ALDERBROOK:

A COLLECTION OF

FANNY FORESTER'S

VILLAGE SKETCHES, POEMS, ETC.

BY

MISS EMILY CHUBBUCK.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ALDERBROOK.

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

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 chamelion 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 tiarelals, 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 good-nature, 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 unconconquerable, 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 chisel of Pygmalion, 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, whomever 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 so

left 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 be-jewelled, 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 perverseness of human nature! Nora longed for the green woods where she had first dreamed over the gorgeous creations of minds 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 the chattering brook; and, making a great crackling and crashing among the underbush, landed headlong upon a velvety 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 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, hopefully 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 many 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 Sylvans!" 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 ——

I 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 browny 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 pulse 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 to 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 I 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, ere 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 best

cap, 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 *maid*. 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 girlish 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-

der 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 boddice; 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

like 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 wild Will had quarrelled with 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 dogwood, 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 parson Lee's little parlor that morning; and a proud, happy resoluteness in the whole air and manner of the bridegroom, softened and subdued by an appreciation of the touching trustfulness that had possessed him of that quivering hand. And so they went forth, they two, with but the rewards of his 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 unuseful bride 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 in the wilderness!

Please make me another pen, 'Bel; this story drags shockingly.

Not finish it, did you say? Why, people will think they starved 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 villanous 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 I 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

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 en gaging 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 grapevines, 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 lonelier 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, interspersed 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 a broom-handle; and, higher still, an old musket, with its rusty barrel and broken lock, rests in honored peace from the labors 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 tables 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, reässured 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 Mary, "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 stubborness 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 drew 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 it 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, cozzy?" 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 hoofed 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 *un*like 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 buds 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 Atlantic, 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 curtsying, 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 musquitoes.

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

in 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 bow 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 sometime."

"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 raindrops, 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 chidnig, 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 wayside. 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-

houses, 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 stept 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 be 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 violently 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 alchymist 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' 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 reädjusted 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 lunatic 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 .ecture-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 visiters 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 schoolmaster'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 "concarn," 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 doggerels, 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 grandpapas, 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 shamefaced 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 altogethei 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 at 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-torn 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 patroon 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 corses 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 Vriesendael.

"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 Vriesendael."

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-

dued, 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 springtime 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 doting 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 neigborhood 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 slily 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 farthermost 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!

MYSTERY.

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 tho

mourner's eye, and knows that the stricken spirit has learned to love the Hand that but bore its treasure before it to Para dise. 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 levellers.

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 Mignionette 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 Mignionette; 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 stept 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 Mignionette 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 Mignionette 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 Mignionettes, 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 Parnassus, 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 hopers!

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 unnecessaries, 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-kill 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 Fomen," 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,

Upon my trembling heart, there fell
The awful words, as by a spell,
Death — death to all!

They come on every breath of air,
Which sighs its feeble life away;
They 're whispered by each blossom fair,
Which folds a lid at close of day;
There 's nought of earth, or sad or gay,
There 's nought below the star-lit skies,
But leaves one lesson as it flies —
Thou too must die!

And numberless those silvery chords,
Dissevered by the spoiler's hand,
But each in breaking still affords
A tone to say we all are banned;
And on each brow by death-damps spanned,
The pall, the slowly moving hearse,
Is traced the burden of my verse, —
Death — death to man!

Ah! the strong, the mighty may well turn pale, and quake, and shrivel, and mewl, even as an infant in its swaddlings, with that skeleton finger stealthily winding itself among the warm, bloodful veins, turning them to ice as it goes. With that dark sovereign of a darksome hour looking into his eyes and counting through these faithful mirrors the pulsations of the heart below; scattering, one by one, the sands from his glass, and stealing, drop by drop, the life from its fountain, the brave, strong-souled man may measure courage with the timid maiden, and never blush to find an equal in heroism. To have those who have loved, caressed, and watched over us with sleepless attention, turn loathingly from us and hustle us into the earth, among the stones and festering germs of poisonous weeds, with the frozen clods upon our bosoms, to moulder in darkness and gloom, to be trod upon and forgotten; while beautiful beings that we could love, O, so dearly! are flitting above us; and the light is glancing; and birds, drunk with joyousness, wheeling and careering in the sunbeam; and all the world going on merrily, as when our hearts went with it — Oh! what has man's courage, man's strength, man's stern self-control, to offer against such an overwhelming certainty!

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*.

GENIUS.

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 must 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 Lilias 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 courtsied, 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-committeeman has a right to do; then he made a great many commonplace 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 Lilias 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 rea 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 Lilias Fane, the two committee-men proceeded leisurely toward the school-house.

In the mean time poor Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias smile at the looks 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 Lilias 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 Lilias Fane, with her merry blue eye and face full of kindness and gentleness, half-hidden in the mirthful dimples which played over it—sweet Lilias 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 Lilias 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 had n't she said *we* when talking to the "big girls," as though she did n't feel herself a bit above them? and had n'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 Westborns & 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 Lilias 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 Lilias! 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 Lilias, and then she smiled again.

"Our school is considered a very difficult one," observed the bachelor.

"I apprehend no difficulty at all," Lilias 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.

Lilias 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 *cloaked* is missing.

For that day at least Lilias 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 Lilias Fane. Even the hearts of the Westborns 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 Lilias! 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 Lilias 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, Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 would n't mind it, Miss Fane," said a timid, but sympathizing voice close by her ear.

"How can I help it, Alfred?" asked weeping Lilias, 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 Lilias; 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 Lilias 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 should n'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 should n'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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias, 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, Lilias 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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. Lilias 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, Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias 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 Lilias; 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 as though 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 Lilias, 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 Lilias.

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 betweenity 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-slipped 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 vest, 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 tack a smile to the name of parson Lawsley whenever it was mentioned, and in six months' time our dear old pastor was reïnstalled 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, heartful 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 cheeringly 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 the 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. Ha! 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 BENEFACTOR, 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 did n'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 satinet 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. Would n't I flourish my shillelah, 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 the 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 sachem'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 interest ing 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 possesser of a double diamond; and really rated his wife below other women, in proportion as she rose above them. Did Mary submit to the thraldom? 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 did n'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 visiters, 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 holyday 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! Enviable Ida! Thy rainbow was set in tears, true; but it was as a triumphal arch thrown over tne 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 not *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 nour 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 confidingly she placed her hand in his to be taught and guided.

The noble poet and his Ida (his before heaven, though only tne 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 earthliness 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.

Enviable 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 strewed 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-

denly 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, gladsome; 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

arched 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 disenchanted 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 intertwisted 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 disappointment mildewed thy heart. Haste thee back, simple Undine, and rest thy throbbing head close in the bosom of the golden moss-cup.

DORA'.

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 Aunty 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. Aunty 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 Aunty 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.

Aunty 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. Aunty 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 "bounden duty" to lay by the surplus for a "rainy day." Aunty 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 Aunty 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 Aunty 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 Aunty 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.

Aunty 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 in its coruscations. So Dora' went on singing every Sabbath in the village choir, singing at the fireside of Aunty 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 Aunty 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 Aunty 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 adimringly 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 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 misgiving, 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! unclose thine 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 forth on man's great mission — TO DO GOOD.

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.

END OF VOL. II.

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