her own fluttering heart. And oh, how that heart fluttered, as the young girl stood thus on the border of womanhood! Far before, her poetic imagination spread the broad fields of life; far out in ether gleamed stars innumerable, which were to be her way-marks to immortality; and beside

her walked her guide, her inspiration, her sacred spirit-friend, in the guise of an angel, trod he by her side, invisible to all but her. Glad Ida! Envidable Ida! Thy rainbow was set in tears, true; but it was as a triumphal arch thrown over the gateway through which thy Destiny was leading thee up to a broader view of life. And the child walked on humbly and lovingly, yet without a fear; stepping carefully the while lest her foot should crush the little violet or the dew-flower, and kneeling as she went, to mark even the texture of the jewelled gossamer which nimble fingers had spread from green to green in the spirit-freighted night-time. Loved and loving, but all unknown, stepped Ida Ravelin beneath her rainbow arch, and looked with a startled gaze out on the strange world in which she was a stranger. Warm breezes came wooingly, and kissed her cheek, and laid their soft fingers on her forehead, and left a touch of balm upon her ripe lips; the golden sunshine glowed in her path, or coquetted with cool, fresh shadows which invited to dreamy repose by the wayside; a thousand glad voices greeted her from shrub and tree; flowers blossomed, wings glanced, waters sparkled, and the heart of Ida Ravelin fluttered in its cage like an imprisoned bird. But the cage was strong, and it could not free itself with all its flutterings. The wires had been woven over it, when it had no wing to raise in opposition, and now it commanded no resources powerful enough to undo the elaborate fastenings. It had been locked from without, and from without must the relief come. So Ida was still a stranger to those who loved her; for she was loved deeply, and with a reverential tenderness, inspired by her singular purity and guilelessness. So delicate and helpless, too, seemed Ida, that every arm coming within the charmed circle about her, involuntarily extended itself for her support; but she needed them not, for in her helplessness she was strong—in her lack of worldliness she was wiser than any worldling. Still there was a sadness in the strange, prophet-like eyes of Ida Ravelin, that seemed scarce to belong to one so young; a sadness which had stolen up from the grave where some of their tears had fallen; and though her heart

was now as joyous as the young bird that waved its wing, and wheeled and carolled in the sunlight, the shadow would not go away from her face.

So, many there were who wondered at the young girl's seriousness, and thought, as they looked upon her, how strange a thing it was that any blighting influence should have fallen upon so young a nature—and then turned away and forgot her existence. Ida was quiet and unpretending, too simple and timid to live long in the memory of a stranger. Others gave a second look, and these always found something to interest them; but it was only those who won her confidence, and who appeared as guileless as herself, that were entrusted with even the first key to her nature. These were often startled by the stirrings of the free, gladsome spirit shut within, and could scarce think the occasional gush of mirthfulness, which seemed to have its source in an overflowing fountain down deep in her nature, could be real. But who should be glad, if the pure are not? Who should be happier than the gifted, holding as they do the key to the bright world, and bearing a second treasure within their own bosoms? The God-gifted, led by the hand and guided and cherished by Eternal Love, so like the angels as to be counted one of them even while lingering here, throwing their warm sympathy, like a veil woven of balm and sunshine, over the world of suffering men, treading among the flowers of the earth with the light of heaven circling about their heads—who should be happier than the gifted? And Ida Ravelin was—oh, *so* happy! Happy was she in her own genius, in her power of creating inner sunshine—happy in the human love which was lavished on her by the few who wondered at, even as they loved, the power she exercised over them—happy in the beautiful, beautiful things of God's creation, which sprang up beneath her feet and hovered over her head—but happier still in the fond dream of her heart's inner chamber—the deep, impassioned love which she had lavished so unsparingly upon her spirit's twin. So the child went onward, passed under her triumphal arch to womanhood, and the angel within her

was not recognized. So, many an angel "walks the earth unseen," since the close of the gate of Eden.

Ida Ravelin was still young, but not beautiful. It is said that the spirit's beauty cannot be shut within, as you would shut the diamond in the casket, hiding all its light; but that the radiance illuminating the inner temple *will* spread itself over the face, proclaiming to all who come near, "here dwells an angel." I know that sometimes the angel in the bosom looks out through human eyes, and puts its own impress on human lips; but this earth has sadly changed since the ladder of the old patriarch's dream was let down from heaven; and there are things enow in it to make the beautiful spirit oftener veil its sorrowful face with its own pinion, as though thus to wait for the final release. The radiance which would be dazzling to a mortal eye in heaven, is subdued by the sin-heavy atmosphere of this world into a feeble glimmer; but it is all there, and waiting only the call homeward to become glorious. But what if the beauty of the spirit *should* come out before the world and sit upon the brow? The angel would still be unrecognized; for men are not gifted with a pure vision, and the gross eye cannot see beyond the handsome shape and the brilliant coloring. When the crowd bows to personal ugliness, made beautiful by soul, the fallen Zareph and his fair Nama may spread their wings—they are very near to heaven.

Ida Ravelin was not beautiful; even those who loved her most did not attempt to say it, and strangers passed her by without a glance. It is true that her slight, delicately moulded figure was faultless; but there was a shrinking timidity in her step and manner, which effectually shaded this beauty. Her eye had a clear light, but that was timid too. At times there was a soft, dove-like expression in it, and again there burned from its centre a deep, soul-fraught brilliancy, and its vision seemed prolonged far into eternity; but it was too full of thought. Her full, round forehead was too severely intellectual, and the rich, heavy braids which bound her magnificently formed head could not compensate for its singularly

lofty developments. The lower part of the face was of a different mould. Ida had never possessed regular features, although in childhood she was strikingly beautiful. Her mouth had been made lovely by the sweet smiles which habitually clustered around it, rather than by the chiselling of the Architect; but now the character of the smile was changed. Like the one centred in the eye, it was heavily laden with thought. Ida had a bosom full of light and love; and, in rich, heavy clusters, lay upon her heart the closely-folded blossoms of genius. *Upon her heart.* That genius would ever build its altar there!

But Ida had her hand closely on her bosom's door, lest these treasures should escape. She had placed it there at the first stirring of the swelling buds, and, as they gradually struggled more for freedom, she pressed her hand down more and more closely, and whispered to herself — "Never — never — never, but in heaven!" And this struggle made itself visible upon her face. The smile was there, but it was thoughtful; the sweetness had not vanished, but it was usually overshadowed by reserve; sometimes there was a soft lovingness flitted to her lip, but it could scarce be recognized before it retreated, as though chilled or scared back by the cold world it looked out upon. It would not have been singular for a stranger to imagine her a gloomy ascetic; common acquaintances considered her merely uninteresting; but, despite the prisoned genius, with all its swellings, and with all its strugglings, her friends, those who knew her best, took her to their hearts, and *felt* that there was an angel there, although they did no: *see* beyond the wires of the cage. Ida was not morose, nor misanthropic, nor sad, nor an enemy to mirth; she was only too thoughtful and too much reserved. It did not materially affect her intercourse with those she really loved; for love covers a multitude of shortcomings, and Ida had enough to satisfy common friendship, without encroaching upon her sacred treasure. Few would believe that Ida was happy; for, though she looked with an interested eye on mirthful doings, she never mingled in them. She had seen but little of the

outer world ; and, though she had studied closely the few pages within her reach, she was but slightly under its influence, either for joy or sorrow. However dense the clouds above her, the rainbow always spanned her heart. Her world was within ; and, as it was too sacred to be looked upon by other eyes, she shut up with it the bliss it brought, and carried everywhere her Eden with her. Oh, Ida was deeply, purely, silently happy. Misery *is not*, as worldlings have declared, and the puling sentimentalist labored to establish, the twin gift of genius. It is not so — it cannot be ! Let the whole world frown ; let the cloud darken, and the winds rave — it is all the same ; the fires of adversity will burn away only the dross, and, in the midst of all, will walk unseen the white-winged angel. And that holy angel spreads its shield over the sensitive bosom, and holds always to the thirsty lips the cup of bliss. Are my true words doubted, because there are so many examples of a different seeming ? Oh ! there are men, drunk with vain-glory, and with ambition, and other earth-distilled draughts, whose lips never touched the cup of inspiration. Men sometimes hear a voice in the air, and mistake its tone. There are many false angels abroad, and they deceive many. Some, too, have filled their bosoms up with defilements ; and from such the angel turns away to weep, casting her protecting shield at her feet, while the shafts of misery fly thick and fast. Genius cannot bring her accustomed blessing to those who would have her dwell apart from purity ; and when her temple grows dark with earthliness, her lamp blazes in the midst, a consuming fire. He who would pollute the wings of his bosom-angel, must needs be miserable. But, the gifted, the God-gifted, do they but recognize their Benefactor, are, in a peculiar manner, the little children of this world ; and little children have received at the hands of a Holy One an especial blessing. So the thoughtful-eyed, sober-lipped Ida was supremely happy.

Their voices — those of Ida and the brother-spirit that she had so early recognized — had met each other in the upper

air, and mingled tones. Long since had the twain linked themselves in a relationship which only the blessed little children, gifted with spirit-pulses, can understand. Why could not this be enough? Ida thought it was; and yet, lovers in spirit, in person strangers, they met.

It was a cold, dark, dismal, cloud-curtained morning, when Ida Ravelin was called to confide her heart-worship to the less romantic eye. She had been conscious of a strange shadow, hanging over her head, for days; and now she whispered, with white lips, "It is falling — it is falling!" and arose to obey the summons.

Ugh! how chillingly the hurrying wind swept around the corner; and what a dismal tone it had, like the midnight howl, which comes to tell, to the invalid, tales of the noisome grave. Heavy was the slow, dragging step of Ida Ravelin, and heavier still her heart. She knew that the eye of curiosity, the earth-taught tongue, could not link closer together two spirits which had no need of such mediums. One by one, stair after stair, her steps slowly counted; finally, she poised for one agitating moment on the last, with a foot thrust tremblingly and doubtfully forward, again descended, moved onward mechanically, and laid her hand upon the door. Hast thou but been dreaming, Ida; and is the vapor which thy heart's censer has caused to envelop thee, to pass off like a smoke-curl in the clear air, leaving thee all disrobed of thy enchantment? Not so. Ida Ravelin would have known her poet; for the angel of genius had a glorious temple. But she did not spring forward to meet him; she did not smile; even the usual light of her eye was clouded in; she would have known her poet, but *she was not recognized.*

Slowly and chillingly the shadow settled down upon her heart; and then came a cold smile, and words as cold; and the twain sat together, like strangers of different lands, without any common sympathies, and spoke of that which interested neither, and mocked each other with hollow compliments; and then, with a cold clasp of the hand, and a formal bow, they parted. Ida's heart had never beat so sluggishly

as at that moment, and her lip might have been moulded of iron.

They met again, and yet again, and again; and still Ida's voice seemed chilling, her lip severe, and her manner almost repellant. She felt that she was unknown; and the entire sunshine and beauty of years of dreamy bliss seemed to her darkened in a moment. Finally, however, the smile upon her lip began to beam with soul; a dewiness crept to her eye a softness gathered about her heart, and words were spoken which could never have been addressed to any other. She knew, though he did not say it, that her poet-friend had begun to recognize his beautiful invisible; and the broken spirit-link was melting into itself, and conjoining. There was something, too, in his voice, which went down into her heart, and touched a chord that had never before vibrated. On a sudden, all the hoarded wealth of her nature was stirred. The angel sprang up, and spread a pair of wings gloriously beautiful. The swelling buds burst into full blossom, raising a cloud of perfume. A thousand little harps were tuned, and, at every breath she drew, her bosom quivered with the rich gush of melody. And her hand, and her lip too, quivered, and her voice grew tremulous with strange emotion. The hour of release had come. A finger from without had touched the hidden spring, and the long prisoned spirit of Ida Ravelin was free. But it did not leap forth from its cage exultingly. The atmosphere of earth was an untried element to it; and there was still a hand striving to hold it back. But Ida Ravelin was no longer mistress of her own nature. The weak hand trembled—the tumult increased—and the wild flood bounded past the slight barrier. The angel was triumphant! No wonder that Ida was perplexed and overcome with doubt and dread, trembling at the present, and refusing to look on the future. The low, melodious tones of her poet-friend were full of encouragement and hope, but his eye was earthly. He could not see down into the depths of spirit which his voice had stirred, and understand the cause of the quickened breath and the tremulous lip. Gently, and

with patient kindness, hour after hour, he strove with poor Ida's weak timidity, until his words became, for the time, strength to her; and, at last, most confidently she placed her hand in his to be taught and guided.

The noble poet and his Ida (his before heaven, though only the pure above would know how to recognize the tie that bound them) stood in the night air, with clasped hands and clasped spirits. The stars up in heaven looked kindly upon them, and the wind swept by, kissing warm lips, and dallying with curls, and touching with soft wing a brow which bore the Deity's own impress. Far before them stretched the still waters of the most beautiful lake in the wide world, with the lights from the opposite shore twinkling through the trees, and flashing out upon it in sudden gushes, which broke and departed, leaving their places to others; and behind them were the swelling tones of cunning instruments, bearing on their wings of melody the soul-laden voice of a woman. The full moon was far up in heaven, and cast upon the water a broad stream of golden light. A little boat would now and then shoot across this moon-gift, the oars flashing with diamonds as it went, dragging far after it a long, glittering train; and then it would steal silently along the shore, and the rough boatmen would rest on their oars, and feast their eyes on beauty and their ears on melody, and perhaps dream of holier things than had ever found a place in their thoughts before.

"The angels have paved a pathway of light—our path of life, dear Ida."

In a moment a cloud passed over it, a shadow fell, and the path was broken. Ida raised her dark, pensive eyes to the poet's face, but her voice was shut in her heart.

"It is only for a moment. Some steps must be taken in darkness. We are yet on earth, and earth is a place of shadows. But mark the brilliance beyond, as though the portal of Paradise were already thrown open; and its glory lighted up our way as we draw near our haven of rest. It is a beautiful path, my Ida!"

“Beautiful.”

Ida Ravelin responded mechanically; but she rested her cheek in her palm, and silently retraced her own steps all along the emblematic path. It was narrow at first, and broken. Dark waves came up and parted the light; then it would rush together again, the bright ripples kissing and commingling. Further on were other little breaks, but the brilliance grew broader and stronger, as she proceeded, until she came to the shadow.

“It has been a heavy one,” thought Ida, “this disappointment and this struggle, but — why struggle? ‘*Unlike others!*’ — it was whispered in my infancy — it steals up from the sod every time I kneel beside *her* grave. My mother! my angel mother! I can ‘*keep my treasures for the eye of heaven,*’ as thou badest me, but I must be true to my better nature.”

The spirit in her bosom arose and asserted its might. A serene smile sat upon her lip; a steady light came to her eye; and her quivering pulse calmed itself and beat with slow, triumphant earnestness. Her companion looked at her and wondered at the change.

“It has been a heavy one, but now *I am free!*” The words passed from her lips in a low murmur, which the ear could not catch; but she felt her heart grow strong; and, as she looked again, the shadow was lifted from the water.

The next day Ida and her poet friend parted; and, though she did not say it, she knew their next meeting would be in heaven. They had not loved as others do; it had been a peculiar affection, coined in the innermost recesses of two spirits which had been melted into each other long before a thought had been given to the caskets which contained them — pure, and holy, and elevated — without a particle of earthiness commingling — a beautiful and a hallowed thing. And they had been brought no nearer by the meeting. The clay was a hindrance to them, and now Ida longed to cast it off. The chain which linked them together could only gather strength in heaven. And yet it was a sorrowful thing to part, with all the sweet remembrances encircling those few blessed

days lying in their fresh, pure beauty upon the heart. The tears rushed to the eyes of Ida, but they were shut back again resolutely; her voice became even more tremulous than on the day previous, and her pale lip quivered with strong emotion. Poor Ida! The cloud had not wholly vanished.

"If he could but know that the parting is for time," whispered the heart of Ida; and she shaded her eyes with her hand, for the tears would be kept back no longer. For the first time she was guilty of a murmur, and that against the beloved.

'His heart could not be aching so, and mine not recognize the pain.'

She felt the touch of a hand, the pressure of lips on her bowed forehead, heard a low, sweet word of farewell, that might never be forgotten, a step in the passage that fell on her ear like the toll of a muffled bell, the closing of a door, and she was alone with heaven. Poor Ida! How she sobbed and wore out the lagging hours with weeping.

Enviably Ida! She was awake. The angel in her bosom fluttered no longer behind the prisoning bars; and on the broad earth not a human heart so blest as hers. Intense, earnest thought still made its home in her eye; but beside it was the light of conscious inner power, and purity, and love, all commingling; a self-acknowledged affinity to the invisible ones which hovered over her. The harp in her bosom had been attuned to those above, and not an earthly finger had power to produce a discord. Now was Ida Ravelin prepared for the world, and prepared for heaven; for, strangely enough, both require the same preparation. The robe that can be soiled by contact with things below is not the one to glitter among the stars.

Ida Ravelin was not beautiful, but she had no further need of beauty. The angel which had always been shut within her bosom came out and hovered round her; and men sought, as though there had been some strange witchery there, the shadow of its wings. The touch of her finger thrilled; the

glance of her eye melted; the sound of her voice enchanted. It was the magnetism of genius. Now was the path of Ida Ravelin strewn with flowers, and their perfume was grateful to her. The altar of her glorious nature was thronged with worshippers, and, with a childlike trustfulness, Ida gave love for what seemed love. What is there in the world which God has made to look upon with indifference? What in the natures God has moulded, marred and soiled though they be by the clay they are prisoned in, to regard with coldness? Oh, a brother's heart, however pitiable its setting, is a holy thing, and woe be to the foot which dares to rest upon it! A brother's hand! it may be stained, but there is a pulse in it which is an echo to the stirrings of the soul, and the soul is the breath of God. Who dare refuse the love-clasp to a brother's hand?

Ida gave love for love, and many revelled in its pure sunlight; but her soul had an inner chamber, a veiled temple, to which the world was not admitted. It was the trysting place of two spirits which waited to keep a yet holier tryst in heaven.

The world had stepped between the two friends, and they could meet only in heart.

There were grey hairs on the temples of Ida Ravelin, but the flowers were yet fresh within, and still fond ones gathered near to taste their perfume.

Away in a strange land, an old man was dying. Tears wetted his pillow, and warm lips strove with kisses to melt the gathering ice of death. Soft fingers lay upon his temples, an anxious hand pressed against his heart, trembling as its pulsations grew fainter, and mingled voices, made sharp with anguished feeling, went up to heaven most pleadingly; but the spirit had looked over the bounds of time, and it could not be won back again. The old man smiled, and raised an eye to heaven, whispered a cherished name, and died!

Ida Ravelin sat in the midst of a wrapt circle, scattering her buds of thought and feeling with a lavish hand. Sud-

den.y that veiled inner temple was strangely illuminated. A glorious radiance beamed out upon her; meltingly it circled round, bathing all within with bliss, and she felt the enfolding clasp of wings invisible. Oh! that *her* soul should remain the longest prisoner! A soft whisper stole down into her heart, and its answer was a struggle. She must be free! A deep, burning brilliancy sprang to her eye; the crimson gathered hurriedly on her cheek; the fevered pulse bounded and staggered; the thousand silver chords, which had kept the heavenly prisoner so long in its earth-worn cell, stretched themselves to their utmost tension, and closed over it with a mad, determined energy, then snapped asunder and shrivelled in their uselessness; and the angel planted a foot upon the shattered fabric, and, raising its white wings heavenward, rose from the earth, never to return again.

They made a sweet pillow among flowers, and streams, and beautiful singing-birds, and laid a head upon it, and wept long over this mouldering image of clay. But the stone they reared in that beautiful valley spoke falsely. Ida Ravelin was not there; she had joined the loved in Paradise!

TO SPRING.

A WELCOME, pretty maiden!
 Dainty-footed spring!
 Thou, with the treasures laden
 No other-hand can bring.
 While onward thou art tripping,
 Children all around are skipping,
 And the low brown eaves are dripping
 With the gladsomest of tears.

From mossed old trees are bursting
 The tiny specks of green;
 Long have their pores been thirsting
 For the gushing sap, I ween;
 With scarce a shade molesting,
 The laughing light is resting
 On the slender group that's cresting
 Yon fresh, green hillock's brow.

At the timid flower it glances,
 Beneath the maple's shade;
 And foiled, it lightly dances
 With the bars the boughs have made;
 On the waters of the river,
 Still in a winter's shiver,
 Its golden streamers quiver,
 O'er-brimmed with lusty life.

The folded buds are blushing
 On the gnarled apple-tree;
 While, the small grass-blades a-crushing,
 Children gather them to see;

And the bee, thus early coming,
All around the clusters humming,
Upon the bland air thrumming,
Plunges to the nectared sweets.

Life, life, the fields is flushing!
Joy springs up from the ground;
And joyous strains are gushing
From the woodland all around,
From birds on wild wings wheeling,
Up from the cottage stealing,
From the full-voiced woodman pealing,
Ring out the tones of joy.

Thrice welcome, pretty maiden!
With thy kiss upon my cheek,
Howe'er with care o'erladen,
Of care I could not speak;
Now, I'll make a truce with sorrow
And not one cloud will borrow
From the dark, unsunned morrow
I will be a child with thee.

THE POETESS.

AN ALLEGORY.

THERE WAS an immense lake nestled down in the lap of a hilly country, and fed by a thousand tributaries. Among these was a blithesome little sparkler, which oozed up through the green moss, in the shadow of protecting oaks and elm-trees, and trickled down from the rocks, at the foot of which it gathered up its forces and bounded off, dancing and laughing, to its destination. The genius of this stream was a dear little innocent, dwelling in an amber moss-cup close by, and loving most truly the rosy clouds above her, and the green earth with its jewel-work of flowers and dews beneath. And she was content with these—the simple-souled little Undine! But one day, a luckless day perchance, the water-maiden poised herself upon the golden rim of her Sylvan temple, and gazed earnestly down upon the lake, which lay cradled in the arch of a rainbow. And she thought within herself what a very nice thing it would be just to deck herself in the jewels she was daily pouring into the bosom of the lake, and, canopied by that bright bow, sing to the multitudes of men who came down to drink of the burnished waters. It was but a thought; and the dear, simple little Undine was on her way. At first she was intoxicated, for everything was new, glowing, glad-some; and close by her side crept one who whispered sweet things in tones deliciously soft, but oh, how replete with falsehood! The sun made a bright path for her, and flecked her robe with gold; the white-blossomed wild shrub showered its tribute of purity and perfume on her feet; shadows came to kiss her dimpled mouth; the bird wetted its gay wings, and then turned to fan her face, scattering pearls at every wave; and the love-eyed deer upon the marge of the stream bent its

arcned neck, but forgot to drink, because she was there. Oh, she was a fresh, happy spirit, singing and laughing there in the wilderness, loving the cool, deep shadows, and bearing always on her breath the scent of violets! A fresh, happy spirit was she;—what a pity that she should come out where she must barter her warm, ingenuous, beautiful faith, her simple trustfulness, and, it may be, her love and truth, for the wisdom which makes the heart barren! Never was a journey more delightful than that of our bright-lipped little wanderer, until she emerged from the path down the hill-side; but there she began to meet with countless annoyances, and she wished herself back again, nestling in her golden cradle in the wilderness. Other water-spirits were there, older than herself and world-wise; and, at first, they looked disdainfully upon this simple child of the hill. But when they observed her brightness and singular purity, and knew that she would be preferred to themselves, they suddenly assumed great friendship, and attempted to unite the waters of their own brooks with hers; and crossed and re-crossed her little thread of silver, making so many provoking entanglements, that the hitherto care-free spirit grew weary, and had scarcely the courage to pursue her way. Still she went on, though with constantly increasing difficulty, till at last she reached the border of the lake. But at every foot of ground she passed over, the disenchanting little spirit felt her enthusiasm ebbing. The meadow, which had looked so green and velvety in the distance, was covered with a coarse stunted grass, half faded; and the trees were diminutive and unshapely. As for the flowers,—the scentless arum grew there, and the blood-red *cardinalis*, and the deadly water hemlock; and, now and then, some cold blue blossom bent its poisoned chalice for a draught, and the ominous nightshade nodded among the inter-twisted roots of the cypress at a little distance. Oh, how the little spirit sighed when she thought of the fragrant dog-wood, the meek-eyed violets, and the frail, beautiful tiarella of her native wood! There were serpents, too, by the lake-side, nestled in the rank sedges, and croaking frogs, half beauty,

half deformity, and a thousand other things which made our timid little Undine look with deep regret upon the misty curl of blue which linked her mountain home with the clouds. So she wandered in a strange sadness about the lake, sometimes turning from the barrier raised about it when she might have passed, and sometimes jostled rudely back when she had just resolved to cross, till at last a strong, kind hand was extended to her; she trembled for a moment above the tide, and then dropped down into the bosom of the lake. How bewildered was she there, and how she shivered and tried to smile, and looked all about her to find some compensation for the dear things she had left—the awakened little dreamer! The cold water-bath had spoiled a heaven for her.

The waters of the lake did not mingle together. There lay the turbid alongside the clear and pure, the poisoned flood and the stream that had balm in it—there was every variety in the great lake, and men might come and drink of which they chose; and the spirit of the mountain rivulet grew almost happy again, when she saw bright lips bent to her own waters, and brightening still more as they quaffed. But she must have been an angel to deem this sufficient compensation for the thousand vexatious annoyances which no unsophisticated water-spirit, who has never followed her rich gifts to the altar of the world, can understand. And our darling little Undine was not quite an angel; and might become less angelic still, by standing too long beneath the arch of the rainbow with all her jewels on. Haste, haste thee back, pretty wanderer, before the breath of the dark hemlock has filled thy veins with poison, or the sun kissed the peach-blossom from thy cheek, or the wrangling waters made thy soft voice harsh as their own, or the dank night has mildewed thy heart. Haste thee back, simple Undine, and rest thy throbbing head close in the bosom of the golden moss-cup.

D O R A'.

EYES, like a wet violet, nestled among a profusion of the softest-hued Persian fringes, and hair, gathered from the elfin fields of Erin, and combed and twisted into waves by fairy fingers—such had Dora'! Then those lips, with their sad sweetness, and the love-thought in each corner! and the pale, polished cheek, and vein-crossed forehead!

Sweet, delicate Dora'!—much do I fear, that such a vision of loveliness will never again appear at Alderbrook.

It was years and years ago that Dora' moved among our mothers here, with a step like a fawn's, a head erect and earnest, like a wild deer on the look-out for the huntsman, and a face full of half-joyous, half-solemn surprise, such as Eve must have worn when her foot first crushed the dews and flowers of Eden. Beautiful was Dora', as a dream which turns from the daylight to nestle in some young heart, or a thought that refuses to syllable itself in clumsy words; and yet, beautiful was she never called; but all paused and looked upon her as she passed by, and smiled, and owned a stronger power, though they knew not what it was, than that of beauty.

Stand by me, reader, and follow the direction of my finger, over the bend in the brook, and along the white clover-field to the foot of that little knoll with the two elm-trees on its crown. Do you perceive the top of a chimney peeping from the green things piled up there, like a monument to a Sylvan? You may not discover it, but I, who have looked so many times, know that little speck of reddish brown to be a chimney. Well, beneath is the smallest pattern of a human shelter that your eyes ever lighted on; now pretty much gone to decay, and grown entirely over with moss and hop-vines. I have heard that a white rose-bush once quite over-topped

the front corner, and sunflowers innumerable peeped their yellow heads above the eaves at the back; and I have myself a distinct remembrance of stopping to admire the trumpet-honeysuckle, that years ago graced the door-way; but not a flowering thing opens in that vicinity now. There, all alone, once lived Auntie Evans; a good, gentle old woman, who, for the want of better things to love, kept always about her a family of kittens, chickens, rabbits, and tame pigeons. Besides this, she used to make gingerbread for the little people that always looked in, upon their way from school, and supply the whole village with sage, rue, and chamomile, from a garden that would have been no wonder in Lilliput. Auntie Evans could not have been said to be without the means of living, for she fed herself, and not unfrequently her less industrious neighbors, with the proceeds of her busiest of all busy needles. One day, a letter, marked on the outside, "in haste," was sent her from the village post-office; and, in an hour after, the fire was extinguished upon her hearth, the latch-string drawn, and Auntie Evans, for the first time in her life, found herself in the stage-coach. In a few days she returned with a pale, sad little girl, all in black, and was invited at once to a grand tea-party, for curiosity's sake. But the old lady had only a short story. A friend had died, and bequeathed her an only child.

"Has she money?" asked the gossips.

Auntie Evans said "No;" and then they all shook their heads and looked mysterious; and somehow, in a few minutes though there could be no connection between it and the other subject, they were all talking about the new and excellent regulations which had been made at the almshouse. Auntie Evans expressed herself very glad that the poor children were to be better cared for; and thereupon sipped her tea without further concern. That subject was immediately abandoned, and the conversation took an unaccountable turn, calculated to overthrow entirely the doctrine of association, for somebody began talking about the price of plain needlework. Most of the ladies were of the opinion, that a sempstress

could no more than support herself comfortably; and if by chance she did accomplish more than that, it was her "bunden duty" to lay by the surplus for a "rainy day." Aunt Evans appeared to listen to all this very composedly; but, in reality, her thoughts were a little absent. She was planning the number of shirts she should be obliged to make, in order to send the little orphan, Dora', to the best school in the village.

Dora' was sent to school; and forthwith, the pale child became as great a favorite as Aunt Evans herself. Dora's voice had a tone to it, like the stroke of a silver bell, reaching us through a medium of tears; and she might always be found, whether under the cherry-tree, at the back of the school-house, or nestled in a rich clover-bed, or seated on the spotted alders by the brook-side, with a group of children about her, singing the little songs that she learned of Aunt Evans. How deliciously sweet was that voice! And though the words could claim to be of no higher order than

"Little bird, with bosom red,
Welcome to my humble shed:"

or,

"Pretty bee, busy bee,
If you 'd but sing to me,"

many a stern old man paused to listen, and many a *business* woman raised her red bandana to her eyes, as those clear, touching tones fell, despite the crust above it, on her heart. The women did not know why they were thus affected; but Aunt Evans would have told them there was a shadow within, from which that voice stole its touch of sorrow, and which, later in the day of her life, would fall back upon her heart.

Aunt Evans might, quite unknown to those about her, have been a prophetess; but Dora' went on, year after year, singing all the time more and more sweetly, and with more touching pathos, while the shadow, if any there was, must have been nearly melted by the neighboring sunshine. One

individual, considering himself somewhat wiser than his neighbors, whispered at length to some others, that the peculiarity in Dora' Evans's voice was the despairing plaint of prisoned genius; but Alderbrook had no citizen mad enough, even though all had credited the suggestion, to bind the child for this to a lot of splendid misery. Dora's neighbors knew little of raising a God-given power to that point of famous infamy where even its admirers are privileged to jest about it;—they were common men, and had never learned that it is the misfortune of genius to consume itself in a bonfire, that others may be amused by its coruscations. So Dora' went on singing every Sabbath in the village choir, singing at the fire-side of Aunt Evans, and singing at the social gatherings in the village; always thankful, and rejoicing that she had a power which could make herself and everybody else so happy. Thus passed year after year, until Dora' was fifteen; and the shadow had as yet settled on neither heart nor brow.

Dora' sat upon the knoll that I have pointed out under the two elm-trees, circled by a row of young faces, all turned earnestly and lovingly to hers.

“Sing it again, Dora'! do! do! just once again, dear! it is so pretty!” went the pleading round; and Dora' smiled, and began to sing.

That morning a stranger had reached Alderbrook by the stage-coach. He was a small man, slightly moulded; with eager piercing eyes, two wrinkles passing from their inner corners half way up the forehead; an aquiline nose, sallow cheeks, and thin lips always pressed closely together. Though he could scarcely have attained the middle age, he was slightly bald; frequent threads of silver mingled in his black hair and beard; and upon his face there was many a line, the work of a more hasty pencil than time carries. Just as Dora' commenced her song, this man was hurrying along, with his usual quick step, close beside the fence. As the first strain fell on his ear, he raised his eyes, and cast up to the clouds, and away into the tree-tops, a glance of eager inquiry. Again it

came, and again; and a smile full of beautiful delight broke over the listener's compressed lips, and a fire was kindled in the centre of his now dilated eye, which seemed burning back into his very soul.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, as his glance fell upon the pretty group cresting the green knoll; and then he crossed his arms upon his breast, lowered his earnest brows, and bent his ear to listen.

The stranger did not leave Alderbrook that day, neither did he then continue his walk; but, returning to the "Sheaf and Sickle," as soon as the little party beneath the elms was broken up, he possessed himself of all his landlady knew concerning the rustic songstress.

"Such a voice!" he muttered, as he strode up and down the piazza; "such compass! such delicacy! such pathos! she would madden them. It would be a generous deed, too—poor orphan!"

He passed on, his steps growing every moment quicker and his eyes more eagerly bright. "Ay, ay! I will do it! I cannot leave such a diamond in this desert!"

That night the artist tapped at the humble door of Auntie Evans; and drawing his chair alongside the old lady, unfolded his plans. She listened coldly.

"The child is well with her mother—she cannot go."

"But such a gift, madam!"

"A gift from God! it is a sin to tamper with it."

"Ay, from God!" answered the artist solemnly; "it is a sin to leave it unimproved."

An hour was spent in fruitless argument, when the composer suddenly inquired, "But what says the young lady herself? let her speak."

"Yes, let Dora' answer," returned Auntie Evans, triumphantly. "Thank God! I may trust her! what say you, my child?"

"What sayest thou, gifted one, to the glorious art?"

Dora's face was buried in the folds of muslin that hung about the little window, and at first she did not raise it.

“Speak as you would have it, darling,” said the old lady, softly, drawing near, and bending over her idol.

Such dreams as had been swimming in the young girl's fancy! Such a consciousness that every word the composer had said of her wondrous power was true! Such an irresistible longing to give utterance to an undefinable something that she had always felt struggling within her! How could she resist it? Dora' loved her kind foster-mother; but now there was a fever at her heart and her brain was in a whirl. She raised her eyes. How changed were they! the soft, meek dewiness had passed—they had grown larger and darker, and wore an intensity of meaning, a depth of feeling and purpose, that made them strange to Aunty Evans. The love-thought had almost vanished from the corners of the mouth; the lips lay apart like two lines of burning crimson, the upper drawn up and knotted in the middle, and a spot of bright red glowed in the centre of each pale cheek. Dora' did not speak. It needed not that she should.

“The shadow is falling!” murmured Aunty Evans. “My poor, poor Dora'! Oh, I have had a fearful watch!”

She folded the child in her arms, kissed her hot cheek, placed her hands upon her throbbing temples; and, saying to the composer, “She will go with you,” motioned him to leave them alone.

Aunty Evans was not so ignorant of worldly things, as to trust her precious charge, without due precaution, to the keeping of a stranger. She possessed herself of ample knowledge concerning the character and standing of the composer; and was very exacting in all her arrangements for the child's welfare, evincing a lynx-eyed policy that she had never been supposed to possess. Above all, she insisted on her being allowed to return to her humble home at any moment she should express the wish. So Dora' went away from Alderbrook, and Aunty Evans was left alone.

Bright Summer passed in her glory—melancholy Autumn laid a worn head upon the bosom of Winter, and with sighs

yielded up the spirit—and Winter came on with his cold breath and blazonry of jewels. Six months had passed away since Dora' sang to her companions on the knoll beneath the two elm-trees. Now she stood in a luxuriously furnished apartment, the soft flaxen ringlets shading her delicate throat as of yore, but with little else to mark her identity with the violet-eyed child that had sung in the fields at Alderbrook. The pale, earnest face of the composer looked out upon her admiringly from a pile of cushions at the other end of the apartment; and she was aware of the gaze, and seemed bent on gratifying him, for her small hands were clasped with unwonted energy, and determination burned in her cheek and flashed from her eye. She stood near a piano at which a stranger was seated; and, after his fingers had passed over the keys, her voice broke forth in all its olden melody. But now it was subject to her control; now she *knew* the feeling that she would express, and her voice became but the wings to bear it out. The prisoned genius had found utterance. Was Dora' happy now? Out upon such simplicity! How could it be otherwise? Was she not about to entrance a world? What blissful emotions would creep into a thousand hearts at listening! And would not the enchantress find an all-sufficient reward in the adulation of millions? Ah! Dora', Dora'! bend thy brow to the halo! tread upon the roses! Never think how the first may darken; how the last may shrivel and fall away from the sharp thorns beneath them! The path has been well trodden and watered—pass on!

The good composer, Dora's friend, was dead.

It had been published far and wide, told in the drawing-room and in the coffee-house, in the private parlor and in the public saloon, in hall, alley and shop, lisped in the boudoir and cried in the street—everywhere, in all the places where the virtuous dwell and vicious hide themselves, it had been told that a new star had arisen in the musical horizon; and those who would never care for the artiste on account of her

art, were told that she was young and beautiful. What a crowd came out to greet the first appearance of our star! Should she not have felt honored? Lights flashed, jewels blazed, plumes waved and nodded, smiles sped to their destination, or lost themselves upon the air, and all—for her? Not one, not one! Poor Dora'! even in her triumph, how desolate!

A burst of applause greeted her appearance; and, for a moment, her heart bounded, and her eye flashed with gratified ambition. Then rows of faces gaped upon her from pit, box, and gallery; eyes were strained, and glasses levelled, and the young songstress felt the warm blood mounting hastily to her forehead. Poor Dora'! even in her triumphs how humiliated!

She sang as she had ever sung; for genius is always conscious of its own sacredness, and will not be stared down by bold impudence, nor raised up by admiring plaudits. She sang, and garlands fell at her feet, and, all night long, the applauses of that multitude rang, like the idle mockeries that they were, in her ear. Was it for this she had toiled, and hoped, and given her better nature up to a withering ambition? Was this her temple in the clouds, now dissolving in its own nothingness—a thing of vapor, bound together by a chain of gilded water-drops? The wings were melted, and Icarus was fast approaching the Ægéan. What a blessing that mankind so seldom reach the goal of hope! The chase is glorious—in empty, unsatisfying *success* lies the curse.

It was the anniversary of the evening on which Dora' had resolved to turn from the bosom of her foster-mother to the world which was beckoning her. A light was burning on the white pine table, and beside it sat Aunty Evans, her Bible on her knees. She appeared older, much older, than on that night twelve-month. Thought had cut strange lines upon her face, and deepened the look of simple good nature, once so conspicuous there, to one of earnest, almost painful solicitude. The door was open, and the fragrance from the honey-suckles

and roses stole into the apartment ; but Aunty Evans thought not a word of the honey-suckles and roses. She was indulging most painful reflections. A passing figure rustled the vines, a shadow fell across the door-way, and a light foot pressed the threshold ; yet Aunty Evans looked not up.

“ Mother ! mother !—I have come home to you—I am sick, I am weary ! Give me a place, mother—a place to die !”

There were sobbings and tears, half joyous, half heart-broken, in the little cottage that night ; and, in the morning, all the villagers gathered to look upon the returned idol. How changed ! Poor Dora' ! it is needless to follow thee to the grave. The spirit that, finding food nowhere on earth, turns and eats into itself, can endure but a little time ; and we will be more thankful for the natural light that again beamed in thine eye, and the natural feeling that slumbered about thy lips, than sorry for thine early loss. Thy rest is among the flowers, where the bees steal their sweets, and the birds spread their wings to the sunlight.

Sleepest thou not passing well, young Dora' ?

THE ANGEL'S PILGRIMAGE.

Disciple. When the soul sinks to earth and its wings fall away, how may they be restored again ?

Zoroaster. By sprinkling them with the Waters of Life.

Disciple. But where are those waters to be found ?

Zoroaster. In the Garden of God."

I HAD been poring over some of the half beautiful, half ridiculous fictions of the Oriental theologians, startled every now and then to find a real diamond gleaming up from the mystic rubbish of darkened genius, and saddened by learning how very near the truth some few had groped, while they had gone down to the grave without having discovered one ray of its pure light.

Gray shadows were falling upon Strawberry Hill, when I closed the book and leaned from the window, thinking, as I marked a dark-eyed girl of some five summers crossing the log bridge, how would the mighty Zoroaster have been rejoiced to receive the key to truth now in the keeping of even that little child. The shadows lengthened and grew dimmer as I watched, the twilight deepened, and my thoughts took on the same mistiness ; the Persian allegories, the Rabbinical fictions, and the sublime doctrines of the Chaldeans became strangely mingled in my dreaminess ; and hill, stream and meadow faded from my closing eyes, as a new scene opened upon them. I was at once transported to one of the innermost recesses of a solemn and hoary forest, which I believed had slumbered for centuries among its own undisturbed shadows, untrodden by the foot of man. But even as I stood wondering in the midst of this magnificent loneliness, I heard a voice in plaintive sadness exclaim, "How long ! how long !" and I at once recognized the presence of one of those fallen angels described

by the Rabbins. He had stood upon the heights of heaven, when earth was a gloomy mass of darkness; he had seen "the Spirit of God move upon the face of the waters," and he had joined the music of the stars, when this beautiful globe sprung to life and light. He had nestled in the trees of Eden, and dipped his wing in the waters of the Euphrates; but he had sinned, alas! and those beautiful wings had fallen away. And when I saw a fair fragile creature by his side, that I knew had trod the earth for centuries, though there was less than the weight of twenty summers on her clear brow, I read his sin and its punishment. For her sake his wings had fallen, and with her he must wander, a pilgrim upon the earth, until the end of time. For years and years they had made their home among men — for years and years listened to the melodies of the rich voiced bul-bul as he warbled from the rose-trees of voluptuous Cashmere; drunk the perfume from Persian groves, and wandered in the romantic valleys of the Nile; but though they grew not weary of beauty, there was that in the hearts of men and in their acts which made them sad. So the angel and his bride wandered away to darker, sterner regions. They climbed the icy peaks of the rugged Altai, slept beneath the hardy evergreen of Siberia, and braved, hand in hand, the winds which howled along the dreary plains of Kamschatka. And still they wandered on, till Zillah and her angel were the first to leave their footprints on the soil of the New World. They had since seen nation after nation grow up and wither; they had seen gay cities built, and again brave old trees growing over them; — change, change came everywhere, but not to them. At last, another race had claimed the soil and by might possessed it. The hearts of the angel and his bride sickened at wrong and carnage; and it was then that they plunged into the heart of the wilderness, and made them a home in its solitary depths.

An hour-glass had just been turned, and the angel bent thoughtfully over it, watching the glittering sands as they dropped, one by one, into the empty glass below. Beside him reclined, like Eve in the original Eden, a beautiful woman.

A heavy grape-vine overshadowed her; and underneath, and by her side, bloomed gorgeous flowers of every hue, all matted into the luxurious green. The hand of improvement had not yet wrested from the wilderness its treasures. Her soul-full eye, with even more of tenderness than thought in it, rested lovingly upon the angel.

"That *we* should measure hours, my Zillah," he said at length, "like children of a broken day! we whose seconds are marked to us by the seasons, and whose minutes are centuries?"

"And is there no change yet upon the dial-plate?"

"None. When I spent a thousand years and all my skill upon this dial, I little thought that cycle after cycle would pass — cycle after cycle — years wither and go to their graves, and young years spring up bearing with them new germs of life, and still not a shadow come to tell us that the evening of our long, long day was nearer than at its morning."

"And the other signs, in the heavens and on the earth, and among men. Are there no way-marks yet discoverable? nothing to say how long ere this sweet, sad journey will be ended, and my angel shall have the wings again, which he lost for me?"

"Yes, it is a sweet journey, Zillah; though so, so long! There was unfathomable mercy in the punishment awarded me, in that thou wert left; and cheerfully we will bide our time."

Long and wistfully had the fallen angel watched for some sign of the earth's dissolution; but yet his only remark was, "We will bide our time." He had looked for the stars to pale; but still they burned on with the same unchanging radiance as when first the band of seraphim went forth to light their fires; he had watched cloud after cloud thickening and dissolving in the heavens, almost expecting to see in their endless transformation a form which he yet believed he should recognize, step from their soft folds. But there had been no change in these, save as they obeyed the biddings of the wind, since from the walls of the upper Paradise he looked down on

their first fresh loveliness. There had been no sign in heaven, and none, none on earth. What mark of age was there in the strong-limbed giants of the wood, that stood cloud-capt around his bower in the wilderness? Life, life was everywhere. Everything, even death itself, teemed with it; for, if but a flower closed its young eye, and turned earthward withering, flowers innumerable sprang up where it stood; and so the mighty destroyer became the parent of beauty and bloom. The earth had never reeled nor paused for a single moment in its bright circuit among the stars; but on, on, beautifully and quietly she moved, like a bird from Paradise flown by the hand of the Eternal. The angel had watched her in his unvarying round, and though his eye had become dimmed by the atmosphere of earth, he could yet see deep into the mysteries above him. He knew much, very much of the heaven-lore which God has written on the stars; but yet the weakness of his vision was painful to him, and he longed for the day when his mind could span the universe as at its creation. He knew where the pelican brooded on her rocky desert nest, and saw in the red blood drunk by her children from her willing breast but another type of that which has its types everywhere. He had followed the eagle in the eye of the sun, and knew the language of his scream, the thought which prompted every movement of his strong pinion, and the dreams that hovered over him in the cloud-capt couch he had builded on the crag. He had seen the wing of the bird grow heavy beneath the weight of centuries; and when at last it drooped and faltered, he knew the secret which cost the adventurous Spaniard a life—the fountain where it went to lave and grow young again. He had bent his ear to the flower and listened to its whisperings; the foot-falls of the evening dew were familiar to him; and not a drop of water had a tinkle, not a leaf a murmur, and not a bird a song, the language of which he had not interpreted to his still youthful bride, the gentle Zillah. But the flower whispered of *Life*; the dew brought a life-draught in every tiny globule; and the gushing water, and the fresh-lipped leaves, and the mellow-

throated birds, and the wandering breeze, all joined in a chorus which brought sadness to the spirit of the angel. It was all LIFE! LIFE! but it was that life which bears somewhere in it the seeds of dissolution; not a blossom from the tree guarded by the flaming sword of cherubim.

“Are there no way-marks?” repeated Zillah. “It is long since we grew sick of the glitter and falsehood about us, and so turned to the delicious stillness of this quiet wilderness—very long, my angel. Let us go back again. Perhaps we may find a faint shadowing of what we seek in the actions of men—in their virtue, their wisdom, or possibly their vices. It may be that His handiwork shall never fail; that the earth and the heavens are immutable; and that we are to be free when my poor fallen brethren have received back upon their bosoms the marred image which he first left there, or when their continued sins have worn away its slightest traces. It may be that by wisdom they will gain a spirit-mastery, and so drop the cumbering clay and its defilements together, and then thou mayst return to thy home and take thy Zillah with thee. Let us go forth and look upon the work of mortals, and see if they are not writing their own destiny with their own hands.”

The angel was persuaded, and hand in hand the twain went forth upon their pilgrimage.

The vision changed, and I again met the wanderers in a great city. A noisy rabble filled the streets, and the hoarse laugh and ribald jest passed freely as they hurried on. Zillah shrank from their infectious touch, and as she did so, I heard the angel whisper, “It could not have been worse in the ancient cities which HE destroyed by fire.” But every minute the crowd became more dense, and as the multitude pressed in one direction, the pilgrims turned their heads and suffered themselves to be borne onward by it. It stopped beneath a scaffold, and the two strange spectators cast upon each other inquiring glances.

“It is some merry-making for the rude populace,” at last the angel remarked, “and lo! yonder comes the harlequin.”

"Then he mimics woe," said Zillah, "for he seems in an agony of suffering."

In an agony of suffering indeed was the wretched criminal, as he crawled rather than walked across the scaffold, wringing his hands and uttering low, half-stifled sobs which could not be mistaken.

"It is no jest," said the angel, "and yet these men come as merrily as to a nuptial banquet. Can it be that these poor creatures of a day find food for mirth in a brother's suffering?"

"See! What are they doing with him?" exclaimed Zillah in alarm.

The arms were pinioned, the cap was drawn upon the head, and the executioner proceeded to adjust the cord.

"It — it is a scene unfit for us!" said the angel shuddering, and averting his eyes with horror.

A minute after there was a movement in the crowd which made a sound like the sullen murmur of the sea; and the laugh and jest went round as before while the soul of a man, a brother, was passing, with all the blackness of its fearful guilt upon it, into the fathomless future, and the presence of the Judge. Poor Zillah trembled like the lightly poised hare-bell in a storm; there was a startled glance in her soft eye, her check became blanched, and her tongue faltered as she exclaimed,

"What *can* it mean? Have they taken away his life, the little span which notwithstanding its briefness men love better than their souls?"

"Ay, my Zillah — his life! The frail bark has been cut from its moorings to drift away upon the unknown ocean, by hands which even to-morrow will strive to cling to this cold shore and strive in vain. But this is not a fitting scene for thine eyes to look upon, my bright bird of the sunshine, — nor mine — nor mine!" he added in a low murmur. "Oh! for my lost, earth-bartered wings!"

"Bartered for *me*," returned Zillah, in a tone no louder than her breath, but fraught with an exquisitely sad melody.

The angel answered only with a look, but it brought a tint to her cheek and a beautiful light to her eye.

"And this is murder," she continued, after a moment's pause.

"No; not murder, but the terrible punishment of a terrible crime. When thy race, my poor Zillah, lost every trace of the image they first bore, and turned against each other like the wolves and tigers of the wilderness, the GREAT ONE passed a decree that blood alone should wash away the stain of human blood; and this man's hand was red with that which had flowed in the veins of his brother."

"Ah! the multitude should have veiled themselves in sackcloth, and sprinkled the gray ashes upon the floors of their dwellings," said Zillah, her lip growing still paler, and quivering with horror. "The entire people should have thronged the altar. Mourn, mourn, ye proud nation! It is the son of your bosom whose baseness has required this terrible deed at your hands; and He alone who 'rideth upon the wings of the wind,' whose 'pavilion is in the secret place,' knows how far the infection has spread. Alas! my race! my poor, degraded, ruined race!"

"This sad spectacle must needs beget sad feelings," returned the angel, "and yet the thoughtless crowd make merry as at a bridal; and those who come not here to regale their eyes with the sufferings of a brother, pass carelessly on, chaffer in the market-place, pore over the page, obey the beck of pleasure, and forget that another black, black seal is added to the degradation of man. Ah, my Zillah, the end is afar off. I catch no glimpse of the living waters; my sight grows dim in this darkness, and my foot is heavy, very heavy."

"Look!" exclaimed Zillah, "the dead man is lowered to his coffin, and they all throng to look at him; see how they jostle each other!"

"Ay; and still they laugh and jest! The red drop is at the heart of every one of them; and they are now gorging the fiendish principle with blood which they dare not shed. Let us hence."

It was with difficulty that the angel and his companion extricated themselves from the brutal multitude — men who, seeming to snuff blood afar off, flock to see the spark of life extinguished on the heart's altar, and can be kept back only by high prison walls or the glitter of the bayonet. But at length they were free, and hastily did they move away from the scene of retribution and cruelty.

"Alas! for thy lost wings, my angel," sighed Zillah, when the frightful din had died away upon the ear.

"The Waters of Life are not here," was the sorrowful reply, "not here in the midst of cruelty and blood; the heart of man is no better than at the beginning, and — it is no worse. The doom is not yet written, the book of good and evil is not yet sealed — how long! how long!"

Another crowd now obstructed the way, swarming to an immense edifice, some eager, some careless — tradesmen talking of the common business of the day, lawyers mooting dubious points in wrangling tones, though usually with courteous words, boys with shrill voices hawking their various wares, and the rabble, as ever, jesting, laughing and jostling. Among the crowd were two persons discussing the execution of that morning.

"They hurry the poor wretch into eternity unprepared, as though he were a dog or an ox! It is barbarous!" said one.

"A relic of the dark ages," observed his companion; "necessary in the infancy of time, when men were like the beasts of the field, and could be restrained only by the strong arm, but that philanthropic and enlightened statesmen of the nineteenth century" —

His voice was lost to the ear of the angel, who had pressed on eagerly to catch the sound; for after what he had beheld that morning, the knowledge that the whole human race was not intent on blood was grateful to him.

"Those men have pity — let us follow them," he said to Zillah.

"But they pity only the red hand," was the reply; "they

said nothing of the bloody shroud, and the desolate hearth-stone."

The two pilgrims pressed forward and entered at the door of a spacious apartment which was crowded to overflowing. A row of venerable persons occupied cushioned seats raised on a kind of dais at the extremity of a large room. On one side of these sat twelve men in busy conference, and on the other, a goodly number lolled over tables covered with green baize cloth, some yawning, and others biting the ends of their feather pens or fastening and unfastening them behind their ears. Two dark faces glowered on each other immediately below the cushioned seats; and lower still, in a small square box, a person leaned forward, balancing on his elbows, and now prying into one face, and now another, with eyes which the angel trembled but to look upon. At last, the twelve men rose, and a silence as of death brooded over that vast multitude. A question was asked by a mild gray-haired man from the dais, and a deep, heavy voice resounded throughout the hall of justice, "NOT GUILTY." The crowd caught the sound, and peal on peal arose the deafening plaudits, the arched roof ringing back the sound, pausing to catch it again, and then replying, as though it had been a living voice answering from above.

"This is a proud triumph," said a voice beside the pilgrims.

"An innocent man, victim to some accident or slanderous tongue, doubtless," returned the angel.

"No, no; a greater scoundrel never trod the soil; never."

"But he is innocent of this crime."

"He is guilty, stranger, guilty; everything has conspired to prove it, and not a man in this room but is morally convinced of the fact."

"How, then, has he escaped?"

"By the help of yon lawyer's quibbles."

"A partaker of his crimes, I suppose," remarked the angel.

"*He*, a partaker of his crimes! he, the most honorable lawyer in the nation."

"I am a stranger," remarked the angel, apologetically;

“and I would fain know why this honorable man soils his soul for the sake of the guilty, and why you and all this multitude rejoice to see crime go out from your midst free to gather about itself still more filth and blackness.”

“We rejoice in the exercise of mercy,” returned the stranger.

“ ‘ Shall man then dare to shiver
The mystic golden bowl ?
Send back unto its Giver
The God-born deathless soul ?
Shall he the frail spark smother,
All earth cannot re-light ?
His weak, sin-heavy brother
Cast from his holier right ?’

“No, no! we are enlightened people, and the law of blood is distasteful to us.”

“Is then the law abolished among you?” inquired the angel, somewhat anxiously.

“Not abolished; there are wolves and tigers still in the land and they cry for vengeance in the name of the God of mercy.

“ ‘ Ay, from earth the blood-stained banish,
Snatch away his little time ?
'T is noble sure to punish
By copying the crime !
Heap the sods upon his breast,
Crush him down in all his sin !’ —

“Woe, woe, to such a blood-thirsty spirit! Thank God, however, that the murderous iron rule is gradually yielding to the voice of mercy, and the law of love is prevailing. ‘God is love.’”

“God is just!” echoed the angel, as he turned to depart.

“They disobey the express command of the Almighty, given before the framing of the nations,” said Zillah, “and bring an attribute of his own holy character as an excuse.”

“Their justice is cruel and heartless,” answered the angel, “and their mercy is weak and wicked. Love and justice wait hand in hand before the Great White Throne; but these men cannot link them together, for their eyes are darkened, and

heavy clouds are gathered about their souls. We need not search further, Zillah."

"Nay, a little longer—a little longer," pleaded the soft voice; "perchance they have a treasure, a talisman, a seed of good which we have not yet discovered. I feel that this distorted law of love has grown out of a holy principle which may even now be swelling and bursting from the rubbish. I will follow thee no longer, my angel, for my heart is sick and my foot weary; but tread thou these fearful paths, search thou for the hidden fountain, and when thou hast gained a sprinkling of its waters, fly to me and tell me time has ended. It is here, it is somewhere here. I feel its life-giving presence."

For many days and nights the angel wandered in dark dens of wickedness, his purer nature quivering and shrinking at the sounds of blasphemy. His foot followed in the track of the crouching, prowling assassin; his ear listened to the voice of the midnight robber; the thief brushed him as he crossed his path, and the vile, the polluted of every grade passed before his eyes like so many demons of the pit. The air grew heavy with sin, and clogged his breath; his frame drooped, for there was a weight upon it far heavier than fatigue could cast; even the rays of the sun struggled and grew ghastly in such pollution, and the stars seemed red and bleared.

Then he turned to brighter scenes, scenes on which the sun dared shine, not indeed in his first purity, clear and soft like the light of Paradise, but with a wild brilliance, which, while it dazzled the eyes, and withered the young plants that the dews neglected to visit, bore yet a fair promise of seed-time and harvest, day and night, to the hearts of men.

But even here was the villain's heart mantled in hypocrisy, here prowled the disguised wolf, here towered the beautiful marble above reeking bones and the foul mould of Death. In this brave light Revenge stalked up and down, an honorable and an honored guest. Here Avarice spread a yellow crust upon the heart, which burned in, and seared, and grew thicker, and gnawed at every chord that might have sounded a tuneful cadence, still increased in thickness till there was no power to

resist it from within; and then from the fearful gangrene sprang a brood of crimes, all veiled indeed, all *proper* and *legal*, which made the angel recoil as from the *less refined*, but scarce blacker ones that swarmed the dens he had left. Here too lurked fair Envy smiling and flattering, until she could place her foot upon the victim's head, and then down! crush! crush! — no pity, no remorse. Nay; why should mortal head dare rise higher than hers! Among flowers of the richest fragrance and brightest hue coiled Scandal, and when her serpent hiss rose upon the air, the flowers drooped, and their perfume was mingled with her noisome breath.

“It is all in vain — all in vain!” sighed the angel, as he returned again to his companion. “The heart of man remains the same as when this now degraded hand wielded the sword which guarded the gate of Eden; dark thoughts, violent passions, wicked imaginings all lurk within him, all are fostered and cherished in his bosom. And yet, my Zillah, there is something, or the foreshadowing of something — a veiled star, a pale light fringing the cloud, a low murmur as from the concealed fountain, a breath of pure air ever and anon stirring the seared leaves, and passing over the pulses of my soul. There is something, Zillah, which had well nigh made me hear the rustle of my own wings, and fixed my eyes on Paradise. I cannot tell what it is, but I feel it — I feel it.”

“Even so do I,” returned the fair Zillah, “and for that was it that I chose this spot. I have builded me an altar, and here, my angel, have I worshipped while thou hast been seeking.”

“I have sought in vain — all in vain,” returned the angel mournfully; “Oh! when will the end be?”

“*And then shall the end come!*” answered a deep melodious voice which made Zillah start and the angel open his large, mild, mournful eyes in wonder.

The figure that stood beside them might have risen from the shivering piles of withered leaves which the wantoning night-wind had thrown up in heaps along the plain; or shaped itself from the mist that dangled in long gray wreaths from

the tops of chimneys, hovered in great shadowy wings around silent windows, or rolled up, fold on fold, like an ominous curtain from the reeking earth. It was that of a man, but not such as walk the world in modern times. His beard was parted upon the lip, and descended, a mass of waving silver, to the girdle; and long floating locks, like the snow in whiteness, shaded his scarce wrinkled brow, beneath which looked out a pair of eyes as soft, mild, blue and dewy as the sky of a summer evening. The angel felt his heart irresistibly drawn back to the time when he was sinless, for there was something pure and spirit-like upon the face of the stranger, which, though it lacked the loftiness of a brother angel, was yet so beautiful, so meek, and so full of love, that the highest seraph would scarce have lost by the exchange. He was evidently old, very old; but it was such age as the father of our race might have exhibited, when eight centuries had passed over him and left him still unscathed. His voice was deep, strong, and mellifluous; his eye undimmed; his cheek full, though lacking somewhat the roundness of youth; his lip ruddy, his frame muscular and erect, and his foot firm. Still he was old, — that could not be doubted; but Time had never touched him with palsied finger; no blight had reached sinew, or brain, or heart, and every year that had passed over him had brought new strength and vigor.

“‘And then shall the end come!’” he repeated in fervid tones; while a deep enthusiasm kindled in every feature a voiceless eloquence.

“When, father?” inquired the angel reverently.

“When the commandment shall have been obeyed, when the work is accomplished” —

“What commandment? what work? Are we to search? to dig? If thou knowest where this fountain flows, tell me, oh, tell me! I will climb the most inaccessible rock, I will penetrate the cave where sleeps the deadliest miasma, with my single hand I will open a passage to the core of the earth — only tell me where to seek, and I will ask no more.”

The stranger fixed a wondering and yet benign glance upon

the perturbed countenance of the angel. "And dost thou not know?"

"No, no; but tell me, and I will bless thee forever!"

"Nay, bless Him — Him! Surely thou hast heard of the Glorious Ransom."

"I have heard," whispered the angel, in deep awe, "but it was THERE; and even *our* harps and voices were silent. I dare not speak of that where the air is so heavy with the weight of earth's defilements. And it can never come to *me*."

"To thee! there is not a human being" —

"Nay, nay, old man; thou dost not understand thine own words. But tell me of the end. I see something upon thy forehead unlike the brand of thy miserable race, and I think the golden secret lies in thy bosom. I would fain know when this weary pilgrimage will be finished."

The venerable ancient fixed his penetrating eye for a moment on his companion, whispering to himself, "And he too! it cannot be! I thought myself alone!" and then, evidently puzzled, though more than pleased to recite a story in which his whole soul was interested, he commenced:

"Eighteen hundred years ago Rome was at the height of her glory. All the principal nations of the earth owned her sway and gloried in their bondage. The redder forms of tyranny had departed. The brow of Octavius Augustus was mild beneath his crown; while under the patronage of the wise Mecenas, and by the taper of Grecian genius, the loftiest forms of art were born and flourished. The voice of eloquence sounded in the forum, the flowers of poesy budded and blossomed in palace and in cot, life sprang from the silent marble, the canvass glowed, and Philosophy linked arms with Pleasure, and wandered about her sacred groves, or dallied in her luxurious gardens. *But HE was not a Roman.* On her proud brow the Queen of the Nations wore the half-crushed chaplet of Grecian liberty, a beautiful wreath dropping with the matchless perfume which still lingers around her broken columns and crumbling arches, around the spiritual ideal breathing in the creations of her artists, and around the graves of her phi-

losophers, her poets and her statesmen. *But HE was not of Greece.* In one proud hand Rome held a jewel unequalled in gorgeousness, a golden lotus gathered from the banks of the Nile, and now crimsoned by the blood of the beautiful and perfidious Cleopatra; and in the other she clasped a rude but strong and valuable chain whose rough links bore the names of Gaul, Germany and Switzerland. *But HE came from none of these.*

“The mistress of the world felt quivering beneath her sandalled foot, and pressed more closely as it quivered, a strange nation, with strange laws, strange customs and a strange religion, despised alike by the Roman, the Greek and the Egyptian, small in territory, divided within itself, weak in arms, and learned but in its own laws. This was the once favored nation of the Jews. Jerusalem, fallen, degraded, enslaved, still bore some traces of ancient splendor. There stood the Holy Temple, though desecrated by Mammon; the children of the prophets still gathered in their synagogues; and the proud Pharisee swept in his fringed garments from the council chamber to the altar, lounged on rich cushions, and quaffed the blood of the grape from goblets of massive gold and richly chased silver. *But HE claimed not his home in Jerusalem.* In Galilee, in despised, contemned Galilee, and not its fairest city—not Capernaum, not Cana—but in poor, mean, hated, contemptible Nazareth—there sprang the Fountain of Life; there, from that dark, unknown corner, from that smallest, most degraded city of the most degraded quarter of the earth, HE, the Mighty One, the King of Glory, walked forth and named himself the Son of man, the Saviour of a fallen, helpless, miserable race.”

“I know Him—I know Him,” murmured the angel, bending his knee and shading his brow with his hand. “Go on,” he added after a moment’s pause; “go on; tell me more; it cannot reach *me*, but—my poor Zillah!—tell me all.”

“He sought meanness of origin and poverty, not because there was virtue in these, but for the sake of the lowly poor,” continued the stranger, his cheek glowing and his eye lighting

excitement of his theme. "His mother was the betrothed bride of a poor carpenter, his cradle was in a stable—His, the sovereign Prince of the Universe! But a choir of angels came to rouse the earth to sing his welcome; a new star was set upon the brow of night, and in its light the magii of the East, the philosophers of the Persian court, bent in worship to the clay-shrined God; and a haughty monarch so trembled in his kingly purple, when he heard of the obscure infant, that hundreds of tiny graves were opened, each stained by the blood of the helpless and moistened by a mother's tears."

"Go on! go on!" whispered the angel.

"The humble Nazarene put on the tasseled robe of a teacher, but he turned not to the palace for his disciples, nor lingered he by the proud door of the Sanhedrim. He wandered by the lone Galilean lake, he sought those places where men never look for honor, calling the unlettered and the lowly to his side, the ignorant fisherman from his nets, and the despised publican from his scrip. And yet this obscure man, with these humble followers, stirred at once proud, pompous Jewry to her centre. He toiled and suffered, toiled and suffered, and wept, and then he died, as none but malefactors ever died before."

The old man paused in his story, as though too much agitated to proceed; while the angel echoed in mingled awe and surprise, "He died! He *could not die!*"

"He—he was borne to his sepulchre," continued the meek ancient, "but the grave could not hold the Son of God. *He died for us, he rose for us, and he waits us at the right hand of his Father.*"

There was a long, unbroken, almost breathless silence, — Zillah bending forward in meek awe, her brow pressed to the altar, the face of the angel buried reverentially in his folded arms, and the patriarch standing with upraised eye and clasped hands, his face glowing with love and rapture.

"And the ransomed—when will He call them home?" at last the angel inquired.

"They drop into the grave at morning, in the blaze of day,

and at midnight; every hour, every moment—even now while we speak, some freed spirit is passing, and there are snowy wings that hover at the portal of death to bear it away to Paradise.”

“But when will He call all? when will the end be?” inquired the angel, with tremulous eagerness.

“Thou wouldst know when will arise the cry of the angel, ‘Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.’ But futurity has the secret hidden deep in the folds of her misty robes, and neither man nor angel may rob her of the treasure. Yet, my son, I can give thee the key, and if” —

“Quick! quick!”

“He told us — He — He taught.” The old man paused, composed his features, and resumed: “To those disciples called from the wayside, from the boat of the fisherman and lowly roof of the laborer, rude, unlettered, and of no repute among men, whose hands had never touched the soft palm of the Pharisee, and whose voices had learned to tremble and falter in such an august presence — to these lowest of the sons of this world, He confided the wealth of heaven, such rare jewels of truth as never before glittered beneath the stars; and these humble, unknown men He commissioned to bear their treasures to all the nations of the earth. At Jerusalem they began, and tower and temple trembled to their deep foundations. Thence they scattered their living pearls over hill and vale, far and wide, wherever the foot of man had trodden or lay the stain of sin.

“Even Grecian philosophy bent her polished ear when a follower of the Crucified stood in one of the proudest courts of Athens, and Epicurean and Stoic were alike confounded by the simple but sublime eloquence of truth. Rome, too, proud Rome acknowledged the still small voice which had stolen up from far Nazareth; but when she strove to honor it with purple and crimson the voice died among the caves and dens of the wilderness, the jewel receded from her grasp, while she placed its blazing semblance on her forehead, and all Europe

bowed the knee to the falsehood. But while in the name of the crucified Nazarene, who trod the earth in sadness and dishonor, the princes of the earth drew the lance, and knight and noble paved the way to his own emolument, while war and carnage ran riot throughout Christendom, and Jew and Saracen were taught to despise the religion which turned men into beasts of prey and deformed the face of creation; from distant caves and lowly valleys the meek voice of prayer still arose, and still the casket of the jewels of truth was the human heart. Through the red blood flowing at the mandate of Egyptian priest and Roman pontiff; through the crevices of the rocks of Switzerland, the hidden nooks environing the valley of Piedmont, the republican plains of Germany, and the wild, picturesque mountains of Scotland; through wrong without ruth, through the dungeon and the rack, through the bloody knife and blazing faggot, these jewels of truth, these Waters of Life have been borne" —

"And now! where are they now?" interrupted the angel, with almost vehement earnestness.

"Dost thou see yon church-spire, piercing the gray mist and glittering in the one pale ray which the moon sheds from her veiled throne? Go thither and love, and raise thy wings heavenward. Or here," lifting the folds of his robe and disclosing a small volume; "here the Waters spring; here the Tree of Life flourishes. Search! thou wilt find its blossoms on every page."

"Not for me! Alas! not for me!" murmured the angel, while Zillah, raising her forehead from the altar where it had rested, and extending her hands, eagerly exclaimed, "For me! for me! to fit me for the day when thy wings, my angel, shall be full of glory, that we may mount together to the throne of the Eternal. But, father, I would fain know when that may be. We are to tread the earth until that hour."

"And I," returned the ancient, "have the same pilgrimage before me."

"But when, oh when shall it be accomplished?"

“Not until every altar like this thou hast reared shall be cast down.”

Zillah raised a startled eye to the face of the patriarch, and cast herself precipitately before the altar.

“What! have I not told thee that the Great Sacrifice has been offered, and may not my testimony be believed? Did I not stand beside the cross, and, while bidden to tarry till a second coming, see the sinless victim bleed? What wouldst thou more? Canst thou not make the sacrifice thine own? Faith and love alone are required of thee — wilt thou not believe?”

Zillah remained still meekly bending before the altar, but her thoughts had risen far above it. The light of truth was slowly breaking over her countenance, illuminating each feature with a deep, subdued enthusiasm, till the frail, beautiful daughter of earth seemed to bear more traces of heaven than the exiled angel.

“Every false altar must be cast down,” continued the ancient; “the commandment must be obeyed; the Fountain of Life must gush forth in the midst of every people; the jewels of truth, borne through suffering and blood till nearly half the world acknowledges their beauty, must be scattered freely over every portion of the globe, and far above the standards of the nations must float the banner of the Crucified. He that was God, was man, and is the God of glory henceforth and forever. The mighty work intrusted to us at that holy parting moment must be accomplished, ‘and then shall the end come.’”

“I too will go forth upon this holy mission,” said Zillah, bowing her head meekly; “perchance my weak hand may be blest, since to all that share in the salvation has the sweet work been intrusted.”

“And I cannot loiter here,” returned the angel, “though I have forfeited my right to be in any way a ministering spirit to the race. Go thou, my Zillah, and I will hover in thy footsteps, I will nurse the flowers thou lovest, and scatter their perfume in thy pathway. When evil is near, I will shield thy loved head; I will watch by thy side during the remain

der of this fearful night, and when the morning at last dawns thou shalt know its approach by the ray which falls upon thy angel's renovated pinions. To the work, my Zillah; it is one which will ennoble even thee."

The mild old man smiled; and I almost fancied that I saw something stirring at the side of the angel, as though every fresh consecration of ransomed mortal brought nearer the hour of final triumph; and then the entire vision vanished.

I was leaning from my window as an hour previous; but the little girl stood no longer upon the bridge, and Strawberry Hill and the hoary old trees above it were slumbering in soft summer shadows. The moon, now a soft silver crescent, had climbed far up her azure pathway, and lay a sweet smile upon the face of the sky, and the earth was smiling back a beautiful response in every dew-drop. For a moment I thought the creatures of my drama were about me, but in the next I knew that Zillah and her angel were born of the wildest fiction; and that the ashes of the beloved disciple, if not mingled with the farthest elements, still slept at Ephesus. But much, very much, had mingled in my thoughts in which dreaming had no part. And as I carefully separated the threads of fiction that had entangled themselves in the richer woof of truth, I longed to exclaim, in the words of my fabulous Zillah, "I too will go forth upon this holy mission!"

THE DISSATISFIED SPIRIT.

GOD "bowed the heavens and came down," and breathed upon the earth; and a "living soul" was born. It was not an angel, to watch over the destinies of man, and interpose its white wing between him and evil; but it was a thing as lovely; and so it looked about to find itself a fit dwelling-place. While it paused in doubt, there came fluttering by a gay, beautiful creature, its bright wings woven in the loom from which the Iris sprung, all glittering in gold and crimson, now bathing in the dew and now in the sun-light, brilliant and blithesome, and light as the air on which it balanced. The spirit grew glad at the pretty sight, and as the tiny wonder again swept past, it thought within itself, "What a delightful thing to be a butterfly!" Instantly, a pair of gorgeous wings sprouted from the thought; and the embodied spirit flew exultingly up and down the earth, careering in the light, and glorying in its new-found beauties. Sometimes it paused to peep into the hearts of the young flowers; and sipped daintily the sweets which dwelt on their fresh lips, and fanned them when they drooped, and bathed in their perfume; and at night it folded up its wings and made its couch where the moon-beam lay most lovingly. But it could not sleep. That was a breath from heaven, stirring those gorgeous wings, the "living soul" within, swelling and struggling, conscious that it was not performing its mission. There could not be a brighter nor gayer life, and surely the innocent little butterfly was not guilty of doing harm; but there was a chiding voice came up from within, and the dissatisfied spirit could not sleep. Finally, it grew sorrowful, even in the midst of its light companions, as they poised and reeled in the sunlight, intoxicated by the mere bliss of living. And every day it grew more and more sorrowful, and its wings heavier, till at

last it cried out in sharp anguish. Beautiful and innocent was the life of the gay insect; but the God-born spirit was not created to waste itself on a sunbeam or a flower; and those magnificent wings were leaden fetters to it. A bird was carolling on the tree above, and, as the saddened spirit looked up, it thought of the happy hearts which the little songster made, and how it praised God in its light joyousness, and then exclaimed, pantingly, "What a sweet thing to be a bird!"

A little child found a dead butterfly at the foot of the red maple tree, that morning; and as she stooped to pick it up, there came such a gush of melody from the green above, that she started back in pleased astonishment; and then, clapping her soft hands together, she raised her infantile voice in clear, ringing tones, fraught with the music of a mirthful heart. On the instant, there came a rushing sound from the massive foliage; a pair of beautiful wings broke thence, and balanced for a moment above; then descended, hovering about the head of the child, as though bestowing some wordless blessing; and, finally, spread themselves for flight. The bird paused where the laborer rested at noon-tide; and the eye of the strong man brightened as he wiped the sweat away, and leaned against the rugged bark of the meadow-tree, yielding himself up to the delicious influence of its music. Then it flew to the casement of the invalid, and thence to the roof-tree of the cotter; and thence it still pursued its way kindly and lovingly, pausing to warble a moment even by the barred window of the criminal. For many a day, the bird-embodied spirit was happy and contented, and believed itself sent upon earth but for the purpose of winning men, by such small, sweet efforts, from sorrow. But, as it nestled one night in the foliage of the forest tree, there came a sad mis-giving, to trouble it. It had heard of a nobler mission than it had yet dared to contemplate; it had looked into a path toilsome, and difficult to walk in, strewn with thorns, and beset with dangers; but yet glorious in that it had been trodden by a Holy One, who had linked it to heaven. The timid spirit

trembled as it thought, and folded its soft pinions over its breast, and strove to recollect all the good it had done that day—how it had softened the nature of the sinful, and dropped balm into the bosom of the sorrowing; but it could not shut down the high aspirations which were swelling within it. It knew well that the spirit of the little bird was not, like itself, an emanation from the Deity. When the song was hushed, and the plumage drooped, it would “go downward to the earth;” but the living soul, born of the breath of the Almighty, could not so perish. Should it fling aside its loftier gifts, and take upon itself the mission (sweet and beautiful though that mission might be) of the soulless bird? “Ah, no!” thought the pretty warbler, while its wings seemed swelling to eagle’s pinions; “the air is full of birds—the world is ringing with melody—it is delightful to swell the care-free chorus; but there is a higher, nobler mission, still.” As its breast heaved with these new emotions, a soft sound, as of a lute, stole up from a neighboring grove, and an exquisitely modulated voice, with deep earnestness, clothed its secret thoughts in words:

“I waste no more in idle dreams, my life, my soul away;
 I wake to know my better self—I wake to watch and pray.
 Thought, feeling, time, on idols vain I’ve lavished all too long;
 Henceforth, to holier purposes I pledge myself, my song!
 Oh, still within the inner veil, upon the spirit’s shrine,
 Still, unprofaned by evil, burns the one pure spark divine,
 Which God has kindled in us all, and be it mine to tend
 Henceforth, with vestal thought and care, the light that lamp may lend.

“I shut mine eyes, in grief and shame, upon the dreary past,
 My heart, my soul, poured recklessly on dreams that could not last,
 My bark has drifted down the stream, at will of wind or wave,
 An idle, light, and fragile thing, that few had cared to save.
 Henceforth, the tiller Truth shall hold and steer as Conscience tells
 And I will brave the storms of fate, though wild the ocean swells.
 I know my soul is strong and high, if once I give it sway;
 I feel a glorious power within, though light I seem, and gay.
 O, laggard soul! unclosethine eyes. No more in luxury soft
 Of joy ideal waste thyself! Awake, and soar aloft!
 Unfurl, this hour, those falcon wings which thou dost fold too long;
 Raise to the skies thy lightning gaze, and sing the loftiest song.”*

* Mrs. Osgood.

The song ceased, and the struggling, God-born spirit, looked down on the cold earth; and, not forgetting toil, and suffering, and weariness — not forgetting the degradation of sin, and the constant wrestling of the higher with the baser nature — exclaimed, with deep enthusiasm, “What a sublime thing to be a man!”

A songster was missed from the woodland; and that same day knelt one in prayer; and then, humble, but strong, and happier far than butterfly or bird, went cheerfully ‘crtn on man’s great mission — TO DO GOOD.

TO MY FATHER.

A WELCOME for thy child, father,
 A welcome give to-day ;
 Although she may not come to thee
 As when she went away ;
 Though never in that olden nest
 Is she to fold her wing,
 And live again the days when first
 She learned to fly and sing.

Oh, happy were those days, father,
 When, gathering round thy knee,
 Seven sons and daughters called thee sire ;
 We come again — but three ;
 The grave has claimed thy loveliest ones,
 And sterner things than death
 Have cast a shadow on thy brow,
 A sigh upon thy breath.

And one — one of the three, father,
 Now comes to thee to claim
 Thy blessing on another lot,
 Upon another name ;
 Where tropic suns forever burn,
 Far over land and wave,
 The child whom thou hast loved would make
 Her hearth-stone and her grave.

Thou 'lt never wait again, father,
 Thy daughter's coming tread ;
 She ne'er will see thy face on earth,
 So count her with thy dead ;

But in the land of life and love,
Not sorrowing as now,
She 'll come to thee, and come, perchance,
With jewels on her brow.

Perchance;—I do not know, father,
If any part be given
My untaught hand among the guides
Who point the way to heaven;
But it would be a joy untold
Some erring foot to stay;
Remember this, when gathering round,
Ye for the exile pray.

Let nothing here be changed, father;
I would remember all,
Where every ray of sunshine rests,
And where the shadows fall.
And now I go; with faltering foot
I pass the threshold o'er,
And gaze through tears on that dear roof,
My shelter never-more.

FAREWELL TO ALDERBROOK.

“ Farewell :

I may not dwell

'Mid flowers and music ever.”

THE hours of my childhood have gone back to their old obliviousness in eternity; youth is on the wing, fleeing—fleeing—fleeing. There is but a narrow shadow lying between my foot and the grave which it seeks—a veil of gray mist, that a few *to-days* will dissolve into—what?—the sickening perfume of dead flowers, or incense grateful to Heaven?

This is a beautiful, bright world, made for pure beings. At its birth angels walked among its cool shadows, bent to its bright waters, and inhaled its perfumes; and they fled not, those holy ones, till their wings drooped beneath the defiling heaviness of sin. A false breath played upon the brow of man; heedlessly he opened his bosom to it; and there it at once nestled, a fatal poison, ever distilling venom. Still the flowers bloomed; still the waters flashed and sparkled in the warm light; still the breezes waved their censers laden with rich perfume; still the birds carolled; the stars smiled; leaves rustled, kissing each other lovingly; dews slumbered in lily bells and the hearts of roses, and crept around withering roots, and revived fading petals; the sun, and the moon, and the silver twilight, each wrought its own peculiar broidery on earth and sky; but upon the flowers, and the fresh leaves, and the waters, and the breezes, the gay, beautiful birds, and the silent dews, on sun, and moon, and stars, on all, everything of earth, rested the taint of sin. In the morning of this little day of time, what more deliciously sweet than to recline among the blossoming luxu-

riance of Eden, and worship God, there, in his own temple? It was the object of life to enjoy its own blissfulness, and praise Him who gave it. But when, on the whisper of the Tempter, sin came, it brought a change. The poison hid itself among all the beautiful things that we most love, engendering thorns and producing discord: it festered in our hearts, revelled in our veins, and polluted our lips, until the angels veiled their faces in disgust, and man was left with "no eye to pity, no arm to save." Then, from the dense cloud, broke forth a ray of glory; a crowned Head looked out in pity; divine lips bent to the poisoned wound; and lost, ruined man found a Saviour. He was heralded by angels; angels are still whispering, "Look! look! live!" that Saviour is standing with love-beaming eyes and arms extended; but men are blind and cannot see his beauty. Shall I sit down among thy flowers, sweet Alderbrook, while my Redeemer is dishonored, and my brethren, the sons of those who walked with God in Eden, die?

"Faultless, if blinded?"—"The just God will not be angry with those who, not knowing, have not loved him?" Who has said it?

Ah! "*The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*" The beautiful page of hill and dale and sky is spread open to all. I go to teach my brother how to read it.

Dear, beautiful Alderbrook! I have loved thee as I shall never love any other thing that I may not meet after the sun of Time is set. Everything, from the strong old tree that wrestles with the tempest, down to the amber moss-cup cradling the tiny insect at its roots, and the pebble sleeping at the bottom of the brook,—everything about thee has been laden with its own peculiar lesson. Thou art a rare book, my Alderbrook, written all over by the Creator's finger. Dearly do I love the holy truths upon thy pages; but, "I may not dwell 'mid flowers and music ever;" and I go

hence, bearing another, choicer book in my hand, and echoing the words of the angels, "Look! look! live!"

I stand on the verge of the brook, which seems to me more beautiful than any other brook on earth, and take my last survey of the home of my infancy. The cloud, which has been hovering above the trees on the verge of heaven, opens; the golden light gushes forth, bathing the hill-top, and streaming down its green declivity even to my feet; and I accept the encouraging omen. The angel of Alderbrook, "the ministering spirit" sent hither by the Almighty, blesses me. Father in heaven, thy blessing, ere I go!

Hopes full of glory, and oh, most sweetly sacred! look out upon me from the future; but, for a moment, their beauty is clouded. My heart is heavy with sorrow. The cup at my lip is very bitter. Heaven help me! White hairs are bending in submissive grief, and age-dimmed eyes are made dimmer by the gathering of tears. Young spirits have lost their joyousness, young lips forget to smile, and bounding hearts and bounding feet are stilled. Oh, the rending of ties, knitted at the first opening of the infant eye and strengthened by numberless acts of love, is a sorrowful thing! To make the grave the only door to a meeting with those in whose bosoms we nestled, in whose hearts we trusted long before we knew how precious was such love and trust, brings with it an overpowering weight of solemnity. But a grave is yawning for each one of us; and is it much to choose whether we sever the tie that binds us here, to-day, or lie down on the morrow? Ah, the "weaver's shuttle" is flying; the "flower of the grass" is withering; the span is almost measured; the tale nearly told; the dark valley is close before us—tread we with care!

My mother, we may neither of us close the other's darkened eye, and fold the cold hands upon the bosom; we may neither of us watch the sod greening and withering above the other's ashes; but there are duties for us even more sacred than these. But a few steps, mother—difficult the path may be, but *very* bright—and then we put

on the robe of immortality, and meet to part nevermore. And we shall not be apart even on earth. There is an electric chain passing from heart to heart through the throne of the Eternal; and we may keep its links all brightly burnished by the breath of prayer. Still pray for me, mother, as in days gone by.—Thou bidst me go. The smile comes again to thy lip and the light to thine eye, for thou hast pleasure in the sacrifice. Thy blessing! Farewell, my mother, and ye loved ones of the same hearth-stone!

Bright, beautiful, dear Alderbrook, farewell!

FANNY FORESTER.

June 1, 1846.

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