

BEHOLDING AS IN
A GLASS

BY MRS. VIRGINIA C. YOUNG



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Belden Homestead

“BEHOLDING AS IN
A GLASS.”

A NOVEL

BY

MRS. VIRGINIA D. YOUNG.



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BEHOLDING AS IN A GLASS.

CHAPTER I.

IT was afternoon, dear reader, and she to whom I wish to introduce you was making a railway journey ; and being very tired, on this her second day, was trying to get herself into a comfortable position to take a nap.

I don't know that you would have singled her out if you had been a fellow-passenger, for she was not a person to attract attention by beauty, nor dress, nor arts of speech or manner ; and as your eyes follow mine your cool, critical judgment is amazed that I should select such a heroine, and you recall your lessons in rhetoric, and remind me of the "three unities" that should govern a writer in the treatment of a romance, and ask, "Is not one of these a beautiful shell or body for the spirit that is to take precedence in the 'goodlie companie' the romancer means to invoke?"

But what if these "unities" are sometimes at variance with nature, and what if experience demonstrates that the central figure in a great drama

may be as to body like the unlovely skin bottle which preserves the pure wine from fermentation?

Have you never found yourself drawn powerfully to those lacking beauty of form, complexion, or feature?

Who was it of whom the prophet wrote—"He hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him"?

What is the body but clothing for the soul, and what is clothing but (in the language of "*Sartor Resartus*"), "a moving rag-screen, overheaped with shreds and tatters, raked from the charnel-house of nature"?

The man who wrote "*Sartor Resartus*" is himself a case in point—the greatest man in Europe, upon whom the world fixed its regards, yet he was the homeliest of men.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway has a fine description of the "blue brilliancy of his eyes" and the "illumination" of his face, on that day at Edinburgh University, when, having been invested with the Lord Rector's robes, he tossed aside this insignia, as impeding, and stood forth to speak, transfigured into that soul-beauty which body nor clothes can give.

The sunlight of love transmogrified this chestnut-burr, and changed the gall exuding from this tongue into oil and balm.

But you tap me on the arm and remind me that Carlyle was a man, and that homeliness in a woman

is much less endurable—besides confounding all the unities of time, place and circumstances to which she opposes the stumbling-block of unexpectedness, and becomes, as it were, “smoke to the eyes and vinegar to the teeth.” But what do you think of the Mrs. Browning type for a heroine? You recollect a certain author, exceedingly popular some years ago, an encyclopedia of learning, in fact, who had a custom of remanding us (for facial descriptions of her heroines), to the classics;—as, for instance, “Such a face confronted Golden Fleece Jason from the rhododendrons of Crete,” or “On cameo and marble dwell the dainty mouldings of that oval cheek, the airy arched tracery of those brows, the straight slender nose and clearly defined cleft of the rounded chin—in brief, the face was one of the Frate’s heavenly visions.”

I might say my heroine was “like a mist that changed according to being shone on, more or less!” At any rate the woman, whose struggle with life I shall endeavor to depict, if no Greek beauty, or odalisque of the Orient, had something about her suggestive of Mrs. Browning—was small like her, dark of eyes and sweet of voice, a voice remarkable in that its inflections reflected every shade of her varying moods.

There were not many people on the train that day—half a dozen men, perhaps, a lady with children who kept fussing over bits of stale luncheon out of a yellow leather hand-bag, and an old woman

whose seamed face bore testimony to having seen "a sight o' trouble."

But there was one passenger who had discovered something very interesting in the young woman, whose name I may as well say was Vivia Lemuir. He sat opposite, and could glance at her without embarrassing by a marked regard. He was a student of human nature, which may account for the fact that he, at a glance, singled her out as singular.

She was not munching food as women so generally do on trains, she didn't fuss with the windows, she didn't stare at other passengers. She read a well-worn book, the title of which he made out to be "Romola," and had another, in soft leather cover, which she studied from time to time, and at which he actually started when he perceived it to be a Bible!

Dr. Charles Evans was a cultured gentleman who had travelled much, and had a way of keeping the world at arm's length, being very independent of it, and concentrating his mind on his profession; tender as a mother to the sick, but rather indifferent to well people.

Yet this polished man of the world, as he appeared, now kept turning his handsome hazel eyes on the unpretty creature, whose air and expression so thoroughly conveyed the idea of fatigue and heart-sinking. Indeed, isolation and long fasting had done their work with her. Kind hands had provided a bountiful lunch when she was starting out

upon her journey, but the remnants of biscuit and chicken were now dry and untempting, and she had given away to children on the train the fruit (apples and grapes) which had weighed down her box of eatables.

Hoping to sleep, she now rolled up her shabby cloak for a pillow, but even with this added could not rest. In twisting about she caught sight, out of the corner of her eye, of the gentleman opposite, and her ready fancy was soon busy concerning him. She noticed the contour of his nobly-shaped head, the grandeur of his broad, high forehead. He was well dressed, all his belongings handsome and in order. With the inevitable suggestion of contrast, her thoughts came back to her own poor little pasteboard bandbox, so unsuitable from its batterable nature to travel with, and that horrid old red carpet-bag, that had belonged to her sister's husband in his heyday, now much the worse for wear and tear.

Poor little Vivia suddenly felt a distaste for life from having to face it in such unkempt form. Tears stole into her closed eyes, and in her sudden deep *dés*pair her frail form shook. The tears relieved the heated brain, however, and she sank into an uneasy slumber.

She was awakened by a violent jar and crash, and in an instant had all her senses at command. She ran to the door of the coach and there beheld a scene of ruin, for the entire train (save the coach in which she was), lay in the mud of the swamp,

and from the smashed *débris* came dreadful shrieks and moans.

The man who had had her last waking thought was just climbing down before her when she said : " O please, sir, lend me your hand a moment."

Dr. Evans looked at her remonstrantly, saying, " Go back into the coach ; you are in no danger."

" But I am going to help those poor people. O my Lord, have mercy upon them ! "

" Nonsense, you can't help them ; you'll get your feet wet."

For reply she jumped down and alighted beside him in the oozy mud. Here her slight weight stood her in good stead, for she did not sink in the mire, and the stout doctor did.

The brakeman of the car was before them with his axe, gazing stupidly on the wreck, not knowing what to do. Dr. Evans snatched the axe, and with a few well-directed blows made an opening in the side of the nearest car, from which rolled out a fat man who filled the air with sulphurous ejaculations. Then came a woman, holding tight to her baby, crying out that it was dead. Vivian took the child, examined it carefully, and assured the mother it was only stunned.

Dr. Evans, who was helping to get the people out, heard her and handed her his pocket-case, from which she selected a vial of ammonia, applied it to the little one's nostrils, causing it to sneeze,

turn red in the face and cry. Vivia helped the woman into the uninjured coach, handed her the baby, and went back to aid others.

One man had been killed by the stove falling upon him, but fortunately there was no fire in it, so there was no conflagration.

The engineer was unrecognizable save by his clothes, and the conductor had had both legs broken, and one had to be amputated.

A broken culvert had caused the catastrophe, the engine first pitching over, and all the boxes and coaches following except the last, saved by the breaking of its coupling.

It was a cloudy night, the misty sky lighted by a pale moon and filmy stars. Fortunately the crash had come within a mile of a village, and the conductor's danger signal, waking the echoes among the hollow cypresses of the swamp, attracted the attention of the telegraph operator, not yet gone to bed ; and seeing the head-light of the train he had hastened to the rescue with some of the villagers who lived near the depot.

There was work to do, indeed, of a nature to sicken the heart and torture the brain. The most of the wounded were found among the *debris* of the sleeper—men, women and children ; but two men (mangled creatures, who had been dreaming the night away in the luxurious Pullman), opened eyes on the light no more.

Vivia Lemuir kept by the side of Dr. Evans. She had some hours ago discovered his near-

sightedness, and now she helped him as he had never been helped before, with a quickness of vision, a readiness of touch, that seemed a kind of prescience of his needs. His surgical skill was called into requisition ere long ; there were dislocated joints to be set, wounds to be bound up, and limbs to be amputated.

Towards daylight a fine, cold rain began to fall, but Vivia Lemuir still held to the ghastly duty of the moment ; still with tender hands sought to assuage the agonies of the wounded and dying. One large man, who had both legs torn off at the knee, was found wedged under the ruins of the stove in the smoking-car. His cries and groans were fearful to listen to. As Vivia stooped over him, bathing his face with her handkerchief, dipped in water that trickled near, "Mein Gott," he said, "you ish like my daughter Gretchen, a leetle *ding* ! Gott pless you !"

Dr. Evans put him in an ambulance, asking Vivia to go with him to the village, saying he would join her in a short time ; for by this the wretched victims of disaster, dead, dying, wounded and shocked, had all been gotten out, and the light of morning looked down from tearful skies on a crowd of railroad hands, busily engaged in rebuilding the trestle, that travel might be resumed at the earliest possible moment.

In three hours Dr. Evans and Vivia Lemuir were again *en route*, she feeling that sense of ease natural to a woman under the recognized

protection of man. Circumstances had developed their friendship to quick maturity, and wonderful seemed the revelation of this womanly nature to Dr. Evans, whose personal experience had tinged him with a large degree of cynicism and skepticism. He sat by her side now, and she in answer to his questions told him the story of her life.

“ My father was my baby enthusiasm,” she said ; “ the most affectionate, tender, dear old gentleman in the world ; gray-headed when I was born, an old bachelor when he was first married, and my mother was his second wife. He was a physician (she gave Dr. Evans a smile), and devoted to his profession ;—a close student all his life, not only of books but of such cases as came under his care. But oh ! how gentle and timid he was ; not physically nor even morally, when it came to matters of principle, but he was most afraid of hurting people’s feelings ; couldn’t bear to present his bill to a man for whom he had done the most faithful work. I don’t think he ever dunned a person in his life. In consequence he was, from the time I, his youngest child, could remember, always pinched for money.

“ I can see him now, with his shiny, threadbare, but well-brushed clothes. He was very neat ;—his long fingers, knotted with rheumatism, yet constantly brought prominently to view by holding them up to shield his sore lips, resulting from attending medical lectures in Philadelphia. I can hear him clear his throat (he had a perpetual

throat trouble), and in going out among his fruit trees he always wore a red silk handkerchief tied over his mouth. His one innocent and useful hobby was the culture of fruit, and he was always eager to spend his very occasional dollar in buying trees, or any new work on horticulture.

“ My mother, who was a practical woman, would remonstrate with him energetically, but it never amounted to anything. Next to his interest in a case of sickness, indeed, beyond it perhaps, was his profound, absorbing devotion to the orchard. Every tree was a pet. He gave you the name, English, French, or Dutch, his tongue dwelling unctuously on the syllables, while he held up the specimen before you in his long, knotted fingers, a great luscious red apple, or a melting yellow pear. I learned to speak the hard names of the beautiful specimens he was always bringing in to my mother, along with papa, mamma, and kitty.

“ The cellar in the winter was fragrant with hundreds and hundreds of apples and pears, all wrapped in paper, and oh, how his benevolent face beamed with pleasure when, in time of heavy snow, he carried a basket of beauties to some poor convalescent, whose mouth watered for the delicious juices of those well-preserved spheres. I recall our old house, identical with hospitality through the country, picturesque with its charm of roses and wealth of orchards, alive with crooning bees and song of mocking-birds; but inside where the new additions (old when I was born),

joined to the venerable mansion of my grandparents (which, with lands and negroes my papa inherited from his father), there were dreadful leaks. Papa was always intending to have the leaks stopped, but somehow could never find himself able. He was old when his people, as he called his negroes, were freed; and he could never get out of the old ruts of slavery times. So my mother took rheumatic fever and died, and he, who had loved her so dearly, was like one lost afterwards. Oh! the pitiful, dear figure,"—the girl's voice faltered. "Excuse me, Dr. Evans, I should not have told you all this."

The tall head bent, and the strong hand clasped the girl's small one a moment.

"Tell me more," was all he said.

"My father had a son and daughter by his first wife, Brother Arthur and Sister Mary. My mother I barely remember—a large, stately woman, of most dignified bearing; this was the picture she made even to my childish eyes. Sister Mary, whom she reared, says she was cultivated and accomplished, the finest pianist in the country; having, in fact, had a city education. I've always felt an intense sense of pain and loss in having been deprived of her in childhood," said Vivian (looking at Dr. Evans with eyes, into which tears were again welling). "I think I might have been very different if I had just had her tenderness and training; but my sister Mary, good as she is, I'm sure had not my mother's ca-

pacities, and so I'm like that girl in the story who 'just grew up.' My good, kind sister did what she could ; but, with her own numerous children and imperfect health, I was like a weed."

"Oh, no!" said Dr. Evans, smilingly, "not a weed ; say a wild morning-glory. You know it comes up in the most barren fields and perfects itself, and it blooms in most unprepossessing places ; why not you?"

"Ah, thank you! that is a poetic thought."

"I'm no poet, Miss Lemuir, just a hard-working bread-winner, seeing generally the worst side of human nature. Like you in one respect,—I have just cut loose from old moorings and am now on my way to a new field of labor. I am glad I can see you to your last train."

Much more conversation passed between them, and when they arrived at the bustling city of Melita, Vivia was glad indeed to have the expectation of some one to steer her safely through the swarming carriages ; but just as the train drew into the station, ere it stopped, in fact, a gentleman entered the coach who, by some occult power of recognition, attracted the girl's gaze ; and as he looked at her she rose and murmured—

"Brother Arthur."

"Why Vivia, dear, I'm glad to see you!" He looked inquiringly at the gentleman beside her, who had also risen.

"Dr. Evans," said she, "my brother, Captain Lemuir."

The two men in a glance took each other's measure, and were each favorably impressed.

Vivia bade the doctor a good-bye with thanks, and walked away with Captain Lemuir to board her last train, drawn up a few hundred yards distant.

CHAPTER II.

VIVIA'S NEW HOME.

AFTER a drive of some miles in a buggy, through a country that looked dreary in its late autumn dress of leafless woods and brown fields, the sister and brother reached Ridley, a large, double log-house with shed-rooms, situated in the midst of open fields.

Two children, with shocks of curly yellow hair, rushed to meet them, followed by bird-dogs and a colored boy. Captain Lemuir kissed the children and tried to make them speak to Vivia, but they would not, and went climbing into the buggy to see what he had brought them.

When they entered the house they were met by a very stout woman, whose cool scrutiny instantly abashed Vivia.

"My wife," said Captain Lemuir. "Celestia, this is Vivia."

The pair shook hands and Mrs. Lemuir sank back into her rocking-chair, while Vivia timidly turned away, took off hat and gloves, and placed them, with her cloak, on the bed which stood in the corner.

The sister-in-law asked her about her journey in an unsympathetic voice, but listened, evidently with a shade of interest, to her account of her accidental acquaintance with Dr. Evans. When she paused, she remarked judicially :

“ I think it was very improper for you to have talked with an unknown man. He might have been a robber.”

Vivia laughed.

“ Why, he was a cultivated, refined gentleman,” said she, in a positive voice.

“ Yes, and pickpockets often have that look. I hope you will never be so imprudent again.”

“ Evans is a gentleman I’m certain,” said Captain Lemuir; “ you mustn’t scold her, wife, and she just arrived too.”

Further talk was prevented by the appearance of a black woman, wearing a homespun hood, who said simply :

“ Dinner’s raidy.”

Vivia followed her brother into one of the shed-rooms, which seemed, to her already chilled body, icy in temperature. Mrs. Lemuir and the children had dined, Candace told them. It was quite dark and the candles were lighted.

It was an untempting meal, cold turnip greens and corn-bread, cold coffee, stale light-bread and stale cake ; also a saucer of pickles.

On returning to the sitting-room Mrs. Lemuir yawned, laid down her novel, and addressed her little captain.

“Hubby, I bought some potatoes from Mrs. Hardwyn to-day.”

“I’m sorry, dear. I begged you not to make any more trades with her.”

“Oh, well, I wanted the potatoes, and she has a very good kind. I know you will despise her, Vivia, for she is the stingiest woman in this country. Why, she made me pay twenty-five cents for half a cup of honey, and as for chicken-feathers, she calls them cheap at goose-feather prices, that is, when she sells them; and what makes it more ridiculous is that her daughter sets up to be somebody, when her mother actually works in the field and does the cooking for the family. Leora was at church last Sunday, and the airs she gave herself were perfectly absurd. She is a pale, die-away looking thing, and it’s my opinion will never get a husband, as much money as her mother has hoarded up.”

“Why, dear,” said Captain Lemuir, “I think Leora quite attractive; very domestic, too. I shouldn’t wonder if she married well. Are you not rather severe on your neighbor? You will make Vivia think she’s got into a hard country.”

“I’d like to know what it is if it ain’t hard,” returned the rasping voice, “but anyway it’s bed-time. There’s your candle, Vivia; just walk across the passage. We breakfast at eight o’clock sharp. Good-night.”

Captain Lemuir rose, took the candle, led the

way, and at her door put his arms around his sister and kissed her.

By dint of will-power she restrained herself till in bed, then she shivered and sobbed till sleep came to her relief.

The next morning at breakfast Captain Lemuir asked Vivia if she were fond of walking, and on receiving an affirmative answer, bade her get ready to go with him and Gerald, his little son, to where the help were picking cotton, the last opening of which still whitened the fields.

They walked along near the fence-row of an extensive field of perhaps a hundred acres. The cotton was now all a dead-leaf color, for the early frosts had killed the foliage, except when white flakes clung in spots where close picking had not been given it. The fences were dilapidated, the gin-house an old tumble-down structure, and the ditches they crossed choked with briars. "Brother Arthur" (as Vivia called him) followed a footpath leading by the edge of a cotton-field, and chatted pleasantly of his experience with the freedmen.

They found these "freedmen" picking cotton in the vicinity of a smouldering fire, built in an old stump, handy to warm by; and making slow work of it as they were all deeply interested in an argument between Uncle Cæsar and Uncle Pompey.

Among the pickers was one white man, evidently of the caste known as "poor trash," and decidedly the most sheepish-looking human being Vivia had ever seen. Indeed, as he stood slowly

pulling locks of cotton out of the brown burrs, he reminded her forcibly of a sheep nipping berries. Captain Lemuir accosted him with "Morning, Lambmy," and Lambmy snickered and said "Mornin'," watching the girl furtively, with a face, eyes and hair as jaundiced as if bottom clay and air had formed his dietary all his life. The captain made several encouraging remarks to him, but he only answered by a slight distortion of his lilac lips and yellow jaws.

"How are you, Uncle Pompey?" inquired the land-owner of an old negro with small, watery eyes, flat nose and catfish mouth.

"A little gruntin', sir, an' under de wedder. How's yourse'f?"

"First-rate (the captain was always first-rate). Here's my sister, Miss Vivia Lemuir; I make you and Uncle Cæsar acquainted with her."

"Mos' obeshent," responded Pompey; "she 'pears to be a mighty fine young lady."

"Hope you will think a heap of her," said the captain.

"Sartinly, sah! most sartinly; a lubly young lady; got a look outen her eye like yourself. Me an' de ole man Cæsar, mum, we wus argyfiën a pint out'n de Bible. Cæsar dar he am a washfoot Baptist. He tink water eberyting. I tells him water ain't nothin'; water ain't gwine to save nobody. I've knowed pussens to be put clean under de water an' den go down to the lake what bu'ns wid fire an' brimstone!"

“ How you knowed dey went dar? ” growled gruff old Cæsar.

“ Heard dem say dey was agwine, on dere death-bed, ” replied Pompey, waxing more vehement. “ Now, Cæsar, ole man, you undertakes to wash folks’ sins ’way by washin’ dere foots. You neber heard dat de tree am knowed by him fruits? Dis here cotton don’t hab wool on hit? dat dar simon tree don’t bare apples? Now s’posen you wash a man foot, an’ he git dead drunk an’ knock somebody in de head, what’ll come o’ him? He be save? No sirree! I tells you, ’cepting a man be born again St. Peter neber let him in, not ef his foot wash ebery day in the year; not ef he wus drowned in water! Now, Uncle Cæsar, what does you say to de looks ob your hoss? Dat hoss ob Uncle Cæsar’s is most ready fur de buzzards to pick; dat hoss ain’t watered onct a week. He ain’t fed on corn onct a mont’. Uncle Cæsar leadin’ man in de church! I say he ain’t got no ’ligion ’tall. ‘ De mussiful man gardeth de life of his beast, ’ ain’t de Bible say so, Mis’ Viviar? ”

She smilingly assented. The venerable speaker paused at the captain’s peal of laughter; regarding this in the light of applause, he resumed, pointing his finger at Uncle Cæsar, who hid his discomfiture by emptying his sack into his basket, and getting in it to pack it down.

“ Yes, sir; Cappen, dere’s where I got de dead-wood on Cæsar. De ’postle Poll say he baptize 3,000 pussons in one day, wid one tea-cup ob

water. Now if one teacupful 'nuff fer all dem, whar de use ob a ribber full fur drown folks in?"

"None whatever, Uncle Pompey," laughed the captain; "evidently none."

"I tell you all now, all yinner sinner," said Pompey (adopting an exhortatory manner, and that indescribable sing-song kind of tone the negroes always use when religiously excited), "'Prepare to meet dy God!' I fell into a trance de odder night. I viewed hell. I lay on de edge of hell all day. De weight ob a bale ob cotton wus on my bres', my head wus hangin' ober. I wus lookin' down into fiery pit. I see all hell a-blazin' like de woods a-fire; an' dere wus a great big kittle fill up wid hot lead an' brimstone a-bilin', an' a great big rooster he wus pullin' a stick ob timber ten inches square across hell. An' I seed de wicked a-jumpin' an a-howlin' in torment, an' a-hollerin' fur Lazarus to come an' bring a drop ob water fur to cool dere parched tongues. I see de debbil wid dat big ole club foot o' hisen, an' a ball an' chain roun' his leg, an' he wus gwine 'bout wid a t'ree-pronged fork, a-stirrin' up de fire, an' drivin' de sinners back in, an' ebery now an' den he would go out and git some ob dat bilin' water outen de kittle an' pour it on 'em, where it wus blistered, an' dey'd holler wuss dan eber, an' de blue blazes would come outen dere nostrils. An' while I wus layin' down at de mouth ob hell, scared to death, lessen I fall in, I hear somebody call me, an' I tu'n my head. I say, 'Who dat call

dis nigger?' De voice say, 'O, my little one, if you b'leve inter Me, git up an' follow Me.' Then I riz an' took another path what I see gwine up a hill, an' as I goed up stoopin', 'cause de way wus so steep, I see Jesus, an' He wus so wide an' so tall, I couldn't pass him noways; an' I had to go right up to Him, an' so I drap down on my knees an' say, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.' He say, 'Only b'leve.' I say, 'Lord, I b'leve'; help Thou my unbelev,' an' that minute I git lighter, as if I had put down a heaby basket ob cotton. De scales drap from off my eyes, an' I see heaben a-shinin' not fur off, ober de jasper sea uprisin' de pearly gate ob de new Jerusalem. Oh! An' dere, close by de gate, wus my little sister Jane what died 'fore freedom come. She stood by St. Peter whilst he let me in. I say, 'Dat you, Jane?' She say, 'Dat's me. Enter in, thou blessed ob de Lord.' Den lots more angels come roun' an' dey take off my dirty cloes, an' wash me white in de blood ob de Lamb dat wus slain; an' dey put de silver slipper on my foot, an' de white robe an' de golden girdle, an' a great crown, like de sun in July, blazin', an carried me in an sot me down to milk an' honey. Oh! my dyin' friends, tu'n from de error ob your ways, an' b'leve me, now is the 'scepted time; now is de day ob salvation."

The speaker's eyes were dripping tears, and before he could say any more Captain Lemuir turned his back and began walking rapidly away. Vivian, whose eyes were wet, said softly, in her

sweet voice, "Excuse me, Uncle Pompey," and hurried to overtake her brother.

"Oh, brother," she said, somewhat breathlessly, "wasn't it touching? But why didn't you tell him he was mistaken about St. Paul? Three thousand souls were added to the church the day of Pentecost, not baptized, and it was under the preaching of Peter."

"Why, my dear child," said the captain laughing, "I considered all he said bosh, and himself a humbug."

"But, brother, some of it was true Gospel."

"Ah! indeed; well, don't let us get to 'argifyin',' Old Pomp ain't worth it. He is the biggest rogue on the plantation; wife can't keep a chicken for him, and I don't know how many of my hogs he has stolen."

"Is it possible? I thought from the way you talked to him you liked him very much. Why do you let him stay on the place, brother?"

"I have a kind feeling for the old rascal; I suppose he does the best he can. You know negroes have no moral sense. They are a kind-hearted race, and it is necessary to be conciliatory. Labor is hard to get in this country, and hard to keep, and a farmer has to overlook small delinquencies. Pompey is a capital hand, has control of a large family of boys, pays his rent promptly. I must get my land worked, and negro labor is best adapted to the climate. White men can't stand exposure here as well as the darkeys. So you

see, sister, it behooves me to do all I can to keep my freedmen in a good humor; and, indeed, policy and inclination coincide on my part. Civility costs me nothing and exerts a powerful influence. I don't mind addressing a colored man as Mr. ; it's a great concession to his vanity, makes him my friend, and detracts not a whit from my dignity."

Vivia still looking dubious, he continued:

"I am trying very hard to work out in my mind the problem of the period. It will be ages before the negro race die out, or emigrate; and meanwhile it is for the interest of the actors in the present drama to harmonize parties. The negro must be convinced of the sincerity of our purpose to keep faith. He is quick to distrust those who take advantage of him in the smallest matters. There is some malice and a great deal of roguery in the negro, but get on his good side, arouse his sense of responsibility, show confidence in him, and he comes right up to the scratch and clears up all his obligations; at least he generally does. Well, sister, here we are at home, and if wife hasn't anything for me to do I will show you my books."

He went into the room where Mrs. Lemuir sat, reading her novel as usual, and presently returned and went with Vivia into the best room, or "parlor," as Mrs. Lemuir called it, though it boasted at least two handsomely furnished beds,

covered with expensive Marseilles quilts and embroidered shams on the pillows.

In the corner stood the captain's bookcase, improvised by himself of goods-boxes, one large one forming the base and a receptacle for newspapers, while secured to it by nails were a half-dozen shelves, the foundation being draped with red chintz and the shelves stained brown.

"You can get acquainted with me all the easier, Vivia dear, after examining my books. Show me the company a man keeps and I will tell you the kind of man he is. My books are grouped in the order in which they are dearest to me. Here are my physiological and philosophical friends, which I prefer above all. Here are works on medicine, botany, chemistry: Dunglison, Dewees, Linnæus, Huxley, Booth, Combe, Deleuze, Agassiz and Draper. Here are my historians: Hume, Gibbon, Macaulay and Carlyle."

"I have read extracts from Carlyle's 'Frederick,'" said Vivia in her timid voice, "but his books are so expensive I never hoped to have an opportunity of reading them."

"Well, now's your chance, Sis. Here's seven volumes of 'Frederick the Great,' 'The French Revolution' and 'Cromwell.' I can't say I like the grim old Scotchman, but maybe you will. At any rate he had too much hard horse-sense to be imposed on by the humbuggery of churchism."

"Churchism, brother; what is that?"

“O, I mean this preaching and praying business,—the whole paraphernalia of priestcraft.”

Vivia looked amazed, pained to the heart.

“O, brother! are you not a Christian?” she asked, in a breathless way, as if something clutched her heart.

“Well, no; I can’t say I am, but don’t look so shocked, little woman; I’m a gentleman, I hope, if not a Christian.”

The girl’s eyes swam in tears.

“I’m a very imperfect Christian myself, brother, but I would not give my faith in Christ for worlds. Ah! how can you be so good and not feel the ‘Infinite Pity of the Cross?’”

“Oh, please don’t cry,” said Captain Lemuir, “I was in hopes you had not that habit.”

Vivia made a great effort, and seeing her composed, he resumed:

“Here are my poets; am I a true prophet when I say you will leave history and physiology for them?”

“I hope not, for I do earnestly desire to improve my knowledge of history.”

“Your ladyship may command me in any research you have at heart;” and he bowed half mockingly, looking at the tear-wet eyes with a loving smile.

“As for physiology, brother, I should like to study it under you if you can find time to teach me. I have the very vaguest ideas of anatomy.

I know which side my heart is on, but I'm not certain I could locate my liver."

"Good!" exclaimed he, "nothing will delight me more; a young lady pupil who wants to get acquainted with her own interior. Now, if some fellow don't come along and divert your attention to one organ alone——"

"O, brother! don't speak of such a thing; marriage is a state I don't want to think of. Have you no theological works, no Commentaries?"

"Can't say I have anything strictly in that line. Ever read 'Innocents Abroad'? No? Well, that embodies what I should call natural theology. And, by the way, we can begin the 'Innocents' to-night; you and Celestia can take turns with me in reading aloud. Have you ever practiced reading aloud?"

"Yes, I've been accustomed to reading to Sister Mary ever since I was a child, she always had so much darning and mending to do. As regularly as the tea-things are cleared away, she gets her work-basket and I a book; I like to have her correct my pronunciation and make things clear to me. You know, brother, I've never been to school much,—just picked up what little education I have."

"Well, really, I think I may congratulate you. You've managed to pick up a good style of expression and a good manner, at any rate. Have you read 'Paradise Lost'?"

“Yes, I’ve read a good deal of Milton’s poetry and all of Shakespeare’s plays.”

“How about the modern poets?”

“I know Tennyson right well, and Jean Ingelow.”

“And Mrs. Browning?”

“I’ve read nothing from her, except quotations.”

“Then, little girl, I’ve a treat in store for you. Her ‘Aurora Leigh’ is the finest poem of the century. This is Longfellow, and I have Emerson’s Essays, beside our own Timrod and Paul Hayne of Carolina.”

Vivia’s eyes lighted.

“I shall be happy with them,” she said simply.

CHAPTER III.

VIVIA was alone, Mrs. Lemuir and the children having gone for a visit of two days to Mrs. Miln. Captain Lemuir had driven them in the rockaway and had promised to be back by dark.

Evening was coming on apace, and Vivia rose from the little table on which were many sheets of paper, closely written, and went to the window, hoping to see her brother driving up the long lane. It was horribly dreary out-of-doors; the morning had promised fair, but clouded up at ten o'clock, threatened snow at noon, then grew warmer, and was now closing down into a misty drizzle under a mantle of leaden-hued clouds. There was the ceaseless, distracting drip of water off the roof through the pipe into the cistern, the continual creaking of the shutters, added to the moaning of the wind under the crevices of the ill-fitting doors and windows.

Vivia had been engaged in a most unpoetical labor the greater part of the day, namely, helping Candace, the colored cook, to try up lard, and convert the scraps of meat left over from cutting up a couple of hogs the day before, into sausage meat. In the brief period of her stay at Ridley

her shrewd sister-in-law had discovered her availability as a "help" in the domestic *ménage*, several removes above the black cook, Candace, only in sharing family privileges; and it was already becoming quite her habit to impose a variety of tasks upon her newly-arrived sister-in-law, couched in such phrases as—

"I wish, Vivia, you would go and show Candace how to make a rice-pudding. Candace always fails at rice-pudding, and I'm so fond of it, and the one you made Wednesday was so delicious;" or it would be, "Vivia, dear, I should be so glad if you would stitch that apron for Geraldine; I began it last week and it seems to me I never can catch up with my sewing, I have so many interruptions;" or again, "O, Vivia, you good child! if you would only darn those socks for Captain Lemuir. He is the worst man on socks I ever saw. Just look what awful holes, and I noticed your stockings so beautifully darned. Now I never could darn worth a cent, and, in fact, I'd rather do anything than darn." Yet she was really a guest, having been invited by both her brother and his wife, separately and jointly. She had waited to accept her brother's repeated invitations till confirmed and emphasized in a letter from Mrs. Lemuir.

Vivia had shown a kind and obliging disposition from the day of her arrival, but her sister-in-law was only too ready to take advantage of her skill in household matters. When Arthur had

remarked that he "had two hogs to kill," Mrs. Lemuir instantly began deploring the "necessity of the dirty work."

"I do despise hog-killing. You had better go and get Mrs. Flanner to come and help attend to it."

Captain Lemuir had seemed so worried and at a loss, that Vivia quite innocently said she had been in the habit of helping sister Mary in all such emergencies, and last winter did up some lard that was quite white and kept till September, when the last of it was used. The poor girl was not a little chagrined when she found that her sister-in-law was actually going off visiting, and with a certain air of assurance dropped the whole load on her shoulders, with—

"I know, Vivia, you will be good enough to superintend Candace while she is doing up that lard and those sausages. I only want you to stay in the kitchen while she is at it; you needn't get a finger greased."

It turned out that Candace had to be constantly directed, and that she had caught her mistress's idea, and was for getting all the help she could from the captain's sister.

"She's a poor gal," said Candace to herself, "no kin to Mis' Celestia, and 'poor folks has to work.'"

Still, though Vivia smarted under a sense of imposition, she did whatever she put her hand to faithfully, and by four o'clock the lard was ready

to set away, clear and unscorched, and the sausages seasoned and ready for stuffing the next day.

For the last hour Vivia had been writing, but now, in the dreary twilight, she became restless and lonely, her spirits fell as the mercury rose in the thermometer, under the unseasonable warmth of an oppressively warm temperature, succeeding the mid-winter coldness of three hours before. It was only one of those sudden changes characteristic of the western climate, but keenly affecting to an impressionable temperament.

She went out on the long piazza and sat down on the "joggling-board." There was nothing to be seen in the waning light but a bald, brown stretch of drenched fields, a distant grove, bare-branched and leafless, not a green tint, not a hint of color in the landscape; no cedars, no magnolias, no beloved pines; and the girl's heart sank in a homesick longing for old familiar paths and places. The atmosphere darkened; an approaching cloud dissolved itself into an immense flock of blackbirds; not the plump black rice-bird of the Carolinas, but the species of small, thin-bodied, migratory birds, that can be seen any day in late fall and winter in the middle-west, darkening the air in their flight, and making it vibrate with their chatter when they alight in the pea-fields. Then her attention was attracted by a peculiar sound, "honk, honk," and over towards the river she saw a large flock of wild geese,

slowly flying in single file, as is their wont. They made her think of her brother Jeff, who was fond of hunting them, and whose very occasional early risings were all induced by an intense desire to kill wild turkeys and wild geese, or to go fox-hunting. One of his few accomplishments was his ability to imitate wild geese and turkeys by a peculiar method of blowing a bit of cane. With a turkey-quill in his pocket, he would get up before day and dive deep into the woods where he suspected they would be roosting. Here he would conceal himself in the brush of a "turkey-blind," made the day before, near a spot baited with peas or corn; and when the birds descended from their perches at daybreak he sometimes succeeded in getting a shot, and perhaps once or twice a year would bag a gobbler. But her sister Mary was much opposed to his hunts after either turkeys or geese, as they invariably gave him rheumatism and made long sieges of nursing for her.

Vivia thought sobbingly of the change she had made from sister's to brother's house. At Sister Mary's she was incessantly busy, helping energetic Mrs. Newsome in all her thousand-and-one duties; but that was different, for sister shared her work and was never idle herself, and Vivia knew her generous, noble nature; but this supercilious stranger who criticised, and snubbed, and domineered over her and her brother too, who seemed to have no love for even her own

children, created an atmosphere in which the girl's sensitive spirit seemed never at ease.

But now with one of those transitions of mood which was a striking characteristic of hers, she put aside the gloom of soul that had come on her with the evening shadows, and also the nervous dread of being alone in that lonely place with no one in call but colored people, and resolutely set to work on that same writing which she had taken from a shallow, flat box containing a much-worn atlas, minus backs, and a quantity of thin paper which she placed on a small table.

She wrote a large, bold hand, which could easily be mistaken for a man's. While she wrote her mobile face went through as many changes of expression as if she were acting in a pantomime. Not that she had any idea of acting, but her face was always a perfect index to her feelings, whether joy, sorrow, mirth, or sympathy. Even casual acquaintances deciphered the feelings of this ingenuous soul. Some people said "Vivia was 'winsome'—'lovely'—'the noblest creature,'—others called her "ugly, disagreeable and haughty." To these last she appeared as they described her because of their total lack of sympathy with her.

She had written about five pages when the barking of the dogs and rattling of wheels announced the master's arrival, which had the effect of arresting her writing; and by the time she had opened the door her brother came in, carrying

Geraldine, and Lambmy toting Gerald. The little girl had only half waked up, and was crying at the sudden interruption of her nap; but Gerald was full of glee, hugging Neptune, the pointer dog, as well as his negro playmate, Toney, while he told of "riding in the black night through big black water with papa."

Vivia stirred around, helping Candace to make coffee and toast, and herself arranged the supper-table. After a pleasant meal she put the children to bed, and then sat and talked with her brother over the incidents of his trip. He said his wife had concluded to send the children back because she found there was a camp-meeting going on at Centenary, and her aunt was just ready to start, and she wanted to go with her. She would return home in time to take Vivia to the Sunday meeting if she could get a dress made by then.

"So, Sissie, if you want to go, you had better let me carry you out to Clegg's store to-morrow and select something, and have Mrs. Clegg make it up for you. Celestia thought you might. Hey! what have we here?" he said, suddenly glancing at the table with the litter of closely-written sheets. "This looks as if it were intended to be printed."

Vivia blushed scarlet and hastened to snatch up the papers and cram them into her box. But Captain Lemuir, in his nonchalant way, dropped the piece he had taken up, saying:

"I used to think I'd be a great writer; I had

quite an ambition that way, but I've given up all such hopes, and am content to knock along and get through commonplace, every-day duties the best I can. It will make no difference a hundred years hence."

On Friday morning Mrs. Lemuir came home from the Methodist camp-meeting to get more clothes and see if Vivia was ready to go; but, as she had not even bought material for a dress, her sister-in-law again went to the meeting alone, leaving Captain Lemuir to weigh up "rent cotton" and Vivia to keep house. She said to Vivia:

"I'll see Mrs. Clegg and get you a dress if she has anything that will do, and she must make it up. I hate to have you go so dowdy. I want you to meet Aunt Henrietta and her girls, and you can't be seen in the things you brought."

Mrs. Lemuir returned from this trip Sunday, bringing with her a young man named Teddy Norwood, a bright, black-eyed, boyish-looking youth, who seemed overflowing with fun.

"Such a crowd was there, Miss Lemuir," said Ted; "now's your time to see what people in the middle-west are like. Mrs. Lemuir, did you go into Captain Jolly's tent?"

"No, I didn't."

"You ought to have, for it was the biggest on the grounds, and they say he killed a hog every morning. But ain't he a sure enough jolly old chap, by name as well as by nature? It takes a huge carriage, one made to order, to carry him

and Mrs. Jolly. You ought to see the couple, Miss Lemuir, I think they certainly weigh three hundred apiece. O, Captain, why weren't you there last night? Camp-meeting is such fun at night! Old man Grimes preached, and he fairly howled because they 'hadn't fixed the mourner's place.' 'Here's fifty souls perishing for want of straw!' " he howled; and Teddy laughed till the tears stood in his eyes. Suddenly, however, he blushed crimson, seeing that Vivia did not even smile, but looked at him with grave astonishment.

The captain, who as well as Mrs. Lemuir had joined in Teddy's mirth, composed his features and said in an apologetic tone:

" My sister is just in from the old Huguenot country, Ted; they look upon preachers and preaching as sacred out there."

" O, well," said Mrs. Lemuir, with an air of disgust, " anybody has a right to laugh at such humbuggery. Why, Pryor professed sanctification to-day; and such a spectacle as she made of herself, shouting and parading that Lowe girl, Minnie Frances, and exhorting her out loud to 'let the world know what the Lord had done for her soul.' "

Teddy was somewhat reassured, but in a more subdued manner said:

" They had old Miss Betsey Davis at Captain Jolly's tent; she was dressed in red flannel, and a bonnet as big as a peck measure, and she said the reason she had not got to the meeting the

first day was because 'her old yellow-speckled hen hadn't done hatching—she had tuck a notion to set in her bonnet.' ”

“ Poor old woman,” said Vivia's pathetic voice, “ I suppose it was all the bonnet she had.”

“ Don't you take such things too seriously, Miss Lemuir ?” asked Teddy, coloring again.

“ The fault of her bringing up, Ted,” interposed Captain Lemuir. “ Our sister Mary, who raised Vivia, is a saint on earth, and I'm mightily afraid Vivia's beginning to be one. I'm sorry on her own account, for saints have a sad time down here.”

Vivia's lips quivered, but she controlled her voice, saying :

“ I wish I were ever likely to be a saint, brother, but I'm much too human, I fear, and feel too strongly the human passions of anger and resentment.”

“ O sister, spare us ! You have plenty of religion already, and I don't object to it in its place, but honestly now, Vivia, dear, do you believe there is anything divine or supernatural in the nervous excitement that makes people prance over that straw round the mourners' bench ? ”

“ I've seen them get mad while laughing the 'happy laugh,' ” said Mrs. Lemuir. “ I bet Pryor could be made mad this minute, sanctified though she pretends to be,—mad enough to fight.”

“ I think it is wrong, and lowers the tone of our moral nature to ridicule any thing, or person, con-

nected with God's church," said Vivia, in an awed voice, and flushing deeply.

"Stand by your colors, little girl," laughed Captain Lemuir, "and, wife, don't be so hard on Mrs. Pryor; she is a most kind-hearted woman and an excellent neighbor, but easily thrown off her balance. Her head is an interesting specimen, very small in the main, high at marvellousness, veneration and benevolence, deplorably low at comparison and causality. Her nose is her salvation, being a long, old Roman, but too much inclined to poke itself into other people's business. Her chin keeps company with her forehead and retreats rapidly out of sight." The captain's eyes twinkled as he looked quizzically at Vivia, taught by Sister Mary to "speak well of the absent or speak not at all."

Vivia had read some phrenological magazines, and understood perfectly his technical phrases, but did not utter her thoughts. Mrs. Lemuir, however, was under no restraint, and rejoined in her caustic tones:

"That's some of your phrenological foolishness, Hubby. I despise the whole thing. The idea of knowing what's in people's heads from the outside! The smartest people I ever knew had low foreheads. It's like judging a woman's face from her foot. Women with pretty feet are never pretty." Mrs. Lemuir, by the way, had a low forehead and large feet.

The week following the camp-meeting Mrs.

Lemuir, accompanied by Vivia, went to pay the promised visit to the Milns. The former seemed quite vexed when Vivia presented herself, equipped for the ride. The new dress, she said, did pretty well, but she had taken too short a time to dress, hadn't put on any powder or rouge, which would greatly improve her complexion; neither had she taken the trouble to roll her hair in papers the night before, and so her bangs were as limp and straight as a skirt without an elastic supporter.

"It's antediluvian to wear your hair that way. Here, let me show you how to arrange it on top of your head; and you must just brush those bangs till they are fluffy. You have much too high a forehead for a woman; men don't admire it, and I—really abominate it. I hate for you to look tackeyish among the most stylish girls in the country."

It was a long and disagreeable ride, but at length they arrived at "Milnville," the country-seat of the Hon. Joshua Miln, a stately brick villa, whose long colonnades of white pillars imparted an air of distinction to its ample length and breadth. The house was surrounded by a grove of maples and hickories, but these had cast their leaves and held up bare branches over the bleached, dead grass of the grounds. However, the glass roof of a conservatory glistened at one side of the building, and Vivia pictured to herself the fine exotics blooming there.

A black footman in livery received them, and conducted them into a magnificent double parlor, the upper and lower parts being divided by rich hangings. Vivia had never seen such excellent furniture, but she glanced at it briefly, being most attracted by the paintings on the walls, which Mrs. Lemuir told her were family portraits.

“ Here, you see, is Uncle Joshua, in his General’s epaulettes, and this is Aunt Henrietta. She wore that costume of ruby velvet at the President’s levee, when she and Uncle Joshua were spending their honeymoon in Washington. Those two girls are Aunt Henrietta’s daughters when they were little; and these Uncle Joshua’s. Aunt Henrietta’s are the handsomest,—but here they come; sit down, Vivia.”

Mrs. Joshua Miln, whom Mrs. Lemuir rose to meet, was of the Juno style, large, and with a slow, dignified way of moving and speaking. She had just flesh enough on her large frame, helped out by art, to save her from being rawboned; her face was wide, nose long, forehead round and polished, black eyes with a brownish tint, and red lips, so thin they were like a line of coral. Jetty braids crowned her head like a coronet, and her black silk dress defined a figure whose curves art had helped to make satisfactory. She spoke in a pleasantly modulated voice, and her manner was the perfection of well-bred cordiality.

She introduced her eldest step-daughter, Pauline

Miln, to Vivia, and her own youngest, Elma Fleetwood. Pauline was tall, blonde, graceful and willowy, and extremely fragile, as appeared from the shadows under the large blue eyes and the transparency of her lily complexion. Elma, on the contrary, was a most brilliant and healthy-looking brunette, her pliant figure curved and rounded in nature's daintiest mould, head proudly poised with coronet of jetty hair, the dusky cheeks aflame with native bloom, the melting midnight eyes aglow with native light; her brows pencilled arches, lashes black and sweeping, nose Grecian, chin well-defined but dimpled, and the scarlet beautiful lips constantly curving with smiles of self-satisfaction. She suggested a rich, tropic blossom, and Vivia fancied her ideal Spanish or Caucasian beauty before her. Elma executed a bow in her best boarding-school style, Pauline cordially shook hands, and Mrs. Miln wanted to know "how Miss Lemuir liked the country?"

She replied that she had not been in it long enough to judge. It "seemed strange and unfamiliar."

"O, all that will pass off as soon as you visit some," said Elma, in a patronizing and complaisant tone. "Staying so closely at home is giving you narrow impressions. If Cousin Celestia would allow you to remain some days with us now, you would get larger ideas, and think the middle-west the most delightful country in the world; besides," added she, "Cousin Julia Snow will give an

infair next week, and we will get you an invitation and take you with us if you'll stay."

The young lady spoke in the patronizing tone of a matron, and distinctly took precedence of the mother, whose spoiled darling she was.

"I'm quite willing to leave her with you," said Mrs. Lemuir. "I want you all to help me rub the rust off your country cousin. Vivia came from Tackeydom, you know, the most old-fogyish country in the world. How anybody can live there surprises me. I know I wouldn't survive ten days. They've got the drollest old pokey ways out there you can possibly imagine."

"Cousin Arthur is not tackeyish, nor pokey either," said Elma, pouting enchantingly, "and no doubt this little sister is as graceful and progressive as he," and she beamed upon Vivia irresistibly.

"Well, we will consider the matter settled," said Mrs. Miln, waving her handsome hand, "and now, Paula, go and tell Jerry to hand some wine. Here is Celia Fleetwood, my daughter, Miss Lemuir. Don't be overwhelmed by the number I have."

Again Vivia's eyes widened, in beauty-gladened wonder. A white exquisitely shaped hand clasped hers, the loveliest opaline eyes smiled a welcome, eyes laughing winsomely beneath white lids; forehead fair and satiny as a lily petal, under puffs of golden hair; cheeks tinged like a ripe peach; love himself lurking in the bow of the

pomegranate lips. Celia's voice was softer than Elma's, and on the whole the harvest moonlight of her blonde loveliness entranced Vivia more than the starry brightness of her sister.

"You must show Miss Lemuir the conservatory, girls," said Mrs. Miln. "O, by the way, such a singular phenomenon occurred in there yesterday morning. You remember how brightly the sun shone after the snow-storm of the preceding night? I got up from the breakfast-table and went into the conservatory and carelessly left the door ajar. Suddenly it began to snow right on my blooming pelargoniums, geraniums and fuchsias. I called the General, and he and Pauline ran in in time to see the strange sight. I suppose the slight change of temperature caused by the door being ajar congealed the moisture within and produced the snow. It didn't do much harm."

At luncheon Mrs. Miln introduced her other step-daughter, Noisette Miln.

"Zetta is my little housekeeper, Miss Lemuir. She has been making custard for dinner," explained madame, as the young lady advanced and shook hands, raising a pair of clear brown eyes to look steadfastly into Vivia's. She seemed to read there something that pleased her, for she said cordially, "I hope we shall be good friends."

She had a refined face, a delicately-cut profile, a large mouth, and a mass of rich Titian red hair flowed wavily over her shoulders. Her voice was very sweet and had a ring of sincerity in it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next five days might very appropriately have been termed a new chapter in Vivia's experiences, so different was the routine to any in her previous life.

In the first place the early rising to which she had been accustomed since childhood was out of the question here. Doors and windows were not opened, fires were not made, not a soul stirring till eight in the morning. She and the three girls, Elma, Celia and Pauline, occupied a large, richly furnished chamber on the second story, to which opened a small dressing-room used by the four in common. Noisette had a small room all to herself on the first floor.

When the maid came to build a fire, she invariably brought a waiter on which was hot punch and glasses for the four, and everybody stared and exclaimed when Vivia declined to drink.

After the late breakfast, Pauline, Celia, Elma and their guest occupied the sitting-room, where there was a small cabinet piano and guitar for those musically inclined, an unlimited supply of novels and fancy work, and a sewing-machine on which Pauline sometimes worked. Elma played

fairly well and was fond of dashing off gay little waltzes and polkas, but Celia was incurably indolent, and unconscionably idle. She never did anything, not even fancy work, and was forever talking about what she would do when she got married. She "would certainly live in some city, for life in the country was the tamest way of wearing soul and body out, under the sun."

Ensnored in a great crimson-velvet rocker, Celia would half shut her opaline eyes, and while she swayed back and forth, would chaff Pauline about her venerable admirer, the Hon. Adolphus Smith, M. C.

Noisette always excused herself on the plea of having "something to do in her studio." Before the end of her visit Vivia had made sufficient progress in her good graces to be asked to this studio, and even to see, without its veil, the large picture Noisette was bestowing her best energies upon. In this picture Pauline leaned over the bank of a small stream, thick set with water-lilies, and was in the act of gathering one of the gold-hearted blossoms. Elma sat at the right on the great roots of an old "hurricane tree" (vernacular for tree upheaved by the wind). She also bent forward, but to gaze smilingly at her own image in the clear water. Her black braids were crowned with blood-red poppies, and she wore a great bunch of them on her breast.

At one o'clock luncheon Noisette joined the circle in the sitting-room, and Vivia soon learned

to look for her coming eagerly, for she invariably gave wings to the hours by introducing some live topic of conversation, or reading aloud. Diffident as Vivia was, Noisette had the tact to draw her out, and to discover the originality of her thought.

At luncheon Mrs. Miln was sure to say :

“ Now, girls, I think you need some exercise. Suppose you have a few games of croquet,” and to the croquet grounds they at once resorted, and played till time to dress for dinner.

This was the final and most ceremonious meal of the day, and generally enlivened by one or two gentlemen guests. In the long evening which followed, there was Elma's gay music, two or three waltzes round the room by Celia and Pauline, games of cards, at which Vivia declined to take a hand, and was only too glad when left to talk with Noisette ; and bed-time at 11:30 or 12 o'clock.

The charm of the evening to Vivia, however, was when Elma softly played some touching ballad to which Noisette sang the words, with fervor and pathos. Elma never attempted to sing, being like some beautiful tropic bird without a voice. Poor Vivia, with a natural aptitude for music, painting and sculpture, had enjoyed no opportunities of taking lessons in either, but her undeveloped talents at least gave her a sense of enjoyment in good music, fine paintings and sculptured figures.

On the day of the "infair" the five girls were stowed in the large carriage, Celia sitting with the driver. They were late starting on their journey of fifteen miles, and the roads being almost impassible from slush and gulleys, it was dark long before they reached their destination. Their experiences, Zetta said, reminded her of Mr. Dickens's "American Notes."

Mrs. Julia Snow lived in an unpretentious, but large log house, with five rooms. Into one of these the girls were hurried, the two main rooms being given up to the guests and company already arrived.

It was a clean little snugery into which the girls went to make their toilets, amid much smothered laughter, when it was discovered there was but one looking-glass. Here was a field for a display of character; and Vivia noticed Elma's unwonted haste in taking possession of the one mirror and monopolizing it, while she donned her costume. Pauline was almost in hysterics from laughing at and chaffing Elma, and, with her slow movements, was the last to get ready.

Celia seemed amused too, at first, but presently became indignant with Sis, and remonstrated in no measured terms; while Zetta, whose voice had a tone of amusement, quietly said, "Vivia, we will be looking-glasses for each other."

To Vivia's surprise she saw Elma use various toilette appliances to heighten her beauty, and, just as she was giving the finishing touches to her

eyebrows, Celia with a laugh snatched the looking-glass, and a romp ensued at which the Carolinian looked on aghast. Elma tried to get the glass from Celia, who called for Paula to help, and she, in hysterics of glee, rushing away with it, broke Elma's bottle of cologne and overturned the water-pitcher. Elma, flying after her, had her beautifully arranged hair mussed by Celia, upon whom she turned like a little fury, leaving the print of her teeth on her sister's arm, while the lock of blonde hair she pulled out by the roots from Paula's head she waved as an Indian might the scalp he had taken. The two blondes gave up and let Elma keep possession of the glass, which, however, gave back a distorted image, for in the course of the romp it had been cracked.

Elma wore yellow satin and scarlet poppies, Celia pink silk and moss rose-buds, Pauline blue tulle, spangled with silver stars, while Noisette, like Vivia, in simplest white, with not a single jewel, kept the poor girl in countenance, and inspired her to look beneath these dazzling surfaces and think more highly of genius and goodness than mere beauty of flesh and blood and fine attire.

The scene in the great room of Mrs. Snow's big log-house was an interesting one as the bevy of young ladies from Milnville entered. There was already a goodly crowd of people and a low buzz of talk. In many instances whole families had come, and a glance took in father, mother, grown

daughter, children of all sizes and ages, and the family dog.

It was a purely democratic gathering, and you could hear all sorts of discussions going on. Farmer Lowe, telling how many lambs he had lost in the sleet-storm last week, Mrs. Hardwyn discussing the price of cotton with Major Snow, and pretty Emma Pryor, already flirting with Teddy Norwood.

There were not many men as yet, however, in the big best room; they were mostly in the passage or porch, or out seeing to the horses. Supper, the fiddle and dancing would bring them in.

A good many of the matrons were in the supper-room assisting Mrs. Snow, and some of the mothers with babies were clustered round the fire in one of the back bedrooms, having a good time talking over the neighborhood gossip.

Vivia found herself seated by Noisette, and directly listening to a group of elderly farmers. Said one of these, turning his tobacco-quid in his mouth :

“It’s been a mighty bad crop year; too much rain in summer, raining, so to speak, the whole of July, and not a drop in August. Cotton on my farm was just drowned out and wropped up in weeds. No, sir, there wus no sich thing as cleanin’ it out after that, an’ it tuck the rust, an’ I didn’t make a third of a crop.”

“Nor I nuther,” said number two; “my cotton

crop was short an' corn shorter; nuthin' but nubbins. The Lord knows what we'll do. This here livin' on Illinoy wheat and Ohio bacon ruins us farmers in Arkansas."

"Oh!" said number three, "we'll do better than we ever did; folks'll draw in their horns and quit mortgaging their crops 'fore they are planted, in big store accounts. Besides, labor is going to be cheaper. The niggers is about run aground, farmin' on their own hook, and they are going to be easy to hire; and I for one am glad because I don't believe in one side havin' all the advantages; and up to this time the advantages has been on the nigger's side. We all thought the landholders of the kintry was bound to have a preponderating weight in the government; it ain't turned out so; they ain't weighed nothin' against numbers of nigger ignoramuses;" saying which he got up, at a wink from Major Snow, and the others followed to Aunt Julia's pantry where they drank from a flask of real old "North Kaliney corn-whiskey."

Meantime Elma had been invited to the piano, and was making the room resound with a gay fantasia. Celia was the centre of a group of admirers, and Pauline was chatting with some girls, when a gentleman entered the room in company with Jack Snow, the richest young farmer in the country. Jack was a careless fellow as to dress, but this friend was a Beau Brummell in the exquisiteness of his get-up, and with his glossy black curls, sparkling black eyes and long white fingers,

(on one of which shone a large diamond), at once became the cynosure of all eyes.

“Who’s that Jack Snow’s got in tow now?” asked some one.

“O, that’s a sort of French Jew from New Orleans. He went fox-hunting with us boys yesterday, and he never knowed the fox when he saw him. We all went on a drive last week to Lost Lake, and this Recamier was along; he’s kin to Jack Snow by his mother’s side, but we all was nearly tickled to death at his ignorance. He knowed no more ’bout a gun than a baby does ’bout a poker, and Ellie Humbolt overloaded his rifle and got Recamier to shoot at old George Lowe’s cow; told him it was a deer, and the rifle kicked him and over he went sprawling, in his velvet hunting-suit; but seems like he’s perfectly at home among the ladies. Look at Jack now introducin’ of him to Miss Pauline Miln. My, what a stunner she is! See, she’s taken his arm and gone to promenade with him. St. James Creek! how I wish I could make myself that sweet to a woman!”

“Miss Lemuir, let me introduce you to Miss Pryor,” and Vivia turned to shake hands, country fashion, with an exceedingly pretty, short, fat young lady, who broke out impulsively with—

“Mamma told me to be sure and get acquainted with you, she thinks so much of your brother, Arthur, and you are one of our nearest neighbors.”

Teddy Norwood having gone through with this

introduction, turned to Noisette and asked her to promenade with him.

There was dancing now going on in a large detached house connected with the main building by a covered way; and to this Teddy and Zetta presently betook themselves, while Miss Pryor's hand was claimed by Jack Snow, whom the fat young lady familiarly addressed as "Jack" and whom she quizzingly plied with conundrums out of last year's almanac.

Meantime no couple excited so much attention as Pauline Miln and Monsieur August Julien Recamier; the girl, so suggestive of a tall white lily, the man with his face of glowing, magnetic darkness, his jetty curls, his sparkling eyes, his French words besprinkling his English, and his foreign air of excessive gallantry. He danced with Paula, took her in to supper, and in short monopolized her. Elma whispered to her, "Paula, are you crazy? what do you mean?" but the deep blue eyes only laughed at her, and directly the stylish figure was whirled away in another waltz, Recamier's diamond flashing from his white finger on her waist.

Mr. Adolphus Smith, M. C. elect, an elderly widower, with long waxed moustache, a swaggering gait and grandiloquent manner, made an impression on Elma, who was surprised that he did not offer himself at once. Indeed, the young lady felt that if she could only be seen in St. Petersburg she would be certain to captivate a

grand duke, whom on certain grounds she thought preferable to any English duke. "The Russians are so 'chic' you know," she said, and if she married an M. C., he might get an appointment to Russia.

Celia had a crowd of admirers, but not one that she set any value upon. Vivia's enjoyment was not of an exciting nature, she merely looked on, observing the manifestations of human nature with those young-old eyes of hers. She heard very little intelligent conversation—the talk being chiefly children's ailments, the weather, hog-killing, prospective marriages, recent births and deaths, among the elderly people. She only received enough attention to save her from being one of the wall-flowers of the party. Teddie Norwood took her to supper and introduced her to a preacher. He was elderly and married, but Vivia struck up quite a friendship with him.

CHAPTER V.

VIVIA was writing in her room in the garret, at her express request partitioned off by some large, portable screens, she and the captain having fixed up a tiny little stove to warm it. It was a very humble lodging-place, with its slanting roof and two small dormer windows, its rough walls and rougher floor; but this last was covered with crocus bags, which Vivia herself had ironed smoothly and sewed together, and she had made two cheerful looking rugs of blue and red strips, composed of a red flannel petticoat and an old blue worsted dress that Mrs. Lemuir had told her she might get out of the chest of disused clothes up garret. The room had rather an attractive aspect, and indicated the taste of its occupant.

There were some books on a hanging shelf, fringed with blue and white paper, and a stone jar contained a cluster of holly branches and a spray of mistletoe.

The view from the dormer window was inspiring to Vivia just now, for it was break of dawn, and the sky brightening with a soft clearness. The east was shining in rosy streaks of transpar-

ent vapor, while underneath the fair and lovely heavens the earth seemed to define its various forms in a translucent darkness, directly changing to more distinct hues of perfect daylight.

Taking a long breath at the open window, she drew in her head and addressed herself again to the task of deciphering the pencilling on sundry bits of yellow paper, and transferring them, in an improved and almost transmogrified state, with pen and ink, to some narrow strips of long, white foolscap. For, in truth, I may as well take you into my confidence, reader, and tell you that this little heroine of mine was engaged in writing a novel, under such difficulties as might have overcome the stoutest heart. She had no time to write during the day, there was so much to see about the house, so much sewing to do, and the children to teach. She was so sleepy when she came upstairs she was obliged to go to bed, so her only plan was to get up before day, when there was no bewilderment of bothers, and everybody else asleep; then her thoughts seemed to flow clearly and happily.

She laid down her pen and took up a newspaper containing a character sketch of a woman. Captain Lemuir had reached home the night before, about nine o'clock, but had insisted on reading this article to Vivia and his wife, his eyes twinkling with fun while he read it. He had dwelt on the quaint delineation with fervor, remarking, as he finished—

“ I would like to know who wrote that. It’s as good in its way as ‘ Betsy and I are Out.’ The fellow that did it has made my speech, as Cousin Euclid More said when he heard the governor speak. What do you think of it, Vivia dear ? ”

The girl’s eyes sparkled ; this praise of her own production (her own painstaking evolvment from bits of crude thought, and written at odd times on yellow covers of magazines and papers, this precious piece of brain-creation), was very sweet ; but Mrs. Lemuir strongly disapproved.

“ Who ever wrote that thing’s got no heart,” she said ; “ caricaturing and making fun of some poor woman. Men are the animals that need taking off.”

“ But whoever wrote this knows more about women than men. Let her write them up by all means,” said Captain Lemuir.

While re-reading and laughing over it now, Vivia thought, “ If my first effort merits such praise, I will work, work, work, and see if I cannot write my name alongside Charlotte Bronte’s and Miss Burney’s.”

She therefore addressed herself to the task of re-writing, improving and variously altering the opening chapters of a novel with such concentrated endeavor that four closely-written pages, quite free of errors as to spelling, punctuation, capitals and grammar, were ready to put away in the tray of her trunk by the time she heard the servants stirring downstairs. Then she put on a long

apron, tied on a veil, protected her hands with gloves, and went down to sweep the dining-room, arrange the breakfast-table, and give some tasteful touches to the sitting-room.

Just as the morning meal was finished, a poor, pale, pitiful-looking old woman, in a thin purple shawl, entered without rapping, whom Captain Lemuir named to his sister as "Aunt Diddie Thorpe."

The old woman hardly stopped to thaw her hands and face before she began to tell her tale of woe.

Her only son, a wilful boy, had persisted in going to California a year ago, with a party of young men who agreed to pay his expenses if he would go as cook for them. After getting there and roughing it in the mining camp he had had a spell of coast fever, and now wrote that he would "come home for good and all if mammy would send him fifty dollars." "And I'm a gwine to do it," said the old woman, the tears streaming from her eyes, "ef the Lord'll help me. I've washed for folks till my han's is raw betwixt the fingers, and now I'm beggin' roun' for a loan. Here's my note, Cappen, writ by Miss Pryor. She's loant me ten dollars, and I want you to let me have forty."

The captain flushed hotly, looked at his wife, got up and went into the next room and asked her to step there a minute. Their voices could be heard, his coaxing, hers short, angry and remon-

strative. They came back, the wife's face clouded and ill-humored, Lemuir's with a shamed look.

"I've only ten dollars, Aunt Diddie, I'll give you that; wish I had the forty for you."

"O Cappen! O Mis' Lemuir," burst out the woman, "you-uns is the richest neighbors I got, and what shall I do if you won't help me? I'll 'turn it every cent back, Mis' Celestia, you know what a worker I is. Why, I've ploughed and made craps many a year, and your old daddie knowed I allers paid my debts. I know you can lend me the money, Misses Muir, if Cappen can't. Dropping on her knees before the now thoroughly provoked lady, she continued: "The Cappen axed you 'bout it cause he got his prop'ty by you. It's a fine plantation, an' you won't never miss what you 'vance to me, an' the Scriptor says, 'He that gives to the poor lends to the Lord.'"

"I don't like that kind of security," said Mrs. Lemuir, in high fighting tones, "and one thing's certain, you won't get it from me, not if I know myself. At the rate Captain Lemuir is going on, wasting and giving, lending and going security, I won't have a roof over my head in ten years; but the thing's got to stop, and the sooner everybody knows it the better. Now, Mrs. Thorpe, there's the door, I won't be annoyed by you any longer."

The bent figure rose and hobbled out, with her apron to her eyes, and Vivian, turning round to say a pleading word for the poor soul, found herself alone.

As for Captain Lemuir, he did not make his appearance in the family circle till the next morning. But his wife's bottled-up anger was then poured out on his offending head, so that the sounds of the marital battle reached Vivia in her garret chamber.

"If that is what marriage means," she thought, "I pray to be delivered from such bondage."

The next morning Mrs. Lemuir's ill-humor vented itself to such a degree on the cook, that Candace, after "sassing her back," immediately left; whereupon, in an excess of spleen, Mrs. Lemuir ordered Lambmy, who helped the captain to feed, cut wood and the like, to get the buggy and drive her to Aunt Henrietta Miln's.

She carried Geraldine with her, but left Gerald howling lamentably on the front gate, to which he had hung after being forcibly taken out of the buggy by Lambmy, who held him for his mother to switch after she got herself settled in the vehicle.

Vivia was not at all daunted by the situation; her training under Sister Mary, in domestic pursuits, had made her mistress of it. She first put herself in proper form, in a large apron with long sleeves, huge pocket, and a kettle-holder which she had brought with her from Pineland. Then she put the kitchen or stove-room to rights. The cook, not tidy at best, had, in her burning anger, left things in more disorder than usual.

A dozen bad-smelling articles confronted Vivia. One vessel closely covered up contained the re-

mains of yesterday's cabbage, and emitted a most sickening odor. The stove she thoroughly cleaned, taking out ashes, emptying pipe of soot, and finally giving it a neat coat of polish. The vessels she scrubbed with sapolio, scoured the tables, swept the walls as high as she could reach, put clean newspapers on the shelves, filled a vessel with salt and put it in handy reach from the stove.

At last, having accomplished wonders for the looks and atmosphere of the stove-room, she sat down and prepared the vegetables for dinner, resting her little feet while she picked the rice and washed the potatoes.

While thus engaged the captain and Gerald came in, the former with a hat full of eggs.

"Heigh-ho!" he cried, when he saw the transformation of Candace's domain; "why, sissie, what a magician you are! This place is nice enough for a man to read his paper in. I'll go and get 'Quentin Durward,' and enliven your mind with accounts of the doings of the Countesses of Croye while you are engaged in these menial labors; but seriously, sissie, you ought not to be 'put upon.' Why should you allow yourself to suffer from another's ill-regulated temper? I have hired another cook and she will be here presently."

"O, well, brother, everything will be ready for her, and she can go right ahead with dinner. Besides, on the whole, I've enjoyed demonstrating what I could do in this way."

The girl, Eliza, now appeared, and Vivia, after superintending her till the meal was almost ready to take up, went to her room and refreshed herself with a sponge bath and clean clothes, coming down in time to set the table and preside over dinner.

Mrs. Lemuir did not return, and Vivia, having put the lamps in nice order, lighted them and got her sewing, expecting her brother to read aloud to her. This he proceeded to do from the work of an eminent scientist, chaining her attention by the witchery of his eloquent intonation and earnest manner, though the subject matter was not to her taste. Shutting the book at last, he said in a serious tone, though at the same time watching her amusedly from under his half-closed lids.

“It’s curious now, isn’t it, little girl” (the name by which he loved best to call her), “it is strange to think of one’s being peddled ’round in the shape of peanuts, yet strange as ’tis, ’tis true. I expect myself to be vended in this very market as corn-nubbins or pig-hams, some day. You, my Vivia, years afterwards (I’m older than you, recollect), will be hiding your coy head as a violet in the shadow of some old decaying log.” He stopped to laugh at her dismay.

“Is that the doctrine of evolution, brother?” she said, so seriously that he fairly shook with laughter; then quieting down, he continued:

“It’s a just deduction from the teachings of

science, sister. Don't you perceive that, according to Professor Huxley, animals, including man, have a common origin with plants, and plants are but developments from the vital molecules of the stone?—a mere progression in form of matter, you observe, from the green mould of the ditch to the whispering tree and blushing rose; from the condition of a sponge to that of a philosopher. Come to think of it now, our friend Lambmy is very well typified in the sponge, defined by the learned savant as a low form of life, deriving its support from something else. In Lambmy's case I am the something else. Here I've been feeding and clothing that intolerable nuisance for years and never gotten anything out of him, except such work as I ought to have done myself. Lambmy, however, is brilliantly exceptional in one way. The great naturalist furnishes us the sublimest test, distinguishing the animal from the vegetable, the fact that the 'former can only feed upon organized substances.' Our sheepish friend will deliberately eat clay or chalk, and, at a pinch, dirt, for I've seen him do it." The captain laughed again, but Vivia didn't join and presently asked:

"Brother, you are not in earnest?"

"Indeed I am. I am trying to instruct you in the sublime teachings of science, of which you profess to be ignorant. It is unfamiliar, and therefore you are unprepared to receive it as truth; and I have made it funny, I suppose, by my mode of illustration. But we have facts, act-

ual experiment. to prove that plants are the purveyors of animal life, the store-house of the sun-force, which the animal directs under the limitations of natural law. Now, what makes you a poetic little thinker, hubbling over with generous impulses and lofty ambitions, while poor Lambmy is only a human sponge whose highest good in life 'is sumthin' to eat' no matter how coarse and ill-prepared? Only that you have a finer quality of sun-force stored up for your use, through your ancestors; and they, through their habits of body, reduced ultimately to the food that nourished their brains and bodies. See that graceful moss you have twisted round my photograph up there! —look at the log of hickory in its red glow of dissolution! Both are of protoplasmic origin. There's a colony of ants in the end of that log, quite excited in view of the conflagration by which they will be helpless sufferers, poor things! If I had seen them in time, that log, their house of refuge, should not have been put on the fire. Well, those ants and our blackbirds, whose evening flight you like to watch, are all alike built up of tiny cells, filled with a watery, ever-moving fluid, it being the raw material of all forms of life. Every word you speak, my Vivia, every kiss you give, every tear you shed, destroys some of these nerve-cells of life, which are replenished from the food we eat, the air we breathe; so that what was a corn-silk last year, is now, perhaps, a strand in this lock of your bonny brown hair; the peach

ripened in some old orchard in 'the land we love,' lives now in this soft cheek of yours; and this cheek will sometime be a rose again in the great cycle of life."

"But, brother," said Vivian, "all this seems to me to bear injuriously on the independent existence of the soul?"

"It does to this extent—there can be no organic life without matter, no manifestation of mind without the intervention of grosser material than itself. The doctrine of a life to come cannot be established by physiological evidence. Spiritualism professes to demonstrate it, but I have not yet seen it proved."

"But, brother, we shall live again after death? O, I could not bear to doubt it!" and the small hands were clasped pathetically, as though something upon which she had always depended to right life's wrongs was being wrested from her, by one she knew not how to resist.

"I don't expect to," he said indifferently.

"O, brother!" she broke out impulsively, and her voice had the ring of sharp pain in it, "how can you be so faithless? Surely these souls of ours, our very selves, are not to be forever dependent on these frail, perishing bodies? If I can live without my arm or my foot, why may I not go on living when the whole house of this tabernacle is dissolved? I feel as surely that my soul is an entity, separate from my body, and able to live without it, as that this earth could go

on without the moon, or the sun without the earth."

"That is only a comparison ; it proves nothing. However, sister, I would not deprive you of a comforting faith, but I saw you had crude, narrow notions on scientific subjects, and thought perhaps I might help you without interfering with your religion. For instance, what religionists call Providence is simply the operation of nature's fixed laws. Rain comes, not in answer to prayer, but in answer to certain conditions. You take cold because you have exposed yourself to a draught, or imbibed some impure element, not because you have neglected going to church, as I expect you have often done penance, by thinking."

"No, I'm not so silly as that, and I can understand such natural operations as the result of God's laws, and as perfectly consistent with His revealed Word ; but that Word of His impresses us with the importance of prayer, and I believe experience will demonstrate to us that if we neglect prayer we shut ourselves out of communion with God. If Christ rose from the dead, we also, who believe in Him, may hope to live again !"

"Science sheds no light on the hereafter," said he earnestly.

"I think it does by inference, brother. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand at the last day upon the earth.'"

"O, well, sister, science calls for positive proof ;

science says, 'Bottle the thunder and lightning, bring it down from the clouds, and let me see the flash and feel the shock, then I'll believe.'

"There you are wrong, brother, for in such cases there would be no room for faith. When you had seen, it would be certainty; and 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Faith is well pleasing to God. The Scriptures give many instances, and St. Paul sums up by saying, 'These all obtained a good report by faith;' and in the nineteenth verse of the same chapter of Hebrews, speaking of Isaac's restoration after the faith of his father had offered him up, he declares the doctrine of the resurrection was known to and believed in by Abraham in these words, 'Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence he also received him in a figure.'"

"O well, sissie dear, I can't say I'm very familiar with the Scriptures; I never was much of a Sunday school boy. I used to be mighty apt to run off Sunday mornings and go in swimming or fishing. Perhaps you are right. Perhaps the matter of the body only changes its form by death, only gets rid of the state in which it at present exists. Perhaps that old idea of the Platonic school, metempsychosis, may be the correct one. Who knows (assuming a light tone), but that you once lived as Hypatia and I as Theon, and some day we may both be birds and

live among the live oaks on the white sandy shore of our dear old home?"

Vivia shuddered.

"Not Hypatia," she said.

"Why, my girlie, she is one of the loveliest figures in history; but I suppose you do not admire her because she was a pagan."

"No, I was thinking about Charles Kingsley's story of her—so horrible. That book and Bulwer's 'Last Days of Pompeii' agonized me."

"Yes, they are dramatic. You remember the scene in the amphitheatre at Pompeii? But it is really not so powerful as Hypatia's death-scene. Ah! sissie, you like Kingsley because he is a reverend. Now I dislike preachers and priests. Mother Church may be admirable, the Bible may be sublime, I can even admire the poetic figure of the sun standing still in the valley of Ajalon, but I don't propose to be the slave of any creed. I prefer to study nature, and look with my own eyes into the revelations she makes of herself."

"But, brother, what is nature but God's manifestations? I think the very flowers are most exquisite exponents of His designing goodness, and I ask nothing better to increase my faith than study of nature,—God's handiwork."

"Possibly you are right," said Captain Lemuir.

"But, brother," continued Vivia, in an awed and eager tone, "how do you feel when you think about dying?"

“Feel?” said he dreamily, looking into the fire with eyes that seemed seeking some lost, loved, well-remembered face; “well, I don’t think about it often, but when I do it is always as something that will give me infinite repose; and sometimes, when I draw the cover up as I lie down at night, I wish it were the kindly covering of clouds which will one day be heaped on my breast. For what is death?”

“ ‘Tis but a pang, and then a thrill,
A fever fit, and then a chill,
And then an end of human ill.’ ”

“Of human ill, brother, yes; but how about ‘that country from whose bourne no traveller returns?’ ”

“I know nothing of it; but in this life,—

“ ‘Of error, ignorance and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we but shadows of a dream,
It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if we consider it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.’ ”

“Ah! but the mockery is in our own hearts, dear brother; far better ‘approach thy grave sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust’—a trust in the Redeemer, who took upon Him the burden of human flesh and ‘was in all points tempted, like as we are, yet without sin;’ a High-priest made perfect through suffering, who can

be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

"You almost persuade me, little sister, and you remind me of the happiest days of my life, my care-free boyhood in old All-Saints' Parish. You were so tiny a toddler when we moved from there you cannot remember; but well do I recall that live-oak shaded home, the mock-orange avenue and the big magnolia trees. Our front yard was a wide, grassy ridge sloping to the marsh, over which the tide came from the outside rim of wide blue sea. How I used to love to lie on the sands, swim in the surf, and listen to the voice of the sea, or watch the white waves 'kneel down on the shore,' or lash it in time of storm! O, with what delight I studied the sails that came up from the under world or sank beneath the verge; and oh! what dreams I dreamed of the future! We were a rich old family then, and little I recked, in those halcyon days, when I lorded it over a crowd of devoted negro boys, of the farce of farming in an Arkansas bottom with a pack of freedmen, and—and—other unpleasant concomitants. Then I used to fancy, in the first years of my exile to this accursed country, that I would coin money, and go back and buy the dear old home and die there. But that, like all my dreams, has perished. Sister, I've kept you up unconscionably late; poor little girl! you do have a hard time. Forgive my foolish philosophy, and good-night, you dear little comforter."

“But, brother, let me read you a few verses first. These are in the Epistle to the Romans.

“‘For if we have been planted together in likeness of His death, we shall also be in likeness of His resurrection :

“‘Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live with Him :

“‘Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, death hath no more dominion over Him.’

“See here again at the twentieth verse :

“‘For when you were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness ; but now being made free from sin ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.’”

The day after this conversation Vivia had a letter from her sister Mary, in which she told her that her family had been enlarged by the addition of a boarder and a nurse-girl ; that the teacher of the Cross-Roads school, Mrs. Laura Dorsey, was now installed in what had been Vivia’s bedroom, and that a poor, hair-lipped girl, the daughter of a drunkard, had run away from his brutal blows and come to Mrs. Newsome begging to be allowed to stay as nurse for Baby Nell.

“Ortemissy,” as she called herself (Artemisia was no doubt her name), had shown herself capable, and she and the new boarder helped to fill the vacuum left by Vivia. As to Mrs. Dorsey, Sister Mary wrote that she was “singularly quiet, yet when she does speak it is most un-

commonly to the purpose. Her weighty words, backed by tremendous strength of conviction, have a power of seed-planting for her advanced ideas that makes me think of a bull-tongue or subsoil plough, tearing up roots and pulverizing earth.

“She is a widow, and tells me she lost three children successively at birth. As a teacher we are charmed with her power to govern, in which she is far ahead of any man we have ever tried. She has brought an organ with her, and has brightened up the parlor with her crayon sketches and water-colors. I am renewing my music under her instruction, and her earnest and scholarly talk is a great stimulus to me. She has discovered genius in Ortemissy’s rough pencil-drawings, and is teaching her. On the whole she has put new life and blessedness into our home.”

CHAPTER VI.

“WHY, Captain Lemuir, how do you do? Have you really brought Miss Vivia to see us?” cried Mrs. Pryor, running out to meet the brother and sister as they drove up to her gate in a buggy. “Well, now, this is a treat. We’ve been looking for you ever since Emma called on Miss Vivia. Come right in; it’s purty cold this morning. You, Jane!” (calling loudly) “come right here and make the fire burn! Well, Captain, what’s the news? Most done gettin’ cotton out? My gracious Fathers! It’s such slow work in this country. Out in Carolina people get through in October; and here it is pushing on towards Christmas, and fields white yet. It just wears me out, the way these freedmen work. In Mr. Pryor’s lifetime there wasn’t no such carryings-on as this—darkeys a dancin’ and havin’ cake-walks at night, and doing nothin’ in the daytime. And cotton ain’t wuth nothin’ noway, after you gets it picked. I ’clare to goodness, after you’ve done payin’ off hands an’ payin’ for the ginnin’, an’ the packin’, and the haulin’ over these awful roads, there’s mighty little left to go

into your pocket. Farmin' don't pay, Cappen, 'less a body owns bottom lands, like your Ridley place."

"Why, Mrs. Pryor, I think my place pays least of anybody's. It's time my renters usually pay their rents and the bulk of their store accounts, but every one of them is still somewhat in debt to me."

"You surprise me, Cappen. I had an' idee that you was making clear money; but that I don't expect to do as long as there's no man about the place."

"Why don't you get one to take charge of your business, Mrs. Pryor?"

"I want one the worst way to take care of me, as well as the farm," said Mrs. Pryor, with the funniest little cackling laugh.

"I should think there would be nothing easier," said Captain Lemuir with a smile and bow; "a captivating widow with a snug farm."

"It ain't so easy as you think; them that wants me I wouldn't have, and I'm just aggravated out of my life by the darkeys. You can't do enough for 'em, an' you never gets done doin' for 'em. I aint seen no peace with them sence Mr. Pryor died, and then my children frets me. There's Emma, fat little minx! You'd be surprised, Miss Vivian, at the way she dances. She will set up all night and dance at one of these frolics, surprise parties you know, an' she's got more beaux dangling after her, sech as they is, than any girl in the

country. Elma Fleetwood is a great beauty, but she don't hold a candle to Emma for beaux."

"O, ma!" said Emma, "do hush; how you do run on! I don't know what Miss Vivia will think of you talking so, and she a stranger."

"Oh! well now, Emma, she ain't no stranger, she's Cappen Lemuir's sister, and you ain't goin' to take her back this morning, Cappen. You've just got to let her stay a week. Why, this here's the lonesomest country on top-side of creation, Miss Vivia. It's a rale favor to stay with a body. Now don't begin to make no excuses. I'll send little Tom back with you, Cappen, and your wife can send your sister's things in a basket by him. I want you to go to Mizpah with me Sunday, Miss Vivia, and hear our presiding elder. He's a stunner! La! I never gets tired of hearing him preach. Now say you'll stay, won't you?"

Vivia, with considerable reluctance, agreed, perceiving from her brother's countenance that he wished her to; upon which Captain Lemuir rose to go, but was stopped by Mrs. Pryor's youngest child, a round, rosy little thing, who answered to the abbreviation of "Parm," for Parmella, who took his hand.

"She don't look like havin' no congestive chills, does she, Cappen? but she does; she had the hardest sort of chill last week, and Dr. Livingstone says I must not let it run on for fear they'll turn to congestive. Would you believe it, Cappen, he says this place is sickly? But la!

that's too ridiculous! Why, I know it ain't. About two miles from here, now, at old Isaac Lowe's place, it is sickly, no doubt about it. You heard that Sam Skimmer died in that place, Sunday, Cappen? No? Well he did, and died with one of them very congestive chills. He was took with a common chill, his wife told me, and he never did get warm no more. When I got there, (I went as soon as they sent for the turpentine, an' told me he wus took bad), I saw he was gone up. They jest poured the dead shot whisky down him. The doctor said if he could get up a reaction he might save him, but he didn't get up no reaction, and so the poor creature died; and died dead drunk, shore as I'm a livin' woman. I don't hold with no sich."

"Gimme de table-cloth, missus," said Jane, putting her head out of the door opening on the piazza where the group were standing, Captain Lemuir, hat in hand, ready to take his leave, only waiting for a break in Mrs. Pryor's flow of words. Taking advantage of this diversion he made his adieux and bowed himself out, while Mrs. Pryor, on hospitable thoughts intent, went out to assist her servant in setting the table.

In the interval Emma did her best to entertain Vivia; but though she chattered away at an amazing rate, her volubility lacked the shrewd common-sense which gave to her mother's something of a piquant interest.

After a dinner of smothered chicken, poached

eggs, light biscuits and canned peaches, Mrs. Pryor proposed that they drive over to the new mills at Smith's cross-roads, and stop at the store.

This was quite a neighborhood resort, a place for picnics in summer and fish-fries in spring. Here the people got their corn ground, bills of lumber sawed, and recently the attraction of a real country store had been added.

The mill was built at the foot of a hill on the very edge of a pond, and here corn was ground, lumber sawed and cotton packed.

There were several men and boys lounging about the mill, besides the proprietor and his help, and one of them presently sauntered up to Mrs. Pryor. He was a tall, angular, dirty-looking man with a halt in his gait, wore a huge, jet-black, excessively coarse beard, had a nose low at the base, swelling largely at the nostril, and a wide, ugly mouth.

He conducted them about the mill, showed them the "curiosities," and then escorted them to the store where Mrs. Pryor made some purchases. Observing that he had lost a finger, Vivia asked him if he had been in the war.

"Lord bless you, mum, that I was. I was in the Virginian army till our cappen, George Cuthbert, an' fifty of the men outen our comp'ny was killed, an' I was takened prisoner an' sent to Pint Lookout, whar I was kept six mont's. I played the best dodge on them Yankees, Mis Pryor, ever

you seed. They was going to exchange, you know, and the corporal what called the roll he tuck a likin' to me. Says he, 'Esau,' says he, 'you teck a crutch an limp up to the inspectin' ossifer an' tell him as how you has got the rheumatiz a-lyin' on this hyar wet groun'.' Well, sir, Mis Pryor, I come that dodge slick as a eel; an' when that inspectin' ossifer sees me, says he, 'This hyar man won't be no 'count to the rebs noway, 'scharge him.' So they put me on board the boat what was goin' to Richmond, the rebs' boat, 'cause them Yankees wus so scared of the tarpeeters (torpedoes), what us rebs had put on the river. I throwed my crutch away 'fore I got to Richmond. Thar I tuck a anverlance and rid to the place whar I had to git my papers fixed. I tell you, Mis Pryor, I has seed sights in my time! I has seed the dead piled up higher'n this mill at Chancellorsville!"

"La! now, Mr. Esau," said Mrs. Pryor, with her good-natured little cackle, "you make Miss Vivia open her eyes."

"Oh! that's nothing; I seed ten thousand beeves killed in one day for the army in Virginia."

"Oh! Mr. Esau, where did you come from?"

"Well, Mis Pryor, I cum from Tennessee, whar I wus borned in a liberty-stable. I growed up at old Saul's tavern, and used to drive the red stage on the Buzzard's-Roost road. I alles had a great likin' for hosses, 'cause I wus born in a liberty-

stable, I reckon. I jined the cirkis onct an' tuck care o' their hosses; but it wusn't near the fun it wus cracked up to be. When we wus crossing the Cumberland the old elephant he broke loose, an' lifted Long Ike (what kep him) on the end of his snout an' throwed him so fur till he knocked his senses clean outen him."

"La! Mr. Esau," ejaculated Mrs. Pryor, "did they ever get the elephant back?"

"Well, they sont out a passel of sha'pshooters what put five loads of buckshot in him, and killed him so dead he couldn't kick."

"Well, I never!" again ejaculated Mrs. Pryor, "an' how long did you stay with the circus, Mr. Esau?"

"'Bout five mont's, then I hired to the liberty-stable man. Lor' 'mighty! what times we uster have when 'lections wus gwine on. The can'idates they would try to see which could hire the most hacks, and they would let the men what was gwine to vote for 'em ride for nothin', and they'd stand treat all the time. Them wus days shore's you born. Out hyar in this all-fired country, a man don't get near as much for a vote as in Tennessee."

"Well, good-evenin', Mr. Esau. It's time for us to be a-goin' towards home, Miss Vivia."

"Wait a minute Mis Pryor, an' I'll bring up your horse an' buggy."

This done and the two seated in the vehicle, Mr. Esau lifted his hat and said:

“I’m comin’ over one day next week, Mis Pryor; look out fur me.”

“It’s so lonesome in these parts,” said Mrs. Pryor, in an undertone to Vivia, as they drove off, “that it makes one glad to see even such a fellow as old Esau. But just see how late it is! Why, I had no idea I wus stayin’ so long. G’long, old Gray. We’ll have to trot her every step ef we make it before it’s plum dark.”

CHAPTER VII.

MIZPAH.

SUNDAY at Mrs. Pryor's found everybody sleeping later than usual, breakfast hurried up in response to the mistress' doleful scolding, and a very poor one it proved, the egg-bread burned outside and raw in the middle, biscuits doughy, ham and eggs fried overdone, and Emma aggravatingly slow in making her appearance.

At last Mrs. Pryor set out with Vivia and little Parm in the rockaway, leaving Emma to follow on horseback with Mose Flanner, a half-witted, harmless son of one of the tenants, for her sole attendant.

When they arrived at Mizpah, a small, wooden church without ceiling or plastering, situated in a grove, now leafless, they found some half-dozen vehicles and twice as many horses, a number of which indicated by the side-saddles that they had been ridden by ladies.

In front of the door, seated on logs, were a number of men and boys, some whittling, some talking in subdued tones, and all chewing tobacco.

There were a few graves near the church, protected by rail-pens, and near one of them, on a log, sat a group of women, whom Mrs. Pryor, conducting Vivia and Parm, at once joined. Everybody had a smile, a hand-grasp and kindly word for friendly Mrs. Pryor. She introduced Vivia—"She's Captain Lemuir's sister," as if that were recommendation enough.

Presently Vivia saw Teddy Norwood drive up with Noisette Miln. She looked very happy, and her simple, elegant suit of gray wool brought out the beauty of her Titianesque hair and warm brown eyes.

She came up to Vivia, and greeting her with a warmth as of real liking, they went into the church and sat together. They could hear Mrs. Pryor and the friends she had met, chatting loudly about the health of the neighborhood.

"You know, Mrs. Pryor," said Mrs. Hardwyn, "Parson Jacobs has had another of them attacks, and now Dr. Livingstone says that both lungs is affected and there ain't no chance for him to get well, though if he can keep alive till spring he may live another year. I was up all Friday night with Betsy Ann Frazer's baby. It had spasms. I believe that child's got the rickets. It can't live, but Betsy Ann jest grieves over it jest like it wus the finest one she had. Look! there's Parson Lyle."

Through the window Vivia and Noisette saw a short, stout man dismount from a big, raw-boned

horse, on which was a saddle and saddle-bags. They could hear the deep, rich tones of his voice as he shook hands all around, inquiring kindly after the families of each. This little ceremony over he came in with a firm, springy step, mounted the pulpit, knelt down and prayed, rose and gave out a hymn, the groups outside all having followed when he entered the church.

He led the singing, lining the verses two at a time, made a fervent prayer and preached a forcible sermon, bristling with original thoughts and phrases. At the close he invited the congregation to go to the creek near by and witness a baptism. It was rather a cold day, but the water was not frozen, and the candidate went through the ordeal with perfect composure, receiving the right hand of fellowship from the members of the church, who received her at the water's brink as she came up.

When Mrs. Pryor got into her vehicle, she remarked to Vivia that she had "promised Mrs. Hardwyn that they would all go and dine with her, as she lived so much nearer the church than they." On their way Mrs. Pryor freely discussed preacher, sermon and congregation. After a while Noisette's turn came.

"She's a sweet girl," said Mrs. Pryor, "the pick of that flock, if her hair is red. Elma Fleetwood is stuck up past all telling, Celia's most too lazy to breathe, and Pauline is a natural-born fun-maker; but Noisette is good and smart, and I'll

tell you a secret, Miss Vivia—the way she loves Teddy Norwood is enough to raise your hair with astonishment. I've seen it for years, ever sence they were boy and girl, in fact; but old General Miln's powerfully opposed to it. I don't know how he come to let Ted drive her to church to-day, but I reckon he thinks he can trust Zetta. Ted gets out of heart 'bout Zetta every once in awhile an' comes to see my Emma. Emma's such a little flirt she will 'take on' with him, but I don't think much of Ted, he's too impudent and hot-tempered. The girl that marries him will do a pretty poor business; besides, he is poor as a church-mouse. They say the senator's in love with Pauline. He was that man what come in so late—a one-eyed man and terrible tall. He's been married twict, got money both times, and now he's looking out for A-number-one the third time. I hope Pauline will give him the mitten."

"Leora Hardwyn's comin' to-day for Emma to help her sew," remarked Mrs. Pryor at breakfast the following Tuesday. "Now, Mose, what do you want?" She turned, holding her coffee cup in one hand, to confront the person of a huge, overgrown boy, who stood with his feet wide apart in the doorway. He wore heavy boots, red with clay, drawn over his pantaloons, a tight-fitting jacket and a broad-brimmed hat. His features were coarse and large, his skin yellow, his mouth stained with tobacco. His light eye had an

uncertain, wandering look, and there were constant twitchings of the mouth.

"Won't you have some breakfast?" continued Mrs. Pryor, kindly.

"No, I don't want no more; I done et."

"Who cut your hair, Mose?"

"Mammy; she like to cut my head off."

"O no, Mose, she wouldn't do that. How are you gettin' on pickin' cotton? 'most out?"

"We is jest a-goin' it, Mis Pryor. I can pick faster'n anybody; dog my buttons ef I can't pick mighty right!"

Mrs. Pryor laughed.

"Have some of these 'lasses cakes, Mose? You know you love 'lasses cakes."

"Well, I does," said he, taking a handful and crunching them ravenously. "Mammy wants you to sen' her some bakin'."

Mrs. Pryor got up and went with Mose to the smoke-house, where she weighed and delivered the bacon. On her return she told Vivian the history of the unfortunate boy.

His father had been a respectable man and was a brave soldier in the war. When he came home he found his wife had gone to live with another man, pretending to think him dead. He had a quarrel with this person, who ended the fray by drawing his knife and stabbing poor Flanner. Mose (a child then) witnessed the whole affair and never had a sound mind afterwards.

"When he takes a fit he looks like he'll tear

hissself to pieces; but he's an accommodatin', hard-workin' creeter, poor soul, when he comes to hissself. He is generally taken with a chill and don't know nothin' for days nor eat a mouthful, and has to be watched when he comes to for fear he'll kill hissself or somebody. He's one of the best hands on the place and mighty good to keep me in firewood."

The family having assembled in the sitting-room after breakfast, Mrs. Pryor, in her restless way, peered through the window and presently exclaimed!

"Laws a massy! It never rains but it pours. Yonder comes old Isaac Lowe an' his wife an' Mary Frances down one road, and Leora Hardwyn on her pony by the other, and the house not cleaned up yet. O, Jane! for la's sake come and sweep this floor. Vivia, did you ever see such good-for-nothing folks as mine? Well, 'tain't no use worryin' about it," and she hastened to meet her guests, glad to see them, no matter what inconvenience they might put her to, for she was one of those sociable souls to whom company is always welcome.

Leora arrived first, and had dismounted and gone into the house with Vivia to lay off her things, leaving Mrs. Pryor and Emma to greet the Lowe family. Mary Frances, a sallow, bloodless-looking girl, suggesting a corpse, glided about in a light blue dress with purple trimmings. Uncle Isaac Lowe was, as Mrs. Pryor said, "as badly put

together as they ever made 'em ;" knock-kneed, parrot-toed and club-footed. He was nicely dressed in a homespun, home-made suit of neat gray jeans, but walked as if his limbs turned on rusty hinges. He never seemed to look at anybody except his wife, and consulted her face as if it were a clock. In making a remark, which he always uttered in slow and solemn tones, he invariably looked at his wife and licked out his tongue, a habit of such long practice that some bad boys had nicknamed him " Old Lickout."

Mrs. Lowe was a perfect pattern of a shrew—thin, pale lips, furtive eyes, and a general air of scrimpness and primness. Yet Aunt Tabby Lowe was not without her good qualities, though she was, as Mrs. Pryor said, "most ondoubtedly the man of the house."

Leora came very near being a beauty, yet she was almost as bloodless as Mary Frances, only it was the bloodlessness of alabaster. Her brow, nose and chin were quite Elizabethan. There was an exquisite daintiness in her dress of navy blue albatross, and her linen collar and cuffs and ruffled apron were snowy white.

"Sister Pryor," said old Isaac Lowe, glancing sideways at his Tabby, "I thought I'd bring Mis Lowe an' Mary Frances an' let them spen' the day while I goes on to Cheowah-town to sell these aigs an' butter an' dried fruit. I've got a passel o' hides in the back o' the spring wagin."

"Uncle Isaac," said Mrs. Pryor, as if asking a

favor, "I wish you'd let me have four dozen of your aigs? I'll pay you cash."

He consulted Tabby by a look, and said,—

"Well; yes, I s'pose I could let you have that many."

"Emma! Mrs. Pryor called, "look in the top drawer and get my pocket-book, and send Jane with it and a basket to put them eggs in."

"I thought I'd tell you, Sister Pryor," said Mrs. Lowe in the complaining tone of voice habitual to her, "we've got a calf ten mont's' old we 'lowed to kill next week, an' if you knowed what the market-price of veal is I could engage to let you have a quarter for the cash."

"O well, that's easy found out," said Mrs. Pryor; "Uncle Isaac, you inquire at Cheowah-town to-day and let me know."

"These aigs," said the old man, as he carefully counted them into his wife's hands, who in turn counted them into Mrs. Pryor's, "is the finest and fattest aigs you ever seed; our yellow Topknots laid 'em an' they is as fat as butter."

"Yes," said Mrs. Lowe, "an' that there calf of our'n, Sonnie we calls him (his mammy died d'rectly after he come, an' I raised him by hand), he's monstrous fat and fine."

"La sakes! Aunt Tabby, I don't see how you'll have the heart to kill him; Parm's got a pig an' a gobbler that's just took these premises, but the creeters is so knowin' an' gentle I wouldn't have 'em killed for nothin'. There's gobbler

Bob now; he's destroyed more little chicks than he's worth, but I couldn't think of killin' him. It would choke me dead to know I had a piece of him in my mouth. But come, let's go in. You can't go in, Uncle Isaac?"

"No, Sister Pryor," gathering up the reins and screwing his mouth into a clucking pucker, "I'll be goin' on. But I'll be back to late dinner."

"Yes, I'll save something hot for you if dinner's ready before you get back. Come in, Aunt Tabby."

Mary Frances had gone into the house with Emma some little time before, and as Mrs. Pryor and her guest now entered the piazza, Mrs. Lowe said:

"I'll take a dip, Sister Pryor, if you ain't no objection," drawing her snuff-box from her pocket.

"None in the world, Aunt Tabby; have some of mine; the best Maccaboy, just got in from Carolina."

"Thankey," said Mrs. Lowe. "Speaking of turkeys, I've had mighty bad luck; ain't got but sixty outen seventy-five hatched out an' only four hundred chickens raised this year, an' I set out last spring to raise eight hundred. A mighty unlucky year!" saying which she rubbed her mouth with some of Mrs. Pryor's fine Maccaboy. "Now Sister Pryor, s'posen we look into the basket."

Mrs. Pryor, nothing loth, raised the lid and took from thence two dress-patterns.

“That brown woost is fur me,” said Mrs. Lowe, “an’ I ’lowed the green would make up beautiful fur Mary Frances. I want Emma to cut ’em out an’ we’ll baste, an’ amongst all you uns you can get ’em sewed on your machine. I ain’t never bought one yet, an’ dresses looks so much better sewed on the machine. You has sich a turn fur cuttin’ an’ fittin’, Emma, I ’lowed nothin’ would suit you better.”

Vivia could see that both Mrs. Pryor and Emma were slightly crestfallen. They had promised on Sunday, when they dined at Mrs. Hardwyn’s, to help Leora with some very particular work to-day, but with genuine courtesy their own preferences were put aside, Leora made to understand that she would be helped later, and, with cheerful neighborliness, Mrs. Pryor had Emma bring out her newest dresses for the visitor’s delectation, and describe the latest style of basque, sleeve, and skirt, carrying her complacency to the extent of letting Mary Frances attempt to try them on ; in which, however, she failed, being in all points long where Emma was short, and lean where she was fat.

Leora, Vivia, and Emma went vigorously to work, cutting, basting and chatting cheerfully as girls will, Emma talking beaux, Leora books, and Vivia sympathetically listening and commenting in a way that gave rise to much laughter. Mrs. Pryor and Aunt Tabby retired to the stove-room, where Jane was beating up some of the newly-

purchased "aigs" for a queen's cake, and where they could lend a helping hand, at the same time dipping snuff out of the same box and gossiping freely, during which confidence-inspiring process Mrs. Lowe made the impressive disclosure, under pledge of strictest secrecy, that "Mary Frances was a-goin' to git married to Tim Boskitt, an' the dress to be made was weddin' fixin's."

There was nothing on earth Mrs. Pryor relished as she did news, especially news with a flavor of secrecy; and so delighted was she that she gave Mrs. Lowe two boxes of her Royal Baking Powder, worth fifty cents each. Such was the state of gleefulness into which she was thrown, that when she returned to the sitting-room, she was inclined to play pranks; and after urging Vivia "to take a dip of this good old Maccaboy," she stepped up behind her and opened a box so near that she threw her into a violent fit of sneezing. She seemed full of animation, and delightedly went to show Leora some very fine hogs she had fattening for Christmas.

Once by themselves, Leora, with the loveliest pink color creeping over her pale complexion, and pledging her friend to inviolable silence, confessed her engagement to Dr. Blackwell, the richest planter on the river. Mrs. Pryor inwardly recalled the doctor's gray head and six children, and looking at the slim, pale girl, thought that Dr. Blackwell would have been a far more suitable husband for herself; but she was fervent in

her congratulations, and yearned for particulars, which Leora blushing gave.

“ Mamma thinks it would be best to have the ceremony right private, just a few friends. Of course we must have you and Emma, but we shall have no party ; and after our wedding breakfast we shall start at once for New Orleans. I shall be married in my travelling dress, and I thought, Mrs. Pryor, if you and Emma could help me with my underclothing a little ? Dr. Blackwell is so impatient.”

“ Why, of course, child ; help you, that we will. You shall stay a week and we will make the whole lot for you,” said the impulsive soul, not thinking of her own huge basket of sewing which ought to be finished before Christmas.

When Mr. Lowe got back from Cheowah-town that evening, he sat down to some of his own “ fat aigs ” (sold at such high price to his hostess that morning), freshly poached, flanked by fried ham, hot biscuits and steaming coffee.

“ How's cotton, Uncle Isaac ? ” asked she, as she waited on him. He glanced at his wife, who had also come into the room to have an oversight of him, took a gulp of coffee from his saucer noisily, not looking at his questioner, his whole attention given to the partner of his bosom, and replied in solemn tones :

“ Cotton's fell.”

“ Well, now, you don't say so ? I'm just goin' to haul in my horns an' not be advancin' to my

renters so liberal. How's dry goods, Uncle Isaac ? ”

He put a large piece of ham and biscuit in his mouth, another swallow of coffee and said :

“ Goods is riz.”

“ An' what's the news in town ?—much a-doin', merchants lively ? ”

He licked out his tongue, consulting his Tabby with oblique glances, and avouched :

“ Times is dull.”

Nothing less sententious did Mrs. Pryor, with all her questioning, get from him, and he never gave her a single piece of his very concentrated bits of information without first consulting his circumspect wife. Even when the hostess questioned him as to the prospects of wheat and oats, the eye-wise consultation was made, ere his profundity vented itself in,—

“ 'Tain't much to brag on.”

The singular pair left as soon as Mr. Lowe was through his late dinner, and Leora departed also, promising to return the next day.

No sooner had they all departed than Mrs. Pryor, in whose bosom a little geyser was boiling in its agony to effervesce, gave vent to her feelings with such relief as Bald Mountain experiences when emitting volcanic thunderings. She opened her lips and immediately the secrets were divulged.

“ O, girls, ain't it too funny ! Mary Frances is goin' to git married ; that dead-and-alive creeter,

the ordinaryest girl in the neighborhood, an' to Tim Boskitt, the new Christian preacher! Gracious sakes! what could he see in her? She's got no more sense than a dead whippoorwill; ugly, sallow, skinny creeter, that can't hardly read nor write. Well, everybody to his taste. Leora's goin' in for riches. I know she can't love Dr. Blackwell, old enough to be her grand-daddie, but it suits very well. Leora ain't one of the lovin' kind. She's got no more feelin' than a panther. High-minded, proud, you bet! She told me she never set foot in one of their renters' houses. I knew she would marry Dr. Blackwell as soon as I heard he was goin' to see her. He's the only offer she's ever had. She's got a better skin than you has, Emma, but she never had near the beaux."

"I wouldn't change skins with her," laughed Emma, blushing brightly, "and I wouldn't stand in her shoes when she marries old Dr. Blackwell. O me! what a case Aunt Tabby is!"

"A perfect scrouger," laughed Mrs. Pryor. "I declare, Miss Vivia, she made old Isaac Lowe swap his two children by his first wife to their grand-dad fur a couple of niggers; but la! what a scratchin' old hen she is—money makin'. Gracious sakes alive! She makes it offen chickens, eggs, sorghum, honey, cider, vinegar, potatoes, brandy, butter, fruit, dried apples, onions and spun thread, anything and everything, and hoards up every cent in old stockings. I'd like you to go over there; I'll carry you some **time** with me,

It's sech a clean, thrifty, old-fashioned looking place. As fur work, Aunt Tabby don't turn back from nothin'. I've knowed her to help old Isaac to fix a cow-shed an' it a-sleetin'. They never quarrels; he dassent."

A little later, just before Jane announced supper, came ponderous footsteps on the piazza, and in walked Mr. Esau, "all spruced up," as Mrs. Pryor expressed it.

He was overflowing with neighborhood news, and gossip, and tales of his own experiences that kept the whole circle in gales of laughter. After supper Mrs. Pryor sent upstairs for nuts and apples to crack and roast, and a jug of cider was brought in, to which Mr. Esau did ample justice.

"I 'clar' to gosh, Mis Pryor," said he, "this is jolly! I wouldn't a-missed comin' here; two or three times lately I wus layin' off to come. I got salivated tryin' to break up chills; my mouth is sore yet." He opened it wide, putting his fingers on his jaw gums.

Vivia and Emma laughed, but Mrs. Pryor was concerned.

"Let me put some borax water on it, Mr. Esau; you ought to sponge it with slippery elm and borax-water. Go, Emma, and bring me a rag and some borax-water."

These at hand Mrs. Pryor examined the ugly mouth, and applied the healing lotion.

"I will do whatsoever you advises, Mis Pryor. I've made up my mind to sober down and git

married, an' I've done picked you out, Mis Pryor, as the most suitablest woman I know to jog along in harness with me. A long-winded nag, and powerful jolly! Besides, you've got the farm already for me to obershee. You wants a obersheer, an' I wants a wife. I'll teck care of your farm ef you'll teck me? What do you say, teck me or not?"

"Why, Mr. Esau! what on earth do you mean talkin' so? I believe you are drunk."

"No, I ain't; I'm sober as you is! S'y yes, Mis Pryor. I'll answer fur it, I'll suit you to a dot; and I'm gettin' more in love with you every minute."

"I declare, Mr. Esau, you make me ashamed. I wouldn't have you if you was the last man on this earth. You surely ain't got no respect for me, nor yourself, to be talkin' such foolishness before these children."

The eliminated product of the livery-stable beginning to speak again, Mrs. Pryor said:

"I think, Mr. Esau, you'd better go home. It just makes me madder'n a hornet to be insulted so. I wish you'd leave."

Whereupon Mr. Esau put on his hat and went out.

CHAPTER VIII.

“VIVIA, Noisette and Elma are coming here to dine on Friday. I wish you would see to getting things in order and make some cake and custard. I am the poorest hand at cake in the world. Your brother brought home some cranberries yesterday, so you might as well make some tarts. And I wish to gracious you could get up a blanc-mange! Have you any idea how to do it?”

“I never made one in my life, but if you have a cook-book with a receipt in it for blanc-mange, I can try.”

Her work being thus mapped out for her, Vivia went at it with such energy that on the morning of the expected visit, the house was in perfect order, and a most tempting array of dainties on the closet shelves.

Great was her disappointment when the carriage rolled up and only Elma emerged. She wore a plum-colored satin dress, velvet hat, plumes, gloves and boots to match. Elegant furs were drawn about her perfect shoulders, her cheeks aflame with vivid color, and, with her sparkling eyes she was indeed a radiant vision.

Hardly had she disengaged herself from Mrs. Lemuir's embrace before she broke out breathlessly!

"Oh! Cousin Celestia, such news, such awful news!"

"No! What?" gasped Mrs. Lemuir. "Anybody dead? How is Aunt Henrietta?"

"Mamma is well, but Pauline!"

"What about Pauline? Is she sick?"

"No, far worse; she is married!"

"Heavens! You don't say so? To whom?"

"Oh! It's the most mortifying thing! Papa is awfully cut up and mamma so distressed! An elopement in our family was never heard of before."

"Goodness gracious! You don't mean to say she has run away?"

"Of course she has, and a horrid *mesalliance* she has made."

"Tell me all about it! What's the man's name? How did she get off? O my goodness! It's just awful!"

"Well, give me time, Cousin Celestia. It is so tackeyish to be in such a hurry. Pauline is the closest girl; you never know what is in her mind, and she is such a laugher she puts you off your guard. You would never think she had secrets. Oh! I told mamma last week that Pauline had low ideas, and she ought to forbid her making so free with common people. Mamma is sorry now that she did not take my advice."

“In the name of goodness, El, whom did she marry?”

“That’s what I am going to tell you, if you will just give me time. Paula is very thick, you know, with that fat fright, Emma Pryor. Now I can’t abide her. Why, her laces are too cheap for anything! Cousin Celestia, have you ever noticed the laces she wears?”

“O yes, often,” said Mrs. Lemuir, with an impatient inflection in her tones. “How anybody can set up to be anybody in those laces passes my comprehension. She is common as dirt; but go on, El.”

“Just what I think,” said Elma. “Well, yesterday afternoon that Dutch Jew, Recamier, a miserable, impecunious wretch, a kind of crazy poet they say, called to take Pauline to ride. He has met her at several parties, you know, since the infair, and no doubt he persuaded her to this at the croquet party at these same tackey Pryors’ where we were so foolish as to go last week. Mamma didn’t like the idea, but Pauline is so headstrong she would go.”

“Where were they married?”

“Right at Mrs. Pryor’s house. And what do you think? She was married by a magistrate and in a brown worsted dress.”

“Great Jerusalem! It can’t be possible, El!”

“It’s certainly so,” pursued Elma, more calmly; I know she looked ugly, for she had the toothache; and besides she had no snow-white along.

It takes a great deal of snow-white to make Pauline passable."

"What does Uncle Joshua say?" earnestly inquired Mrs. Lemuir.

"Say? Why, that he intends to horsewhip Recamier on sight, and that Pauline shall never have a cent of his property. He didn't get home last night till twelve, and mamma was so uneasy. She had sent Uncle Jerry and Nat to make inquiries, but they never even got on the track. This morning that white fellow Mrs. Pryor keeps brought a letter from Pauline to papa, in which she told him of her marriage and asked his forgiveness, and begged him to send her clothes. Papa was in such a fury that he would not do it, but ordered the white fellow to go back and tell her he sent her nothing but his curse. Papa says she will soon find out that she is a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. He declares that any girl who will marry a poor man is a stark simpleton."

"O, she will repent," said Mrs. Lemuir. "But what could have made her act so foolish?"

"I reckon it was the gump's poetry. When we were at St. Ives last summer there was a young man who used to sit in the gallery every Sunday, and he wrote a lovely piece to the 'Beauty with the Bonny Black Eyes.' That was me; but pshaw! I made eyes at him, but I would not have thought of speaking to him. Why, he was nothing but a reporter for the St. Ives 'Index' and poor as Job's turkey."

“Where’s Paula now?”

“Boarding at the Pryors’. Just think of it! I hear they set a very poor table. Zetta is just crying her eyes out, so I had to come alone, for Celia went to town Tuesday. I knew you’d want to hear the news.”

The following week came General Miln’s carriage and a note from Noisette, asking Vivia to come to her as she was in great trouble.

The latter instantly made preparations, and in the course of a few hours found herself by the side of her friend. Sleepless nights and distressful days had made quite a change in Zetta. She looked like one deeply bereaved, for her warm heart doted on her only own sister; she feared they were parted forever. She led Vivia to her own special sanctum, and there they communed over Zetta’s troubles.

“Papa says I’m not to see Paula ever again, Vivia. It’s the same as if she were dead!”

“O no, darling. He don’t mean it. He will relent by and by. Try to hope so, dear. Why should you break your heart over what may be only temporary?”

“But all my trouble is not about my sister, Vivia. Papa is so angry at the way Pauline has deceived him, that now he says he cannot trust me either, unless I will bind myself not to speak to Teddie Norwood again.

“Isn’t it hard to impose such a condition on me, when we two have been like brother and sister

all our lives? Ted's mother was my own mother's first cousin, and always her most intimate and beloved companion. Ted was born in our house, and he and his mother lived with us till she died. He was born after his father's death, and was like our own little brother till his guardian took him away. He treated him cruelly, made him work beyond his strength, and his wife tyrannized over the poor child. He was not allowed to go to school, but he studied all the harder to overcome his disadvantages. He used to come to us on Sunday evenings and I would help him with his lessons. Ted is fiery, but not ill-natured, and generous to a fault. He thinks no kind of work degrading. He would as lief I should see him splitting rails or ditching as not.

"Papa says Ted does not love me, and that he has no stability, no fixed principle; but I think he is prejudiced against my poor boy.

"He has always been so brave, too. I remember long ago his sleeping on a slab in a graveyard, because some one dared him to do it; and the man tried to play a trick on him by stalking among the graves at midnight wrapped in a sheet; but Ted, when he waked and saw him, ran after him, snatched off his sheet and made him a laughing-stock by telling on him. I remember his coming to our house one night in the sleet, almost frozen, to get a novel for his 'mistress' as he called the overbearing wife of his guardian. Somehow his brave endurance of discomfort and

privation always excited my warmest sympathies ;” and so saying, Zetta burst into tears.

“ Dear Zetta,” said Vivia, embracing her, while her own voice quivered, “ don’t give up so ; be patient and things may turn out better than you think. It is hard to have our plans and hopes frustrated, but we may be better off for the trials afterwards. They are like thunder-storms which purify the air. I have a great terror of lightning, but what would summer be without it ? Think of the stagnating atmosphere, the unwholesome earth ! Zetta, darling, why should you think of getting married yet awhile, if ever ? I believe people are better off single, especially if one has any particular work to do.”

“ O, Vivia ! how can you talk like that ? You surely never loved any one.

“ Simply because I am warned by the experience of the two people dearest to me in the world. They have had their lives spoiled by being tied fast to partners who are really clogs to every generous feeling, every hopeful aspiration. As you have trusted me, dear Zetta, I may also confide in you.

“ My sister, who has been a mother to me, is miserably married. Her husband drinks whiskey, uses tobacco, and swears like a trooper. When I think of what Sister Mary has suffered at his hands, I feel as if nothing could atone. Having shared her distresses so long, I hoped, when I came out here, to enter upon a scene of domestic

peace; but lo and behold! it is the same old story, reversed as to persons. My brother is a cipher in his home; his tastes are ignored, his preferences disregarded, and home made miserable. O, Zetta dear, why should you wish to marry when you are so well off?"

"My dear Vivia, I do not wish to marry on my own account, but to keep Ted straight. He is so headstrong. He will rush into some foolish match—if I throw him overboard."

"Then you must think him as unstable as your father says he is."

"I see you have the best of the argument, Vivia, and I confess I do love Ted, about the only unanswerable reason for my thinking of him. But I have no hope now. Since poor Paula has shipwrecked her happiness, papa is less inclined to make any allowances for Ted."

"But, Zetta, perhaps Pauline has not done so badly. That Mr. Recamier is polished and intelligent, and I wouldn't be surprised if he made her happy. Look on the bright side, dear, and above all dismiss Ted from your mind, for awhile at least."

CHAPTER IX.

“ God’s garden, where tall lilies grow,
Silver, and golden, and sweet ;
Where crimson roses only blow
To shed their bloom at His feet.

“ Purple pansies, with hearts of fire,
Violets bathed in their own perfume ;
Amid the rainbow tangle of flowers
Can a little herb find room ?

“ Herbs will sweeten the bleak hillside,
Where flowers can never grow ;
Through winter frosts the wren will bide,
And sing above the snow.

“ And God accepts, with tender love,
The service true and sweet ;
Can nightingales or roses give
A service more complete ? ”

THESE lines in a newspaper were read twice over by Vivia, who then pasted them in her scrap-book.

“ I am a wren, a little herb,” she said to herself, “ without any beauty to predispose people in my favor. Celia, Elma, Zetta and Emma are roses, lilies, violets, and pansies in the garden of life, while I—what have I? Nothing. Not even the power to express my thoughts so as to make them

of any monetary value. What have I ever succeeded at?"

Quite oblivious to the fact that she was just entering the arena of womanhood, the young girl dropped her head and gave way to a spell of gloom. The occasion of all this self-disgust and humiliation lay in a letter from an editor, to whose magazine she had been sending a series of articles, on his promise to pay. Now, having used her pieces, he wrote her that he was "not making expenses, and couldn't pay her." She felt as if all her labor had been thrown away; lying awake nights and getting up before the morning star had risen, writing painfully by the light of a tallow candle, with lead pencil on yellow scraps of paper, then copying off on hoarded strips of paper bought with money made by sewing for the negroes; this was what she looked back to, and, in the paucity of rewards, do you wonder that the faithful little worker was discouraged?

But the bit of poetry in a scrap of old newspaper comforted her, and at the sound of Captain Lemuir's voice, calling "Sissie!" she ran to him with her usual alacrity, and finding him under the harness shed she blithely set about helping him by winding some strong thread for him to mend harness with.

"I hope you will bring me a letter from town," she said, waxing a needle full of thread. "I'm looking for one from Sister Mary. I wish you knew her as well as I do, brother; she makes

religion seem the loveliest thing in the world ; she would do away with all your doubts."

" Why, sissie, I knew her before you were born ! You must recollect she and I were boy and girl together while you were in the humming-bird stage. Did she ever tell you about Jeff's courtship ? No ? Well, she was off at college and went for a vacation visit to some girl friend, and the first thing father knew here came this gentleman, Jeff Newsome, in a two-horse buggy driven by a stylish black driver, and asked his consent to a speedy marriage.

" Pa knew nothing about him personally, but he knew that his family boasted of their blue blood and University educations, and so he only objected on the score of Mary's extreme youth. Jeff was good-looking in those days, very good-natured, and soon ingratiated himself with everybody, I, especially, thinking him the best fellow in the world.

" Poor father was even then getting involved from his security debts, and was highly pleased at the idea of Mary's ' marrying rich ; ' for you see Jeff cut such a splurge that he made folks think he was rolling in wealth. The fact was he never had anything much, and he was a perfect spendthrift. Money slipped through his fingers like water, and no one could ever tell what it went for. He soon became a nuisance, visiting us often, staying long and asking for many things. Pa could never refuse him, yet he might as well have

put his money in the fire for any good that his gifts did Mary."

"Well, he is that very way yet, only more so," said Vivia; "but Sister Mary is so industrious that if she can get even a negro boy to plough she manages to make enough corn and meat for the family to live on."

"Poor thing! she works with a millstone tied to her neck. Shakespeare says, 'A young man married is marred,' but he might as well have included the women. My notion is that Jeff never would have turned out so worthless if he had not had Mary to look after him at so early an age."

"I think you are mistaken, brother. He would not have amounted to anything under any circumstances. With his habits he would soon be a beggar if it were not for Sister Mary. I was studying 'Locksley Hall' the other night, and I thought what a brilliant exception she was to the category involved in those lines:

"As the husband is the wife is,
Thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature,
Will have weight to drag thee down."

"Sister Mary is truly refined and maintains her dignity no matter what brother Jeff does. Her orchard and flower garden are great resources. She sells the fruit, and also many young plants from her hot-beds. She can graft and bud fruit-trees and rose-bushes as well as any man. She is the staff and real head of her family."

CHAPTER X.

ONE afternoon a little black boy brought a note to Vivia, from Emma Pryor, asking her to go over and spend the night. She had made many visits since the one described, and was quite familiar with the way.

As Captain Lemuir was busy, she decided to go over on horseback.

As she was crossing the bottom on her way there, a short distance from Mrs. Pryor's house, she heard screams, presently the sound of some one tearing through the underbrush and making a peculiar, snorting sound. Immediately there came in sight, looking as if in the worst phase of his malady, Mose Flanner.

His white Osnaburg clothes were red with clay, his face bleeding with briar scratches, his mouth foaming while he shrieked at the top of his voice, "Fire! Fire!"

He recognized Vivia, and grasping her bridle made as if to lead her horse in the direction of Mrs. Pryor's. Frightened at his looks and supposing he had finally gone mad, she jerked her reins away, and putting whip to her horse dashed off at full gallop.

Mose made no effort to follow, but ran into the woods shrieking "Fire! Fire!" as he ran.

Nearing the house Vivia again heard violent outcries, and as she rode up to the gate Mrs. Pryor flew towards her, throwing up her arms and crying out, "O Vivia! Emma's burnt to death!"

Speechless with horror, Vivia stood there embracing the agonized mother, who sobbed and screamed.

"Come!" said Mrs. Pryor, "she is still alive! O my child, my child!"

In the sitting-room, on a bed drawn into the middle of the floor, lay Emma, but an hour before the personification of exuberant health, agony now distorting her features and discoloring her fair skin.

To explain the cause of this catastrophe we will give it in the language of the only eye-witness, Jane, Mrs. Pryor's colored factotum.

"You see, missus she done gone to see Hetty's baby what was took wid the conwulsions. She say she be back 'fore Miss Vivia be here, and she say, 'See here now, Emma, you stir yourself, and git dem pillow-case done 'fore she come, and put dem on de bed.' Den she say, 'Jane, for the Laud sake, mek 'aste an' finish da ironing.'

"You see I had fire in de sittin'-room, like I mos' allers dus, an' after missus gone I called Parm—she was playin' in de yard,—I say, 'Parm, fetch me in some fat chips to mek dis fire bu'n; so

Parm she cumed in wid her apurn full, an' presenty she had powerful blaze. Miss Emma lef de sew-in' musheen an' cum to de fire. She say she b'l'eve she hab a chill and she stan' right up wid her back to de fire; den she kneel down still wid her back to de fire.

"Presenty I year Parm holler out, 'Sissie, yer frock's on fire!' I turn round, quickern lightning, but Laud! 'fore I could get my han's on um she done cleared de door and was running like a wild deer! Mose Flanner and George was ploughin' de garding, an' dat idjut Mose trow down ebyring and cut for de woods. I tell George, 'Ketch her! Ketch her!' He went stavein' an' las' he cotch her an' trowed her down an' put out de fire. But Laud, de child' close done bu'nt offen em, an' she clean gone outen her senses. God hav' mussy on my poo, pescious young missus!"

Emma's face was but slightly disfigured—the pretty brown hair was scorched off one side of her temple. Her blue eyes gazed appealingly at those who stood at her bedside; she moved restlessly but said nothing, only sighed. Her mother wrung her hands, and, the tears flooding her face, sobbed—"O Lord! my child! If I could only have saved you! O darling! don't you know your ma would bear it for you if she could?"

Mrs. Flanner and Jane finished covering the burns with lint cotton, dipped in sweet oil. George had gone post-haste for Dr. Livingstone. Vivia took her place by the side of the sufferer

with a fly-brush, holding to her lips every few moments a draught of cold water.

Soon neighbors began to arrive, for George, on his way, had spread the news. By night there were at least a hundred, white and colored, gathered in house and yard, squatting and standing about light wood fires they had kindled.

Emma now lay quiet, and her mother reclined beside her, while little Parm slept soundly on the lounge, having cried herself asleep.

The moon had risen and was flooding all out of doors with silvery radiance, when the doctor arrived. Inside there was the soft buzz of voices whispering.

Vivia held the lamp while he examined the burns. He stepped out to the piazza, asking her to follow. As she started Mrs. Pryor whispered, "Make him tell you if there's any hope."

Walking up to him he saw tears in her eyes. He understood what she would ask, and said:

"She is dying, my dear young lady, but she is passing easily. The vital effort ceased when you supposed she fell asleep; she has felt no pain since. With suspended sensibility she could not suffer. But stay here; don't let her mother know. It would be a pity to disturb so quiet a death-bed. It is nearly over. Tell me the particulars of the accident." She did so, and Dr. Livingstone returned to sit by Emma, while she went through the last act in the drama of life. As for Vivia, she stood in the shadowy end of the piazza, lean-

ing on the bannisters, watching the moon going down through the trees and thinking of the problem of death about to be solved for one young soul.

What was this cold, creeping drowsiness stealing over the form so lately warm, palpitating with vigorous life. If death is only a cessation of feelings of which the mind takes cognizance, why should it be painful? If a mere gradual or sudden stoppage of the action of the vital powers, why should we fear it?

"The death-stroke is only a myth, a figure of the imagination, little girl," her brother had said to her, and the words came back with such vividness that she turned and was not surprised to find him beside her.

He said softly, "Go in, you will take cold." She obeyed, and as she entered the room saw Emma, with her blue eyes wide open, and heard her say distinctly, "O papa!" A smile irradiated her face, and she was gone.

"Dear child," said the old doctor, stooping to kiss her forehead, "I loved you very much."

The women took possession of the yet warm body, doing the last offices gently and lovingly, arraying her in the white linen dress her own industrious fingers had finished the day before.

Captain Lemuir went to arrange about digging the grave and to order the casket. He returned at twelve o'clock next day with his wife and children, helped to put the body in the coffin, accom-

panied the procession in the long and weary way to the private burial-place, six miles distant, where all that was mortal of the fair young maid, adored by so many, was put out of sight.

The captain was kind to his distressed neighbor. He carried his wife home, arranged for Lambmy to sleep in the house, as "the madame was scary," and then, late as it was, went back to Mrs. Pryor's and did what he could to comfort the bereaved household. He consented for Vivia to remain as long as their unhappy friend should need her. With a singleness of aim which was characteristic of her, Vivia resolved to give up the writing which was so dear, and devote herself to making life endurable to the desolate mother and little Parm, neither of whom could bear to be left alone a moment. In that silent but effective manner of hers, Vivia went to putting things to rights. Seeing her friend puzzling over her accounts, Vivia proposed to help her, and ended by taking charge of them entirely, as Mrs. Pryor found her, to use her own expression, "a master hand." She went with her hostess over the farm and got many ideas from her about planning for a crop. Vivia was a good listener, but only at times a talker. When the spirit moved her she fairly overflowed with speech, conveyed in a vein that sparkled with fun or feeling, humor and originality; but as a constant habit she would have been classed among the quiet, as opposed to the chatty women or small talkers. She now, however, struggled against

her natural turn, and ransacked her well-stored memory and ingenious fancy, for talk to amuse or divert her grieving friend. In order to keep her busy also, she begged her to teach her to sew on Emma's machine, and went to work on the spring garments right where Emma had left off; and though this started the tears, it dried them too, for there was much to do; and Vivia soon showed she was capable of this kind of work also. Soon she was running the machine as well as Emma ever had, while Mrs. Pryor basted and talked. The latter decided to give her orders for mourning dresses to a first-class dressmaker in Melita, leaving the selection of material to her. She confided to Vivia that she thought this best, as she would be going to Virginia to see her relatives and let them condole with her, as soon as she could arrange her crop matters.

"I want us to be real stylish," she said. "You know my folks ain't no way common, if I do say it myself; but there ain't no use in wearin' black about home, when everybody knows there's been a death in the family, and that I'm most grieved out'n my senses, but I want to be in first-class goods abroad."

As to poor Mrs. Pryor's being the "most unlitery" one of her family, as she expressed it, Vivia had discovered that from the letters of family correspondence which all passed through her hands, as Mrs. Pryor was not slow to discover her quickness with the pen and utilize her as an amanuensis.

The answers she wrote, with just an occasional hint from Mrs. Pryor, impressed that practical woman as proofs of a most uncommon talent.

"I do think, Vivia," she said, "you could make a fortune writing a book if you would try; I ain't never seen a woman with such a head for business, and writin', and work of all descriptions as you."

But she had not yet come to the end of Vivia's talents; for in order to induce drowsiness, the latter offered to read aloud to her, but she made it "so interestin'," that Mrs. Pryor declared she'd "rather listen than go to preachin'. Why, you make it sound as natural as if folks was talkin'." So Vivia left off the reading and took to stroking her friend's hair at night, and singing "Rock of Ages," which put her and little Parm to sleep and made them dream of heaven.

One day her brother came and stayed to dinner, making himself so agreeable that Mrs. Pryor declared, when he had gone, that if she "could only find a man like him in the matrimonial market, she would be too glad to give him herself and her property."

Vivia's stay, at first intended to be only a week, lengthened into a month, and yet her friend pleaded for her to remain till she could get ready to start for Virginia. Truth to tell, in this atmosphere of love and appreciation, the girl thrived like a plant transferred from sterile, wind-baked ground to a warm, mellow soil. Nor was the element of literary congeniality wholly wanting;

for Noisette Miln came very often, uniting her efforts with Vivia's to divert the mourner. It was her generous heart's atonement for the sometimes jealous feeling with which she had regarded Emma's coquetry with Ted Norwood.

After one of her visits Mrs. Pryor said: "I don't hear anybody tell of her and Ted keeping company any more. I reckon her father's made them quit. I'm sorry now I didn't let Emma marry. She mightn't a got burnt up if I had. Emma had lots of offers; she was a girl that took with the men. She wasn't fast, neither. Ted Norwood thought heaps of her. I see him stan' behind a tree crying the evening we buried her. He is a good-hearted fellow if he is fiery. I just tell you how it is with me, Vivia: I all the time keep thinking how easy she might a been saved. If Jane had only got hold of her, or if George had been in time, or if I hadn't gone to see Hetty's baby."

"Try not to think of such possibilities," said Vivia; "try to think of her as better off; for she is far better off than she could have ever been in this world of pain and sorrow, from which all your love would have proved powerless to save her. Suppose she had lived and married badly? Now she's—

" ' Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe from corroding care,
Safe from the world's temptations,
Sin cannot reach her there.' !

"It is far better for her to have died in her

blooming youth than to have lived to be an unhappy wife. It is worse for a woman to be badly mated than for a man; for a husband can blight the most trivial details of a woman's life, but the hen-pecked man escapes from his tormentor when he goes out doors."

"You talk like an experienced woman, Vivia, and I often think you have an 'old head on young shoulders.' How did you ever get such notions anyway?" asked Mrs. Pryor, her spirit of inquiry strong even in her most afflicted moments.

"I have seen something of the miseries of married life," said the girl, with an absent look on her face. "I've heard one poor lady say she wished she had died in girlhood rather than have lived to be the wife of a man who thought so much of his own looks that he'd get up in the night and light a lamp just to look at himself in the glass; and he would coolly appropriate every luxury or comfort, and ignore her as completely as if she were a dog."

"Well, that wasn't me," said Mrs Pryor. "I had the best husband, the kindest man on earth. He done everything a man oughter do, and was clean and square and above-board in all his dealings. Ef I could ever find such anuther, I'd marry him if he was willin'. I tell you, Vivia, it done me good to see how happy that young couple was—I mean Pauline Miln and Reckymier—with their soft whisperin', and kissin' a million times a day. I went with them to old Cheowah-town in my rockaway to get her weddin' fixins. La!

you ought to seen him tryin' on bonnets on her. He took a bunch of flowers and helt it clost to her face, and said the roses blushed because the rose in her cheek was so much sweeter. O, they was happy sure, though Paula didn't have no more idea how to cook than the man in the moon. Not as much, if his pickin' up chips was for that purpose ; but Mr. Reckymier kept saying his pen could purchase all they wanted. He paid prompt for his board and was a perfect gentleman, if he did steal his wife.

“ My goodness ! Vivia, just look at Mose Flanner ! What's the matter now, Mose ? ” Mrs. Pryor exclaimed, as the demented boy appeared.

“ You see this knife, ” he said, showing them an old blunt, broken carving-knife. “ I'm going to kill any man that comes after her. She is down in a hole, but she shan't be bothered. I ain't going to let 'em pester her any more. If any sheep tries to paw her up I'll cut him with this knife. I come mighty near killin' one last night. I made him baa. I hates a sheep, I hates a cow. I won't have any leather on my foot. ”

He squatted down, untied his shoes and tossed them away.

“ Mose, don't you want some 'lasses cakes ? cause if you do you can just go round to the stove-room and tell Jane that I say she is to give you as many as you want to eat. ”

This turned the tide of Mose's thoughts, and he trotted off to the house.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was the evening before Mrs. Pryor's departure for Virginia that she said to Vivia: "I want you to do me a great favor. You know how much you've been to me since Emma died. Now that we are going to part, I want to give you something to remember me by."

"I'm sure I won't need anything to remind me, dear friend. I can never forget what a mother you have been to me."

"Pshaw! I haven't done anything to speak of, but do, Vivia, don't refuse to accept this watch and bracelet and ring. The watch belonged to my mother, and the bracelet and ring was Emma's. The watch is old-fashioned, and once in a while has to go to the jeweler's to be fixed, but in the main you'll find it a good time-piece and kinder useful. The bracelet used to look pretty on Emma's round, white arm."

"I will take the watch, Mrs. Pryor, but I beg you will keep the ring and bracelet, for I prefer not to wear jewelry, and some time or other these will come in nicely for little Parm."

Seeing resolution in her eyes, Mrs. Pryor, with many a protest, ceased to urge the matter.

Next morning Captain Lemuir came, listened to Mrs. Pryor's final instructions, he having agreed to look after her business in her absence, and at last drove off with his sister in one direction, as Mrs. Pryor and Parm left in another. Mrs. Lemuir was making preparations to attend a barbecue, which was to take place the following Saturday at Oak Grove, a spot selected for its spring of clear water and dense shades.

Though the day opened its eyes tearfully, and several showers came down during the early morning, the later hours brought clear skies and a delightful atmosphere tempered by sweet breezes. Thus favored, the crowds flocked to the rendezvous where two large arbors of green boughs had been constructed the day before; and where all night long a force of men, white and colored, had been at work preparing the barbecued meats, which consisted of whole beeves, sheep, hogs and numerous kids. As the captain and his family wended their way thither, they overtook crowds of people in every kind of conveyance—carriages, buggies, rockaways, spring-wagons and lumbering farm wagons, young men and women on horseback, muleback, and an army on foot.

It was an amusing and motley procession, described by the captain as "white folks and niggers, old and young, working-men and politicians," all intent on a day of frolic, and generally good-natured.

As they approached the grounds the sounds of

brass instruments were heard, indicating that the exercises were about to begin. This band had its own sheltered box near the "Grand Stand," and proved a perfect magnet for the people, white and colored. In its rear was a large open space covered with bran, or sawdust for "bran dancing," as it was called in the vernacular. Under the shade of the great cotton-wood trees were the dinner-tables, fifty feet in length each side, surrounding a hollow square. The barbecue pits were shallow ditches, where whole shoats, calves, sheep and beeves were being roasted on beds of red coals.

There were now at least fifteen hundred people on the grounds, about one-third seated or standing in earshot of the orator, of course a "candidate," who hoped, by amusing the people, to win their suffrage.

Vivia soon tired of his trite wit and evident subserviency of spirit, and was glad to give up her seat to a tired-looking woman with a baby and walk off down to the spring with Noisette Miln, who, with her stepmother and sisters, had driven up just as they did, having with them a niece of Mrs. Miln's, Lide Poitevaut, of New Orleans, who was resplendent in satin and diamonds, a type of the ultra fashionable, new to Vivia's experience.

The new girl and Elma made themselves conspicuous among the bran-dancers, first by waltzing together, then by waltzing with men; but to

Vivia's great surprise she noticed Teddy Norwood among Elma's gallants, and appearing to be the favored one. He waltzed with much grace, but his black eyes looked bloodshot. Her attention was quickly diverted, however, by the appearance of a Mr. Walkup, who was introduced to her and Zetta by Jimmie Snow. He was a cross-eyed, large man, wearing his beaver on the back of his head, a great deal of white to his eyes, and little sacks underneath.

"And how are you enjoying this beautiful occasion, Miss Miln?" he asked, as he stood holding his beaver and regarding Zetta with great complacency.

Then without waiting for an answer, "I never beheld such a concourse. It reminds me of the Scriptures, 'And before Him shall be gathered all nations.'"

"Why, really, Mr. Walkup, do you think this crowd so vast as to suggest the last judgment?"

"There are many, many here," he replied, shaking his head solemnly. "Miss Miln, do you think Daniel's goat was a man?"

Noisette's laughing eyes were full of astonishment as she said: "I fear I do not comprehend you."

"Why, don't you recollect the fifth and sixth verses of the eighth chapter of Daniel? The goat with the notable horn? The goat with the notable horn between his eyes which came to the ram that had two horns, and ran into him in the

fury of his power? Why, now, you must admit that that goat was undoubtedly Alexander? or else Napoleon? or, if neither of them, I corner you on General Albert Sydney Johnston, spelt with a T?" He looked at her with such an interrogation point imprinted on his face that Zetta felt forced to answer, and murmured, "I never thought about it."

"That's the trouble," declared Mr. Walkup, dogmatically, "people don't think; the last thing folks do is to think, and—er, read!"

"I fear you are right," replied she, fanning herself vigorously, "but my friend here, Miss Lemuir, is better versed in Scripture than I."

"Well, now, Miss Lemuir, what do you say to Bonaparte? He waxed great and cast down some of the stars from heaven. Jest like old Bony. You know he stomped on the Austrians and the Italeyans! The fact of the business is, Miss Miln (returning to Zetta), all these things were predestinated, you know. 'For whom He did predestinate He also did foreknow.' Now, Miss Miln, I want to prove to you that it is impossible for you to fall from grace. 'Once in grace always in grace,' is a true saying. 'If the foundation be removed, what can the righteous do?'"

"Cousin Zetta, will you dance with me?" said the voice of Teddy Norwood, and as she bowed to Mr. Walkup, she said: "Please excuse me, my friend Miss Lemuir will report the rest of your argument to me." But she had no sooner gone

than this singular cavalier walked away, leaving Vivia in a gale of laughter, though also a little frightened at being left alone in so large a crowd.

Deliverance from her dilemma came in the shape of Jack Snow, who put in an appearance with a man in a neat, well done-up flax suit and low-quartered shoes, whose large features had a benevolent cast, though his tones were disagreeably nasal. After the usual preliminaries he began to talk of dinner, and to hope that the barbecued meats would be done. "I'm 'fraid there'll not be near enough for this crowd. I went to a picnic onct and all I got was a piece o' yellow-corn bread and a lump of ice, and I could a-done sights better'n that at home. Fact, it give me the colic! Bill Stokes made his dinner offen a big long pickle and a loaf of baker's bread, and it never singed him. Sech a difference in people that way! Now I has the 'spepsy, and a piece of pickle no bigger'n a half dollar knocks me out for twenty-four hours. I expects to be made sick by this very barbecue. You know barbecued meats ain't never done."

"Why eat them then?" asked Vivia.

"O, well, you see I likes 'em, and I can't help eating what I likes."

He then gave her the history of all the ailments with which he had been afflicted from his youth up, concluding with the doleful story of how he had lost his wife and was now a widder-man, and he found it monsous ill-convenient. "You see, my

sons is all married, 'cept my youngest, Mary, and she ain't got the least idee how to cook, and kain't make up no beds; and the worst of it is going home and findin' no lights in the house and no supper; for you see I has a woman hired, and she says she goes by the two-meal system, and so it's either take cold bread and skim-milk or nothin'."

He went on to say that he was "casting sheep's eyes round, and hoped to make his ch'ice 'fore long," when, to Vivia's great relief, her sister-in-law and Mrs. Miln came up. They were evidently well acquainted with Mr. Jones, for they at once went to bantering him in a way that was not at all to Vivia's liking. He, however, proved himself very useful to them, getting them comfortable chairs out of his own wagon so that they could sit and see the bran-dancing, which was now going on under one arbor, while the political speakers shouted vociferously under another. Vivia sat silent, paying little attention to the ill-natured comments of Mrs. Lemuir on the dancers. Beatrice Flanner, a large, yellow-haired sister of Mose, was jumping about heavily, under the impression that she was "dancing with the quality;" but Elma, all in white lace and corn-colored silk, turned her back on her, waving her aside as she did others of that ilk.

By and by dinner was announced, and gentlemen led up ladies till the entire length was surrounded, and they filled the inside of the hollow

square. One of the ministers present said "grace," then the gentlemen went to work to serve the ladies; and not a man took a mouthful till every woman and child was abundantly helped. Vivia made her dinner off a piece of mutton which had been perfectly roasted, so that all its nutritious juices were within the brown and delicate cuticle. She greatly enjoyed it.

As they were leaving the tables Mrs. Lemuir whispered to her, "If Mr. Jones asks you to ride with him, don't be a goose, but go."

Sure enough, when soon after buggy rides became the amusement of the afternoon, the beaux taking out the belles, the "widder-man" came to ask Vivia. She went reluctantly, but yet enjoyed it, for Mr. Jones was very funny, and the route to the new bridge, which all the buggy-riding couples went to see, was quite interesting. And though Mr. Jones came perilously near telling her he had made "his ch'ice," she managed to avert that avowal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE summer was unusually hot, the long June days growing furnace-like in temperature, the very breezes feeling as if escaped from a heated stove. The sky was a glaring white, full of formless, puffy vapors; the sun rose like a crimson ball of fire and went down in the same sullen, angry state, while the burning, thirsty atmosphere appeared to lie in blinding, wavy lines, that one seemed to see everywhere just ahead. The cotton looked withered at noon, the white and red blossoms folded their petals from the midday blaze, dropped off and exposed the miniature boll or ovary which speedily fell to the ground, scorched to death, thus shortening constantly the prospective crop of cotton. The cornfields took on a yellow, shrivelled garb, described in the vernacular as "fired," or "burnt up." Yet every day at twelve precisely the hot wind rose and blew, filling the air with suffocating clouds of dust. The cisterns failed, the woodland springs dried up at their sources, and the river that had been a flood in March, breaking its bounds and covering all the level lands with lake-like widths

of water, was now barely a running stream ; a child could step across.

The white glare of midday was cruel as battle-smoke, and only when night drew her pavilions across the sky, powdering them with stars, did the air become pleasant, and the hot walls and furniture, and even the shuck mattresses, lose their heat. This terribly "heated term" was peculiarly trying to Vivia, from her being unacclimated.

It was a dull household at Ridley Farm, with its ill-assorted couple, their spoiled children, and the air of *ennui* that seemed to cling about it. Mrs. Lemuir lolled all day in a rocking-chair or on the bed, reading novels. The captain retired, as it were, from society, into a hammock swung to a branch of the big sycamore in the back-yard, and immersed himself in his beloved Philosophy. As to Vivia, she could no longer sleep in the little room under the roof, but resorted to a pallet of quilts on the floor of the best room. In spite of the heat, a tree of very fine peaches perfected its fruit, and Mrs. Lemuir invited Elma, Celia and Noisette to come over and enjoy them. Elma and Celia were to go to Cedar Mountain in two days, and Mrs. Lemuir had just heard of a project of General Miln's to send Zetta to Europe with his sister, who would leave New York in ten days.

On the arrival of the girls a table was set under the trees on the lawn, and they all assembled there to partake of the cakes poor Vivia had

almost melted in making, and the iced peaches in cream.

Mrs. Lemuir, while helping the company, indulged in her usual extravagance of speech, on which she plumed herself as being "so independent, like dear Aunt Henrietta."

"I'd advise you girls never to marry," said she. "Here I am, stuck down in this out-of-the-way place, with my nose to the grindstone, and if I were single I could have gone with you all to some delightful summer resort instead of languishing in this fearful country. I do despise husbands and housekeeping! If ever I'm a widow, trust me for not getting into such a scrape again."

"I declare, Cousin Celeste, you are too funny. You remind me of Lide Poitevant's story of her mamma's manœuvre. She was a gay young widow with an income of ten thousand a year, but conditionally, you know; her dear departed had expressly stipulated in his will that if she changed her name her income and estate should go to Lide. Lide says her mamma was actually so silly as to fall in love with her cousin, once removed cousin by marriage, mind you, a young fellow who was abroad when Cousin Mansfield died, so she married the second time, without changing her name, and kept her money. No doubt you would experiment in the same way if you had a chance."

"O, cousin Celeste," interrupted Celia, "I wish you could have been at our house last Sunday

to have heard Zetta's latest conquest talk. His name is Walkup, and he is a 'hardshell,' altogether a capital kernel on which to crack a pun. Hard as is the outside of his shell, the inside is soft enough to be easily addled. He took dinner with us, and kept winking first one eye and then the other at Zetta. He ate so greedily, talked so fast and perspired so profusely, that I looked for him to go into a fit."

"If he came to see me he gave all his attention to you, Celia," said Zetta. "You know you took possession of him."

"If I did it was just to laugh at the gump. I asked him why he wore his hat on the back of his head, and got himself so sunburned. He said he had been told that he looked like Horace Greeley with his hat on that way, but he'd wear anything I advised, if it were even a veil."

"I never saw such a goose in my born days," put in Elma. "He seems to have got his facts all mixed up in his mind, and tumbled them out like scraps from a rag-bag."

"He is certainly very irrelevant," laughed Zetta; "but I'm so sorry for the poor boy."

"I thought I would die with laughing," said Celia, "when he broke in upon some of papa's dignified remarks, with fragments that had no connection whatever with what papa was saying. As, for instance, when papa was talking about the prospects of cholera or yellow fever being epidemic this summer, he startled him with 'Robert Mills

invented Washington Monument. He died before it was finished, but he planned the whole thing.' I saw the muscles of papa's mouth twitch, but he only explained, in a kind of aside to the rest of us, that Mr. Walkup was speaking of a South Carolinian of genius who designed several of the public buildings in Washington, notably the Patent Office, the U. S. Post Office, the Treasury Building and the Washington Monument."

"Elma helped out," said Zetta, "by asking, with quite a show of interest, if the Mills House (a fine hotel in Charleston, South Carolina, she has heard mamma speak of) was built by Robert Mills."

"But I failed to entice him back into smooth sailing on the beaten track," put in Elma, tossing her head. "Excuse the mixture of metaphors, ladies. Well, he paid no attention, but coolly drained his saucer of coffee, and looking up at the ceiling, said solemnly,—' I reckon it is a fixed fac' that old Nero did have Rome set on fire, and fiddled while it was a-going on.'"

"O, now, Elma, not quite so bad as that," said Zetta; "poor Jerry Walkup is an absent-minded, odd kind of fellow, but he really has read a good deal and tells the truth."

"Meaning that I do not," retorted Elma spitefully; "but I see through your game; playing off Walkup to bring Ted Norwood back to his allegiance. No doubt when he comes back you will run away with him, as Paula's escapade has turned out so well."

“O, hush! El,” said Celia, “you are too envious. I am real glad there is no prospect of our poor Paula’s starving. In fact I intend to go on a visit and share my brother-in-law’s lionization next winter. There is no place like New Orleans in winter.”

At this point Zetta asked Mrs. Lemuir to excuse Vivia and herself, as they wanted to talk of matters that might bore the rest of the company. Being excused, the two strolled off down by the orchard and took a path through the fields.

“What do you think, Vivia? I have a notion of going out of my way to call on your sister Mary when I start to New York.”

“O, I’m so glad! You will write me how she looks? I am heart-sick to see her.”

“Certainly I will, and there is a great favor I want you to do me; that is to write me a letter of introduction to her, and use your influence to induce her to give up Artemesia James to me to carry abroad. You see my idea is to give her a chance to develop her talent for drawing. I will begin by giving her lessons myself, and if I find she has real talent and industry I will have her taught by masters in Germany. I expect to have masters myself, and I think it will be a great comfort to help some one in need. I am in great trouble, Vivia” (her voice faltering), “and I fancy nothing will ease me like taking thought for another. Your account of that poor deformed girl, befriended by your good sister and that

clever Mrs. Dorsey, has been often in my mind ; but I fear taking her away may inconvenience your sister."

"O Zetta! you do not know Sister Mary! Why, she would not think of her convenience a moment in comparison with Ortemissy's advantage. But tell me, Zetta, have you any new trouble?"

"No, only Teddy, poor boy, is so proud, you know ; and he thinks hard of me because I won't marry him right now, whether papa consents or not, and he tells me papa has bought me off with a trip to Europe and a year in Germany. Then to pique me he has begun a desperate flirtation with Elma, and she encourages him to the top of his bent. O, my friend, I leave with a sore heart and a presentiment that I will never see my poor Ted again."

Here Zetta broke down, and the two girls mingled their tears.

At last Vivia got her voice sufficiently to say, "I like Teddy, Zetta, but to be candid with you, I do not think he would make you happy, and I believe you will some day think so yourself. At any rate you will understand your own heart better in a year from now, and if he cannot be faithful that long he does not love you as you deserve."

"Probably you are right," she said, in the saddest tones ; "besides, we are too close kin to marry ; and so I'm glad I'm going out of the

reach of temptation. Vivia, have you heard that yellow fever is in Melita? The papers are keeping it close, hoping that the doctors and the Board of Health will stamp it out, but it's there. Have you any knowledge of it? Your beloved old 'city by the sea' used to have frequent visitations of it, did it not?"

"Yes, but I am a 'country tackey,' Zetta, and know nothing about it. Yellow fever hasn't been in Charleston in epidemic since I've been grown."

When the friends returned to the house a striking tableau met their eyes. Mrs. Lemuir had drawn her chair close to the lounge where the captain half reclined, and having drawn his head to her bosom, was parting and plaiting his beard, to the delight of Elma, who exclaimed, in her affected voice:

"Such an exhibition of connubial felicity does my very soul good. If you agree, Cousin Celeste, I will kiss Cousin Arthur myself, the cleft in his chin makes his lips so inviting." So saying she stooped and gave him a kiss to the great disgust of Vivia and Noisette.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTER FROM MRS. PRYOR TO VIVIA.

“ FAWKEER, VA, May, 18—.

“ MY DEAR VIVIA :—

“ You no I aint no hand to rite, but I must try to anser your letters, which is that nice I dont no how to thank you. I do no it looks ungreatful for me not to rite before, but I see so menny people, and goin' round so much, till seems as if there aint no time to set about ritin. But thar's no tellin how glad I am to get your letters, and me and sister Cattie luffed at that barberkew you rote about, till we most died. Sister Cattie ses you oughter rite a book, you rite so butiful. We is havin a real nice time, only Parm can't seem to get over the mumps, and shee's crazy to get back home to ride the colt. Her kitten, which she brought all the way in her arms is dead, of the “ cat-foby ” I reckon, for it had serious fits and I was awful 'fraid it would bite Parm. I will tell you a grate secret, you must never tell as long as you live; I am goin to be marrid to a methodist preacher, a cirkit-rider, by the name of Crook. He makes me think of Mr. Pryor all the time. He's made like him, (a good stout chunk of a man), and sister Cattie says, she aint no objection to him, only his houseful of children; but I forgot to tell you he's a widower I kant look back to see if I made eny mistakes I aint no

hand with the pen, and you must excuse all urers, and Mr. Crook, ain't ridin' a cirkit this year. He's a supernumary, he has got the throat-ale. He has in all seven children, but two of them is marrid and gone, and two is dead. You no I always did like children "the more the merrier," is my motter, and his aint' bad ones. He's got dark skin, and black eyes. We will get marrid in October, and make our weddin' tower comin' home. I want to get you to be at my house to reseave us—like; you and Capt. Lemuir, and have everything fixed up all right. You are sech an elegant hand at fixing up. Parm and Mr. Crook sends their love, I will close, asking you to look over all mistakes, and hopin' to have an early letter from you soon, and hear your remarks from Ridley Farm, to old Cheowah-town.

"Your true friend,

"ELIZA PRYOR."

Noisette Miln travelled with her father to the city of W——, there taking a branch-road, which she left at the station nearest Mrs. Newsome's. Here she hired a conveyance and arrived at 11 A. M. She sent in her card on which she had pencilled a few words of explanation, and her heart fairly warmed when Mrs. Newsome hurried to meet her and took her in her arms with a most motherly embrace.

"My dear child," she said, "how good of you to come to see me; this is next to seeing my little sister. Come right into the house and have some cool water from the spring."

Then, seeing Zetta glance at the driver, she pointed out the horse-lot to him, and bade him take his horses there, and she would send one of the children with the keys so that he could feed them.

Mrs. Dorsey stood on the porch and greeted the visitor in her easy, thoroughbred way.

“Have you had a letter from Vivia in regard to my coming?” asked Zetta, in some doubt as to whether she could ask this sweetly kind woman to give up one who might be very useful to her.

“One came last night, and she urges me to let you have Ortemissy. Of course ‘Missy’ is not mine to give, but then she is nobody’s, as I may say, for her father has been gone a long time, and it will be the best thing for her to go where she can never see him more. He is a miserable drunkard. Still I would rather not force her to go. I will let her decide for herself after she has seen you. I am fond of her, and it will be a wrench to part from her, and the baby is wrapped up in her; but I could not let that interfere with her best interests. So saying Mrs. Newsome left Mrs. Dorsey to entertain the guest. Ere long she re-entered the parlor, followed by the hare-lipped girl with the baby in her arms—the latter a brown-eyed little creature with a look so winsome that Zetta was instantly possessed by a desire to cuddle her; and, with outstretched hands, she wooed little Nell till she came to her arms and suffered herself to be kissed and adored. “O you lovely

baby!" cooed Zetta, pressing her lips to the gazelle eyes and the fluffy golden curls. "O, Mrs. Newsome! she is dainty down to her perfect tiny feet."

The embryo artist was almost as bashful as the baby, but her intending friend was enchanted with her chinquapin brown eyes, glancing coyly from under curly dark lashes, and the rings of brown hair clustering about her forehead and white neck. Only her mouth, distorted by a hare-lip, prevented her from being a beauty. She blushed vividly when Zetta talked to her, telling her her plans, to which, after a slight hesitation, she consented.

The matter being thus decided, she went swiftly out in answer to a word from Mrs. Newsome, and brought in a waiter of rosy cheeked apples and a plate of purple figs. After eating some of each, Zetta declared they surpassed anything of their kind in Arkansas.

"Our figs are small and insipid, and all I have ever seen were of a pale, yellow color. Papa says figs and sugar-cane are the only two products of the South that we cannot equal in our section."

"I must give you huckleberry pie for dinner," said Mrs. Newsome, "for Vivia wrote me there are no huckleberries in the woods out there."

"Thank you; I will like that."

"Mrs. Newsome and I often go huckleberrying," observed Mrs. Dorsey. "We ride the mules

because the bushes grow in marshy spots near springs and branches, and we are afraid of getting our feet wet, and also of encountering snakes. We have canned quantities this summer, for they make as good pies as those newly gathered."

"You have wild flowers, too, that we have not. Vivia is enthusiastic about one that blooms in May in clusters, the petals pink and the stems maroon, so that they look as if speckled with brown."

"Yes, we call it ivy, but I doubt that's being its true name. Anyway, the time of its blooming begins the picnic season, and the boys and girls have rare sport gathering huckleberries. It's a saying that 'Sandhill people turn their children out in the huckleberry slashes to pick a living, and bell one to keep the flock from getting lost.' Truth, too, for berries bring ten cents a quart, and most people are glad of the help in our poor country."

"But," said Zetta, "I have heard papa say it's the land of good living, and I'm sure your delicious fruit looks like it. What do you think, Mrs. Dorsey?"

"Oh! I'm very fond of the Pineland. It is a magnificent fruit country, and has evidently started on a new era of prosperity. I fancy Mrs. Newsome has a mine of wealth in her pear orchard. She is quite an adept at budding and grafting, and I would like you to see a pear tree that now has six varieties on the same stalk, ripen-

ing, from as many buds put in by Mrs. Newsome. It was an old tree that she had transplanted."

"I consider good fruit one of the necessities of healthy life," said Mrs. Newsome. "We have shipped some this year, and I am confident that it will pay better than anything else that we can raise. Our poor lands don't suit cotton, and are too rolling to retain fertilizers. But these same poor hillsides produce the finest peaches, pears, and apples, and are scarcely ever affected by frost. Fruit growing and fruit canning will be the industries of the future."

"I only wish it was one of the industries of Arkansas," said Zetta; "people care for cotton there to the exclusion of everything else. I heard Cousin Arthur say he let his renters cut down the only apple orchard on the place, because they complained that the trees took up ground they wanted for cotton. Mrs. Newsome, I heard Vivian speak of a Mrs. Wilde who was in this country from South America; where is she?"

"She has gone to Saratoga. She is a specimen of a real society woman; the only one we ever had about here." So saying Mrs. Newsome left the parlor to attend to outside matters.

She at once wrote and dispatched a note by her boy, Jeff, to Mr. Calhoun Logan, asking him "to come to dinner to meet Miss Miln from Arkansas, a charming person, in whom he might find his ideal of womanly perfection."

Then, having donned her cooking-apron, Mrs.

Newsome went to work to get dinner, assisted by Ortemissy, who performed her duties deftly, though her eyes were red, and she ever and anon broke into a fresh burst of tears at the idea of leaving Mrs. Newsome and little Nell, the baby she had nursed.

Aunt Nancy Green, with whom her nephew Calhoun resided, did not live very far from Mrs. Newsome's, and so, before Sister Mary was ready to announce dinner, that gentleman made his appearance in the cottage parlor, bowing stiffly as Mrs. Dorsey introduced him. He was a tall, slim man, very neat in his dress, very slow and deliberate in his motions, and evidently enjoying a high opinion of himself. He was almost inquisitive, it seemed to Zetta, in his manner of asking questions. In writing a description of the visit to Vivia, she alluded to Mr. Logan's part in her entertainment as "a pumping process scientifically performed. I assure you, Vivia, when he got through with me, I felt as if my head were a vacuum." But this clear-sighted young lady observed "that Mr. Logan did not get the better of Mrs. Dorsey in the conversation as he did of her. Those sweet, thoughtful, yet mirthful eyes of Laura's seemed to have the power of controlling his predominating curiosity, or satisfying it without words."

After hearing so much about the poverty of the country, and seeing indications of it in Mrs. Newsome's humble house, the dinner was really

a surprise to Zetta. The table was draped in spotless old damask, whose beauty was not marred by the frequent dainty darning, as wonderful, Zetta thought, as lace-work. She quite longed to ask Sister Mary if she had done it herself, but after the smarting of Mr. Logan's recent questionings, she could not bring herself to ask. In the centre of the table was a peculiar and handsome vase—a Psyche, holding in her hand a lily from whose cup trailed smilax and star jessamine, small, four-petalled flowers of delicious fragrance. By each plate was a *boutonniere* of tuberoses and apple geranium. An old-fashioned silver basket contained purple Thomas grapes, and yellow Indian peaches, interspersed with nasturtiums, bronze and flame-colored. There were dishes of snowy rice, cooked in the true southern style, a dish piled full of blue bream, which Mr. Newsome had opportunely brought in just as his wife set about getting dinner, light bread and butter, baked chicken, Irish potatoes in a flaky, puffy mass, the result of judicious tossing with a fork; a mould of wild-plum jelly in the shape of an ear of corn, a delicate sponge cake and a boiled custard. This was the *menu*. The service was of dainty china, and Ortemissy waited on the table as silently and perfectly as Zetta remembered the stately black butler at home to have done, while Mrs. Newsome presided with a grace that would have become a duchess. Mr. Newsome, too, was a very affable and hospi-

table host, full of jokes, and Mrs. Dorsey's pungent and original remarks gave the conversation a flavor that Zetta found exceedingly pleasant; while the spontaneity of wit and good-will all around was captivating. Mr. Calhoun Logan, in assisting at the courtesies of the table, showed his most attractive side. Zetta discovered he had a beautiful smile, and even said to herself, "Little as these folks suspect it, that man is in love with Mrs. Dorsey."

After dinner there was great stirring around in the family, everybody lending a hand to get a trunk packed for the little traveller, and both Mrs. Newsome and Mrs. Dorsey contributing of their possessions with a liberal hand, although Zetta assured them that she would gladly provide whatever she needed when they reached New York.

Good-byes were said, after strict promises to keep up a correspondence, Zetta agreeing to write herself and see to it that Missy should keep Mrs. Newsome informed as to her movements.

CHAPTER XIV.

IT was in the latter part of August that Vivia had a note from Eva Snow, asking her to go to a picnic at Lost Lake, and to meet them at the station next morning by 6:30 o'clock. That night she could not sleep. There was a conflict going on in her mind which dated back to the time when the news first reached her about the yellow fever in Melita. A project then began shaping itself in her busy brain to do something to help those people.

Her life at Ridley Farm had been a cruel disappointment. Mrs. Lemuir had "no use," as she phrased it, "for a dumb thing like Vivia, a girl that couldn't talk worth a cent." Captain Lemuir was disposed to love his sister, but he "was sorry she hadn't been pretty," and he deplored "her sensitive disposition." It was not the hardships of thankless and unintermittent tasks, however, that made Vivia long to go away from Ridley; she greatly admired that heroic nurse of the Crimea, Florence Nightingale. Was it less heroic to nurse people nearer home, who were also dying, as those soldiers had done, for want of proper nursing? But Captain Lemuir had agreed with

his wife, when Mrs. Lemuir had laughed at the "folly" of the women who had already gone there to nurse the sick. Should she go on this "wild-goose chase," as her brother had called it? Yet Florence Nightingale had gone on just as wild a project, opposed, too, by her friends, and afterwards received the plaudits of a nation, the grand jeweled medal of a grateful queen. Of course she would not get any medal, and might possibly die and be buried in a ditch, as she had heard of plague-stricken people being buried, but God would note her effort all the same. So she prayed and debated in her mind over the eccentricity of such a step, the talk it would make, and her brother's vexation. The pros and cons so tried her heart that it seemed to her her very being was poured out in a flood of tears and prayers. Suddenly the sense of some words in a newspaper "poetry corner" came to her memory:

" 'Tis the toil and not the burden,
That shall win the precious guerdon,
'Tis the spirit, not the fruit, thy Lord perceives;
Whoso faithfully hath striven,
Unto him the crown is given,
Though his gleanings only yield him scanty sheaves."

Her strife with herself ended in a resolve to go, and a resolve, also—alas! poor Vivian, to go without telling any one of her intention. She did not dare let her brother suspect it, and yet if she went away under false pretences she felt she could never come back; she could never again face this

brother, beloved, whose congenial mind, benevolent heart and sweet manner so strongly attracted and charmed her, repelled however much she might be by his peculiar ideas and beliefs in religious matters. Yet how could she resist this strong yearning to go, and even, if heaven willed it, lay down her life for the people? The papers were teeming with accounts of the increasing ravages of the "yellow death," people were already dying by the hundreds, and there was a terrible lack of nurses. A long and eloquent appeal for help in the Melita "Herald" had taken strong hold of her fancy, and, as it were, impressed itself on the camera of her brain in flaming photographs. As if to emphasize these she opened a little book very dear to her and read: "It is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, begins. There is in man a higher than happiness—it is blessedness." Was it not to preach this same higher that sages and martyrs, the poet and the priest in all times have spoken and suffered, bearing testimony through life and through death of the God-like that is in man, and how in the God-like only has he strength and freedom?

Her brother's philosophy, frequently enunciated with weighty assurance, had not overturned her faith, but had instilled doubts, and made her appear to herself as drifting without anchor; and now she accused herself, and acknowledged in her prayers for help that though she had not, like Peter, denied the Lord, nor yet as Judas betrayed Him,

she had grown "lukewarm and listened to doubtful disputations." Was not this her opportunity to atone for her backsliding, to lay down her life for others? She had a talent for nursing, that she knew well; and now if she went away to Melita and nursed the sick, she might yet regain her undoubting faith and be saved; for did not Christ say, "to her who loved much, much was forgiven?" For this she had come into the world, not as she once fancied, to write a grand, soulful book, a book that should speak to many minds—this her chosen service as high priestess in the temple of nature, interpreting through her great love nature's beatitudes, nature's prophecies. No, this blessing was not to be hers; but rather as an humble acolyte, swinging the censer of a pitying service about the beds of the sick and dying, she might, with her soft touch and deft skill in the sick-room, save from death some one who would, perchance, do the work she had fancied was to be hers when she should be dust.

Her ideas were shaped into a feasible plan by Eva's note, which she speedily, and without exciting suspicion, put into execution. She agreed to go to the picnic, and by previous arrangement in the family she started to the depot on the appointed morning before either Captain Lemuir or his wife were up, (they usually breakfasted at nine or ten o'clock), and was driven to the rendezvous by Lambmy, on whose half idiot little germ of

a mind her large valise made no impression. Neither did any one notice the valise when she stepped on the train, one of the gentlemen, George Elmore, a stranger to her, assisting her on board.

The lake was in sight of the depot at which the picnickers disembarked, and was indeed a beautiful feature in the landscape, with its blue waters girdled around with swamp alders and willows. A large frame eating-house, in whose uncarpeted parlor the party were to dance, and at whose generous board they were to enjoy a fish-dinner, stood close by the railroad track. One could step from the hotel piazza on to the train. The crowd sauntered in couples to the lake, and more than one gentleman proffered his escort to Vivia, but she declined on the plea of a headache.

Eva Snow, who liked her for Zetta's sake, remained with her, and they sat on the piazza till the accommodation train came along, when Vivia, suddenly picking up her valise, thrust a letter into Eva's hand, saying "Good-bye," and before the astonished girl could speak was boarding the train, which made only the briefest stop there, and in a moment was thundering away. Eva looked after her in consternation, then glanced at the letter; she saw it was directed to Captain Lemuir, and with her mind very much upset, went down to the lake to tell her friends what had occurred. There were many surmises, somebody hazarding that "Miss Lemuir had run away to be married." **But no one guessed the truth.**

Meantime Vivia, borne on her journey, reached Lawson's Junction, where she changed cars, after a wearisome and unexpected detention. She had thought to reach the city by three o'clock, but it was dusk when she arrived. She found herself in so nervous a state that she barely had self-command enough to ask the way to the headquarters of the Howard Association. As she gave her name to the red-faced, anxious-eyed, elderly man who came towards her, he said: "Why, what on earth did you come here for? Great God! don't you know you'll die with the fever? Every one's taking it, and dying with it, dying, dying! And a little hop-o-my-thumb like you! why, what possessed you?"

"I came to nurse the sick," said Vivia. "I understand nursing very well, and though I am small (drawing up her little figure with dignity), I have very good health and am stronger than some women who are larger. I thought you were very much in need of nurses."

"Good Lord! In need of them? I should say we were. I was only thinking about you! You don't look strong enough for such work, and I'm afraid you wouldn't stand it if you took the fever."

"I don't suppose I shall take it for nine days; I can do a good deal of nursing in that time, and I hope you won't turn me off because I'm small." The girl's eyes filled with tears.

"Certainly not, child, no fear of that, but oh! how foolish of you to come! Why, I sent my

daughters to Cat-Back Mountain three weeks ago, and most everybody's left the city that could; but there's lots and crowds here yet, especially the poor devils that live in the shanty part of the town. Why, some of them die and we find it out by the stench, and lots of people are sick with nobody to give them a drink of water or a dose of medicine. Let me look on the bulletin and see where you are most needed. Ah! this is the very place for you, if you are determined to stay in this plague-stricken city."

"I certainly shall stay, sir."

"Very well. Mrs. Eleanor Johnson wants a nurse for her mother. Now what under the canopy made those rich people stay in town? O! I recollect; the old lady got a fall and couldn't be moved, and they have so much confidence in Dr. Evans. I reckon they think he can cure the yellow fever as easy as a common cold. Well, young lady," said the 'Howard,' putting on his hat, "is this all your baggage?" picking up the valise. "Come, I'll show you the way to Mrs. Gildersleeve's."

Now that Vivia had somewhat recovered from her first confusion and terror, she looked around her with interest and awe. This was Broad Street, the "Howard" told her, a magnificent, wide thoroughfare, well paved, and with large, splendid business houses towering on either side. How the white marble fronts shone in the moonlight, and how beautiful was the little square they were passing,

set thick with magnolias in the heart of the city! But oh! the ghostliness of the forsaken places! the terrible loneliness of deserted streets! There was the fountain playing and shimmering among the magnolias, and a mocking-bird singing there sweetly, thrillingly; but their footsteps sounded hollow in the empty thoroughfare, and from one place came a dull hammering, the coffin-makers, the "Howard" said. His supply of fine coffins had given out and "they had to be made now, mighty rough ones at that."

He continued: "Mr. Mullin and all his family have something to do with the dead. His son is in charge of our city cemetery, as pretty a one as you would wish to see, and his daughter did see to laying out people, on reasonable terms."

"Did they charge for it?" asked Vivia, in a tone of surprise.

"Indeed they did, and ought to have charged, too. Why, nobody could beat Miss Letty Mullin laying out folks; she was a perfect artist, made people look better dead than when they were alive; but she died, poor thing, last Friday night, and three of her sisters have died since. The old man tries to hold up his head, and works day and night to make coffins, but I don't know how long he will stand it."

The awful stillness of the street was broken by the creaking of wheels. "What is that?" asked Vivia, as a wagon was driven by, a black man sitting on top of a pile of long, narrow, unpainted

wooden boxes. He said "Go 'long," as he passed them, and the air was filled with a deadly odor.

"O! that's the dead wagon. It's the best we can do for most of them. Sometimes the bodies fester before they can be buried, and others are laid out of doors in coffins to wait until the dead wagon comes along. From one house three children were put in one box. Some days we've had to press every empty wagon that appeared on the street into service, in order to get the dead carried off."

While he spoke they turned into Green Street, where were some of the finest residences in the city. The moonlight played in shimmering brightness on the slate roofs, lingered lovingly on the roses in the gardens, and the city in its preternatural quiet, seemed sweetly sleeping.

"The greatest nuisance," said the "Howard," "are the lazy, good-for-nothing niggers who lie around here to get rations. Why, they won't budge. Just out of town the fields are white with cotton, but these lazy dogs can't be induced to stir themselves to pick a lock. They all have the notion that niggers can't have yellow fever; but I think it will be knocked out of their stupid pates before much longer. They've begun dying already. This morning Mr. Smith, at the Gregory House, sent for me and told me that three black men were dead in a shanty bar-room in 'No Man's Alley,' and wouldn't I have them buried? While I was on my way to arrange it, I heard somebody

say, 'O my God!' I went into the house where the cry came from, and there lay a little girl, yellow as a pumpkin, black vomit staining her hands and face. Another younger child was lying on the bed in a stupor, and their mother was down on the floor, calling on God for help. I gave what help I could, sent a nurse to them, and then went to 'No Man's Alley,' to see after the colored men. It was an awful sight! One of them lay dead on a pallet, congealed blood oozing from his mouth, his teeth clenched and his eyes protruding from their sockets."

"O!" said Vivia, "how ghastly!"

"O don't get scared yet," said the "Howard," with a low chuckle, "wait till you see for yourself."

Vivia looked at him inquiringly, wonderingly. He was a medium-sized man with a large head, getting a little bald above the forehead and top-head, sandy-haired, light-eyed and had a quid of tobacco in his mouth; a serious, rather stolid face, and might be called ugly by one who looked at the outside only. He wore a very common, dust-colored suit, and walked quickly. Very few would have picked him out as Col. John St. John, one of the most heroic of all the heroic Howards; a man of great wealth, but whose simplicity of living, unassuming manners and singleness of aim put him in the category with such souls as Lord Nelson, without the ambitious incentive of a place in Westminster Abbey. He was going to

teach Vivia (along with other exemplars), that deep feeling does not show itself in loud groans and bewailings, and may even be veiled by extreme external quietude.

Of foot-passengers they met a woman with a child in her arms, shivering with the fever chill. She was hunting for the "praste." The "Howard" directed her and she went on ejaculating, "May the Holy Virgin love ye."

On this stately and beautiful Green Street, with its elegant mansions, rested a deadly calm. Indeed, numbers of the magnificent houses were closed, the owners having emigrated to the mountains. But here and there gleamed lights, and long crape streamers floated from the door-knobs. Little black piles of ashes on the street attracted Vivia's attention. The "Howard" told her it was the bedding and clothing of those who had died of the black vomit, which had been burned by order of the council. "There aren't more than a sixth of our people left in the city," said he. "Of those who didn't go away, who were too poor, we have six hundred at Camp Joe Brownson's. I advised Mrs. Gildersleeve to go, but the poor old lady was obstinate, and Eleanor would not leave her. They are good people. I hope, my child, you will be a Godsend to them. Here we are."

They stopped in front of a lofty brick stuccoed mansion, recessed from the street, fruit trees and shrubbery being artistically grouped so as to screen the windows yet not interfere with the

flower-beds. A fountain threw its silvery spray on the fern-leaves growing at its base, and the air was heavy with the odor of heliotrope and tuberoses. A marble statue of Adonis gleamed from under a magnolia, and a bronze Diana gazed calmly at the moon from the entrance to a beautiful arch of Devonians roses. A flight of marble steps led up to a broad portico, and on each side of the folding doors were conservatories, through whose crystal enclosures appeared tall, tropical plants.

"Come right in," said the "Howard," unlocking the door with a key he took from his pocket. "We can't stand on ceremony."

They traversed a passage, went up two short flights of steps, and with a light knock Colonel St. John pushed open the door of a large chamber. Vivian saw an aged lady propped high on the pillows in a great canopied bed. Her venerable face, once fat and full, was now collapsed and corpse-hued. She breathed with considerable difficulty, and took no notice of anything. She was evidently so near leaving this world as to be beyond remembering anything about it. A gentleman was approaching the bed with a vial in his hand, and, at the instant of their entrance said, "Hold the light Eleanor." He carefully dropped some of the medicine into a spoon, put his arm around the old lady's shoulders, lifted her head and saw that she swallowed it. The sweet face of Mrs. Eleanor Johnson turned to the new comer.

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"I've brought you a nurse, Eleanor," said the "Howard" in low tones. "She's small, but I think she's got grit in her and will do you good."

The gentleman who had given the medicine looked at Vivia. She glanced in amazement at this stranger, who was no stranger, but Dr. Evans, the companion of her adventurous journey in what now seemed, in the crowding light of so many new experiences, the dim, distant past.

"How do you do, Miss Lemuir? Why did you expose yourself to this danger? You have never had yellow fever, have you?" he asked harshly.

"No, sir, I have never had it," she said, shaking hands with Mrs Johnson.

"Then hadn't you better go back? You'll be certain to take it."

"Have you had it?" asked she, looking at him with her clear, steadfast gaze.

"No, but I'm acclimated. Its doubly dangerous for you."

"It is impossible for me to go back. I think I shall be able to help you;" and she looked appealingly at Eleanor, whose gray eyes softened as she held the girl's trembling hands.

"I am so thankful to have you, and don't be afraid, dear."

"There's no question about her being able and willing to help you," said Dr. Evans; "the foolishness of the thing is in your making a martyr of yourself, Miss Lemuir, when there's no occasion to do it."

“Did you not tell me, sir,” rejoined Vivia, turning to the “Howard,” “that you are very short of nurses?”

“O, yes, they are scarce as hens’ teeth; see here, Doctor, there’s no use to worry over what can’t be helped; the young lady’s here now—a friend of yours, I s’pose?”

“Yes,” assented Dr. Evans.

“Well, being here, and she’s got any amount of spunk, she might as well stay and do all she can for those who need it. Tell her what to do, Evans. I must go. Good-night to you all.”

“Charles,” said Mrs. Johnson, “stand here by mother, and let me go and show this young lady to a room.”

“O!” said Vivia impulsively, “I do hope I may be of some use to you!”

“Certainly you will; what time did you leave home, dear?” asked Mrs. Johnson, as they advanced along the passage.

“Early this morning; please do not scold me when I tell you I came without leave. My father and mother are dead. I’m twenty-two years old, and I did not ask my brother because I knew he wouldn’t consent. I can see that Dr. Evans thinks I have acted very wrongly in coming; but I hope you will not judge me harshly. To be blamed by one’s friends is so very painful.” The tears ran down Vivia’s cheeks.

“Certainly I don’t blame you,” said Mrs. Johnson kindly; “you are as welcome as an

angel. Now, if you will bathe your face and brush your hair, I will get some tea and bread for you, and when you have eaten you can go back with me to poor mother."

Vivia was only too glad to avail herself of Mrs. Johnson's thoughtful kindness. She speedily made herself more presentable, and hurried down to the dining-room in the basement, where she found her hostess making tea by the help of a spirit lamp.

"We've no servants," said Mrs. Johnson. "Ours all forsook us except our faithful Maria, who died of the fever two days ago. Since then Charles and I have done everything, but his time is not his own; he has a great many patients. He stays with us more than he ought."

"I know he is a noble gentleman," said Vivia. "When I was coming out to Arkansas I became acquainted with him on the train; we had an accident, and I saw what an expert surgeon he was. I did not know he lived in this city."

"He has only been located here a few months," replied Mrs. Johnson, "though he had been here before, and was very well known. He was already getting a large practice when the fever broke out. He did everything he could to induce mother to leave, but she had had a fall and couldn't be persuaded. Depopulating the city, he says, is the only way to stamp the fever out. As I couldn't leave mother I sent my little Eddie to my aunt in Ellerslie. I feel tolerably easy about

him, though I miss him unutterably. Dear little fellow ! I can't forget how he looked as the train bore him off. Kissing his little hand he called back, 'Come soon, mamma, come soon.' "

Mrs. Johnson's voice broke ; she sobbed, and Vivia's arms stole around her. In that embrace all sense of being strangers was lost. Soon each became composed ; and while Vivia drank a cup of tea and ate some bread and chicken with a keen relish, they opened their hearts to each other.

CHAPTER XV.

HAVING business in Milnville the day after the picnic at Lost Lake, Captain Lemuir called at General Miln's to take his sister home. Instead of Vivia, Mrs. Miln, redolent of attar of roses, met him with a mysterious air of suppressed excitement. She informed him, impressively, that Miss Lemuir had not returned. "Mr. Norwood said" (this with a tinge of asperity in her tone) "that she had acted queerly on arrival at Lost Lake, had refused Teddy's escort to the boats, and while most of the party were absent at the Lake, Miss Snow said she had boarded the train, without even a hint to her as to what she was going to do. How very strange, Captain Lemuir! Do you think she intended to go back where she came from, or to overtake Zetta and General Miln?"

"I'm quite sure she did nothing of the kind," said Captain Lemuir, deathly pale at his lips. "Did she leave no message for me?"

"Yes, here's a letter."

"Mrs. Miln let it leave her hand reluctantly, scanning the gentleman's face while he glanced

at it. There were only a few lines inside the sealed envelope, as follows :

“ LOST LAKE, Aug. 29, 18—.

“ DEAREST BROTHER : I cannot believe I am of my own free will saying farewell forever to you, yet so I probably am, for I am going to the city of Melita to offer my services to the “ Howards ” to nurse the yellow-fever sick. I have adopted this plan of going away, knowing you would never consent ; yet of what I suffer in so doing I cannot give you an idea. Forgive me, brother. Try not to blame me. We forgive the dying. I suppose I am the same as dying. I enclose my trunk key. If I survive—but, no ; it is useless to plan ahead. Your loving sister,

“ VIVIA LEMUIR.”

Reading these hastily-pencilled lines, Captain Lemuir, the serene, self-contained philosopher, staggered and caught at a chair for support ; but seeing, even in that supreme moment, the peering, inquisitive eyes, he said in a perfectly conventional voice :

“ My sister has gone to Melita to nurse the yellow-fever sufferers. She went as she did knowing I would not consent. Good-morning, madam.”

Passing out with quick, unequal strides, he got into his buggy and drove away, “ looking like a man who had been shot,” as Mrs. Miln impressively informed her next caller. What he suffered he never expressed in words, for he was one from whom pain could not extort a cry ; yet under his

calm exterior beat a heart that agonized like a chained giant under torture ; a Prometheus under the vulture's beak. During the long drive back home one thought possessed him, the loss of her who had twined herself into every fibre of his heart, the sympathetic, loving, unselfish sister, who did not herself suspect how much comfort she gave him, by entering into his feelings and ministering to his comfort. And now rose before him the fever fiend, as a yellow and foul-smelling presence, making the very airs of heaven a burden, scorching the hands that fancy saw held out for succor. O! the intolerable, indescribable anguish of the yellow death!

She would die—of course she would die. What could save that slight, fragile form from perishing in the clutches of such a monster?

O! how his soul rose up in arms against this cruel dispensation of Providence, as he mentally called it, in bitter derision ; an untimely grave, a sweet, promising young life cut short, all for a Quixotic idea of doing good, forsooth! In the solitude of the lonely road big sobs shook him, as the whirlwind shakes the heart of the oak in the forest.

“Where is Vivia?” asked his wife, in a cold and scornful tone, as Captain Lemuir entered the sitting-room.

“She hasn't come,” he replied, taking up a paper and sitting down as if to read.

“She hasn't? and why not, I'd like to know? It

will bore Celia and Elma to death to have her on their hands, and they just getting ready to be off for the summer. Aunt Henrietta don't want her. I'm sure they all just endure her pretty piety and sweet sanctity because Zetta's so wrapped in her. Why in the world didn't you insist on her coming home?"

"I haven't seen her," said Captain Lemuir, not raising his eyes from his paper.

"Haven't seen her? Well, that beats me! What kind of a jackanapes are you, anyway, to go expressly after the girl and come back without seeing her? There never was a man in the world with such aggravating, mulish ways. I wish you were dead and myself too. It's enough to make a woman swear, I declare. I tell you I'm getting tired of that 'sweet sister' of yours. I think she is awfully sly and undermining, with her journals, and her letters, and her writing, and her reading, and her private interviews; and I wish you'd send her back where she came from."

"I won't hear her abused," exclaimed Captain Lemuir, springing to his feet, his eyes emitting angry flashes: "I'll leave you and your 'place' forever; you can hunt another 'agent' for your property, madam. My sister has gone to Melita to nurse the yellow fever sufferers, and I'll go too. I had just as lief throw away my life as not. I live in torment. If I die with the fever I can't go to a worse place than this."

These few words, couched in such awfully

strong language, had the effect of bringing Mrs. Lemuir into her calculating, strong common-sense state of mind. She argued to herself that her captain was a very kind and not very troublesome husband for the most part, and for him to run off as well as his sister, in this Quixotic fashion and leave her a grass widow, would be rather ridiculously sensational. No! no! this must be nipped in the bud. She therefore rose and followed the captain, whose rapid steps had taken him to the stables, where she found him putting the saddle on Black Bess. She ran up to him, and taking hold of his hands cried loudly, and begged him to "quit such foolishness;" he was breaking her heart; had he no regard for his good name? no feeling for his children? She hadn't meant what she said, she had only been vexed and let her temper get the better of her, and she would be too glad if he would telegraph to Vivia, or, if that couldn't be done in the present state of quarantine, write to her, and send her money to pay her expenses home and persuade her to come back. It was a difficult job, but the captain yielded at last, when his wife went so far as to praise Vivia, and say she "did not know what she'd do without her, she was such a help about the house and so good to the children."

"And so good to me," said Arthur earnestly. "If God ever let one of His angels come down to this earth for a little while, to raise a man above sordidness and selfishness, my little sister was that

one. I shall try to be a better man, wife, if you will only help me get her back."

A telegram being out of the question, as all the operators had left or died of the fever, a letter was written which, as was customary, Captain Lemuir submitted to Mrs. Lemuir's criticism. She suggested various changes, and the letter as finally sent scarcely resembled the original at all. It ran as follows :

"CHEOWAH, P. O., Sept. 2d, 18—

"MY DEAR SISTER :—

"I cannot find words to convey to you the full extent of my grief and annoyance at the imprudent step you have taken. I suppose you did not consider the gossip you would excite by behaving in such a Quixotic style. It is our duty, sister, while we live in this world, to respect the world's opinion ; and if we would have the current of our lives glide smoothly, not to run counter to the world's prejudices. Now for a girl to leave home without warning, without preparation, without an escort, and set out upon such a crusade as you have, is, to use the very mildest term, foolishly romantic. Of course everybody is talking about your strange conduct, and I am mortified by questions as to what induced you to go, or, as rough people put it, "Cappen, what made your sister run away?" and they sting like nettles. Think how distressed Mary will be ! I enclose thirty dollars, and send this letter by hand to Morrill's farm, whence the mail-carrier, who passes there three times a week, will convey it to Melita. I wish you to come home immediately ; but be sure you use all disinfectants. As the trains are not running you will

have to use a conveyance through the country, which I think you can easily do with thirty dollars, as it is only four hours' drive. You must disembark at Lamb's cabin where I will have old Maum Becky receive you. I will have to quarantine you for nine days. Wife says Becky has nursed yellow fever and is not afraid of it. Wife at first thought you had best come out to Dr. Johnson's Infirmary, but I will be better satisfied if you are in reach where I can see to you myself in case you take the fever. We will have your trunk sent to the cabin and furnish it comfortably for you.

“Your affectionate brother,

“ARTHUR LEMUIR.”

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Mrs. Johnson and Vivia returned to the sick chamber, Doctor Evans glanced at his watch, gave some concise directions, and saying he would return at midnight, retired. Vivia proceeded, with a gentleness of touch, to sponge the face, neck and hands of the sufferer, whose stupor continued for many hours, yet she would arouse sufficiently to swallow the contents of the spoon placed between her lips.

After long intervals of silence Mrs. Johnson sometimes talked a little; then her pent-up grief would find relief in the tears that silently flowed down her cheeks. Dr. Evans, on his return, observed no change in the condition of his patient, and insisted that Eleanor should go into an adjoining room, and seek some repose.

“You have had no sleep for three nights; why should you kill yourself?” he said rather harshly. “I will lie down on the lounge by the window and Miss Lemuir will wake me in two hours.”

Vivia added her entreaty, and Mrs. Johnson went out. Dr. Evans was asleep by the time he

assumed a reclining position, and Vivia, with a mind full of profound thought, was neither lonely nor frightened, but addressed herself assiduously to the duty of keeping her patient as comfortable as she possibly could. Dr. Evans awoke, examined Mrs. Gildersleeve, and whispering to Vivia that "there was little change," went off to another patient.

So another morning found the sweet old soul hovering on the confines of this world. She roused into something like intelligence when Eleanor brought her some coffee. She lived for two days, and died the third night at one o'clock. A click in the throat, then the setting of the lips, indicated the stoppage of the breath. Eleanor, with the utmost quietness, performed the last offices, assisted by Vivia, the girl's touch as tender and reverential as the daughter's own. No stranger hands desecrated with indifferent handling that beloved form.

Dr. Evans and her pastor, Dr. Luke Parsons, a strong, noble, manly and Christlike man, placed her in her coffin, Dr. Parsons recited the burial service over the body where it lay, made a touching prayer, and he and Dr. Evans saw it put to rest in beautiful "Oakwood Cemetery."

Vivia remained with Mrs. Johnson, assisting her to pack up and secure the house and get ready as speedily as possible to leave the city, which she did the next morning by private conveyance, intending to go to Camp Perry, and in

nine days to Cat-Back Mountain, to join her little Eddie and other relatives there.

Vivia received her brother's letter, but its tone had the effect of making her more resolved to stay on and do or die in the task she had set herself. She wrote a few lines describing her experiences, Mrs. Gildersleeve's death, and mentioning that the editor of the "Messenger" had just been attacked and she was engaged to nurse him. The thirty dollars she returned in her letter.

It was a most delightfully satisfactory solution of the problematic situation to Mrs. Lemuir, and gave her material for endless gossip and comment. She had always known the Gildersleeves by reputation. She knew they were very rich and very highly thought of, that Mrs. Johnson was their only daughter, and they had just lavished everything on her. She married a Dr. Johnson, who went to Virginia just before the war ended, and was killed at Petersburg. She was one widow no one ever accused of wanting to marry again. "Pretty too," said Mrs. Lemuir. "I've seen her driving several times when I've been in Melita. Her crape was always the same depth. And she seemed wrapped up in her boy."

The "Howard" came to conduct Vivia to the hospital, where the editor of the "Messenger," Colonel Loper, lay ill. It was as long a walk as the memorable one on the night of her arrival, but this time happened to be a fresh and dewy morn-

ing, contrasting with the great city's agony like a red rose with the pallor of a corpse.

"Well," said Vivia's guide, "you begin to think you know all about yellow fever, don't you?"

"O no, indeed! I wish you would tell me your ideas of it, and give me notions about nursing it."

"Generally, you know, it comes on with a chill; sometimes it is a dumb chill; no shaking and no outward cold except one hand or foot. There is terrible pain in the back and head, and the patient complains that he is 'dead tired.' The face looks blotched with purple, and soon the skin is a dirty yellow like a pumpkin. A little later on I've seen 'em against white plastered walls as clear yellow as an orange. Directly your patient is sick at the stomach, and throws up something that looks like coffee-grounds. The pulse gets faster till you can't count it, the temperature is way up yonder. After awhile he'll throw up stuff as black as the chimney back; it will coat the tongue and teeth as thick as a knife-blade. You can wipe it off and he will look at it curiously. He is yet in his senses. Later on there will be a collapse, a shrunken look on his face and body, pulse weak, a cold clamminess over the body, pinched nostrils, purple lips and a deep stupor. There may be a reaction, the skin changing to white again, and even a return of intelligence and the ability to eat a little food and retain it. As the day goes on he gets restless, inclines to talk, has another rigor, fever rises again, he becomes deli-

rious, may need to be kept in bed by force, will probably die before midnight, or between that and dawn. You will have lots of sponging to do, sometimes with vinegar, sometimes with water, hot or cold, as the doctor tells you; and you will have to give mustard foot-baths, keep your patient covered, sponge his head with ice, and put cracked ice in his mouth to palliate the intolerable, consuming thirst. Do, pray, my dear young lady, do your everlasting best for poor Colonel Loper. Your best is no poor best either, if Dr. Evans speaks truth. He praises you to the skies, and I believe him.

“Colonel Loper is the greatest man in this town, and I love him better than any man I know. Now don't you get scared because he is a rough customer. He may blurt out an oath at you now and then; he's no carpet-knight. He ain't one of the kind that flirts with other men's wives, but he is pure gold in the rough ore, and brainy. O Lord! there's a mind for you! He is a perfect lion for courage too. He sent his family to Yosemite just at the outbreak of the fever, and I've no idea he will let them know he's sick. They'll hear nothing about it till he gets well or is dead. He's got a sweet young daughter, just grown, and such a noble wife! They would both fly to him if they knew he were sick. But he's the sort to die and make no sound, rather than let them run any risk. Now don't you get mad and disgusted when you hear him swear. You'll be sure to hear him

do it, for he's had the habit ever since a boy. It's second nature with him, and he don't mean the least harm. Why, he's the tenderest, kindest man in his family—a good husband, a good father, and a good friend. Now let me tell you something about him so you won't think so hard of him when he says words offensive to your little ears. The man has suffered, I suppose, as much as mortal man can suffer. Let me put the case to you.

“Thirty years ago George Loper, that's the Colonel, was admitted to the bar here with good prospects. He had ability, grit, lots of friends, and people loved his father; his way to rise seemed a plain ‘walk over the course.’ There was one little trick he had that was like a gully seaming up and undermining a good piece of land; that was taking too much whiskey—and when he drank it, it turned him a plumb fool. Well, court was in session that fall, and George got with a lot of young fellows, like himself, fond of a social glass. First thing we knew he was on a regular spree which lasted three weeks. Just as he was coming out of it, and quick to burn as powder, he goes into a saloon one Sunday morning, and there was a faro-dealer. He walked up, made a deal, lost, and handed the man a twenty-dollar bill.

“‘It's a counterfeit, sir,’ said the man.

“‘O, h—l! it's not,’ said Loper, his eyes blazing.

“ Now it happened that Abdiel Stubbs, a good sort of easy fellow, a friend of Loper’s, a kind of fag of his, indeed, with whom he had been brought up, sat in the saloon. A poor, simple-minded fellow, not an idiot, had sense enough for common uses of life, but not that wise sense that ought to have made him keep his mouth shut in the presence of a man whose brain had not yet regained its equipoise after being overturned with liquor,—he, forsooth, Loper’s own fag and football, must foolishly say, ‘ O George ! it is a counterfeit.’

“ Instantly the apparently quenched fire of anger blazed up with death and destruction in its consuming flame. In the twinkling of an eye a pistol-shot was in poor Abdiel’s bosom, and the words, ‘ O George ! you’ve killed me !’ rang in the ears of maddened Loper with a knell of anguish that I believe has kept up its real peal in his heart and brain ever since. Stubbs died, regretted and pitied by everybody ; most of all by his poor old mother and gentle sister, who supported him and loved to do it. You can imagine how strong public feeling was against Loper, but I think his remorse was keener than any anguish of loss of popularity. He left home and wandered in Central America. He worked on that railroad across the Isthmus. He lived with those strange foreign people, in one incessant round of hard manual labor, but the agony of pity, the viper of remorse was his boon companion. Even in that out-of-the-way land he got letters, and hearing there would be a session of court

in September, he wrote three months before to his friends that he would appear and stand his trial.

“It was reported everywhere that General Loper’s son was coming home, and people shook their heads, and many didn’t believe it. ‘Why,’ they said, ‘he’ll be hung and he knows it; catch him being such a fool as to come back.’

“They didn’t know the timber he was made of. The second day the grand jury was in session, up rode George Loper and hitched his sorrel to a sycamore near the court-house door. The grand jury brought in a true bill, and he was tried, pleaded guilty to killing, but not to murder in cold blood; was convicted of manslaughter, sentenced to two years in jail and five hundred dollars fine. I had gone east, and so was absent at the time of the trial. When I came home I went to the jail and asked the jailer if anybody was allowed to see Loper.

“‘O yes,’ said he, ‘he ain’t guarded; it would be tomfoolery to guard any man that made his way back from the wilds of Central America to stand trial for murder, don’t you think so?’ Fact was, George Loper was keeping house in that jail in a most surprising way; he had two large rooms comfortably furnished, and more books than I ever saw before or since, except in a public library. Why, they were piled from floor to ceiling, and as for George, he received me with the dignity of a prince of the blood. Well, Miss

Lemuir, he was then just in his prime, but remorse had made him look like an old man; his eyes were the saddest I ever saw in a human head, but the sadness was all in his eyes; there was never an allusion to his pain. He talked in a way to light up one's mind and warm one's heart. He was visited by our best people, and while in jail did all the legal work that could be done except pleading at the bar. He was an omnivorous reader, and a student that delved and toiled like a galley-slave. I think he worked to keep himself from going mad and blowing his own brains out. Well, he came out of his comparative seclusion, and after awhile married a woman as earnest and active in her way as he is in his. Such a busy life as they lead. They own a fine farm near the city here, keep Jersey cows, blooded horses and Angora sheep.

“Mrs. Loper has always managed the farm. She rides like an Indian and has the executive capacity of a general of armies. George Loper is to-day at the head of the criminal lawyers. When he pleads, acquittal or a mild sentence is a foregone conclusion. He has made the ‘Messenger’ a power in three States; the brilliancy and power of his editorials is something to be felt, not described. Of course he was in the war, and to this hour his name lights up the faces of the men of his old regiment. You have heard stories of Alexander's and Napoleon's kindness and sympathy with the men of the rank and file; that was

Loper's way. Well, he was in the habit, when his family were at home, of spending his sleeping hours there; that is, he drove in after breakfast, dined in town and went back home about midnight; but since he sent his family off, which was the last of June, he's boarded with Mrs. McAboy on Second Street, a very showy place, but the fare was bad. I don't know what possessed him to stay there, only that it was convenient to his office and he's had so much to do. His men kept dropping off; some left, and more got sick; but he's kept the 'Messenger' going until he was taken ill. When he became sick Mrs. McAboy told him she wanted his room, and he was moved in an ambulance last night to the hospital where I'm taking you."

Just then they were passing near a sluggish stream from which came a disgusting odor.

"That's the bayou," said Colonel St. John, "the very fountain of pollution, as Loper's 'Messenger' has named it. You see how low it is. Well, in some places it barely runs, and into it people dump their filth. It is the receptacle for the outcome of sewers and sinks, and Loper foretold that it would be a hot-bed for the propagation of fever if the germs were once introduced. Phew, what a smell! Bad as if a thousand cats and dogs were decomposing there. I saw the doctors dissect a man here at the hospital yesterday. His spleen seemed to be the organ most affected. It was eight inches long and five wide, the kidneys were enormously congested and the gall-bladder was

filled with a stringy-looking substance, not bile though, and there was tremendous veinous congestion."

They now entered the large building known as the Melita Hospital, and passed through a ward full of patients where a woman was busily engaged feeding eggnog to the patients. She did not even glance towards them, but Vivia looked at her curiously and noticed her lily-white skin and golden hair.

"They call her the 'Angel of the Hospital,' poor thing," whispered the "Howard," as they passed out of the ward. "And she's got her hands full; she's been here three weeks. I got Colonel Loper into a little room by himself, and I shall depend on you to bring him round more than Evans, with all his nostrums. Now, Miss Vivia, ever hear of mesmerism?"

"Yes, sir," said she, smiling.

"Well, I have mighty strong faith in the mesmerism of touch and will. Exert both for the salvation of the greatest man in the middle-west. If he lives we will elect him governor of the State."

"I believe in the power of the touch of sympathy," said Vivia, her sweet eyes kindling.

"This used to be Dr. Odell's office," said the "Howard." "I just had time to have a bed put in here, and Loper was put right into it."

They entered a high-ceiled room with a shabby carpet on the floor, dusty heavy curtains at the

wide windows, and an office paraphernalia, in the midst of which the hastily made-up bed looked strangely out of place. But Vivia's eyes lingered longest on the snow-white head, tossing so restlessly on the pillow, and the piercing eyes under shaggy brows.

"She's only a little hop-o-my-thumb, George, but Evans says the best nurse out," said the "Howard," with a chuckle. "Now do what she tells you. Good-bye, Miss Lemuir; I'll look in some time to-day," and he was gone.

Vivia, in her singularly self-forgetful way, approached the bed and put her cool little fingers on the big, burning, hairy, yellow hand that lay on the coverlet. Without saying a word she began cold sponging; after twenty minutes of this she got him to move to the other side of the bed, beating up the pillows; then she found a paper of lemons and had just made a glass of lemonade, which she was holding to the lips of the patient, when Dr. Evans entered.

"How are you, Miss Lemuir?" was his cool greeting. "Stop a moment, let me add something to that," and he put in a few grains of bitartrate of potassium. "That will do you good, Colonel. Better have ice in it, Miss Lemuir; you can get ice from across the passage. I will ask Miss Weston, the lady in charge of the nearest ward, to call for you when dinner is ready."

"Is there a step-ladder available in the building?"

“Yes! there’s one in the room where the ice is kept; what do you want with it?”

“I want to stand on it to take down those heavy curtains; and I would like some clean sheets for his bed.”

“I will get the step-ladder for you,” said Dr. Evans, with the ghost of a smile lurking in his eyes; “you go about your business with your old-time energy, I see.”

Dr. Evans brought the step-ladder, and as soon as he had adjusted it Vivia started to ascend, but he prevented her.

“Let me,” he said, “I’m so much taller it will be a far easier job for me;” but Vivia stood by and directed him, telling him how to get the curtains down, which he set about awkwardly enough.

“Now, hadn’t I better give him a mustard foot-bath?” said she, as Dr. Evans picked up his small medicine chest, preparatory to leaving.

He looked at her with some surprise. “I would advise it, and when the calm stage comes on you can give him a tablespoonful of iced milk, but it will be some hours yet. Ask Miss Weston to show you the kitchen when you want your dinner;” so saying he disappeared.

Vivia now bethought herself of her hat, and as she laid it aside reflected: “I suppose he was amused at my absent-mindedness.” She then looked about for a foot-pan, found one, half filled it with water impregnated with mustard from the bottle the doctor had left, placed the pan at the

foot of the bed, then by raising his knees the patient's feet could remain in the water while he lay quietly covered about his lower limbs with blankets.

She saw him press his hand to his forehead.

"Does it pain you very much?" she asked.

"The whole front of my head feels as if it would come off."

"Let me rub it for you, she said; and, pressing her palms on each of his temples, would gently pass her hand back and, forth. She saw the glistening red eyes close, and, taking a lump of ice in her handkerchief, she would pass it quickly over his forehead and the top of his head, the icy touch not pausing a second on any one spot. This was evidently soothing. After letting his feet remain in the foot-bath half an hour, she dried and wrapped them in blankets. There was considerable perspiration and much drowsiness. Vivia sat down by him, silent as the dew, and fanned him like a breath, while she listened to his stertorous breathing. He soon moved, opened his eyes, which looked so watery she thought them tearful.

"Who are you?" he asked harshly, and a little of their native penetration came into the weak eyes. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm your nurse, Colonel Loper; my name is Vivia Lemuir."

"What place is this?"

"The city hospital."

“The h—l it is! That woman turned me out of my rooms! I remember! It was nothing but a swindling shop. Do you know what she fed us on? Why, beef so tough it would do to make boots of, and bread so sour the yeast put into it would have made a pig squeal; as for her made-over coffee, I know it was nothing but chicory, and the milk mostly water. Think of starch pudding with such sauce! biscuits sodden with soda and hard as brickbats. Lord, what shams!” He broke into a laugh.

“Girl, did you ever see a sham? Let me introduce you to my landlady, Mrs. McAboy, with the paint on her face so thick you can’t get a glimpse of her natural skin, with a hump on her back she calls a bustle that would make a dromedary go mad with envy. She’s a widow and out husband-hunting, and the lies she tells, and the subterfuges! This world is full of shams! You believe it?” He looked at her sharply. “O! you don’t! you needn’t tell me! I know better; you are one of the trusting kind. Why, I am a sham myself; I walk these streets as boldly as Adam walked in the garden before the fall, but yet I have the brand of Cain on my brow. I’ve killed a man! Girl, did you know it?—a poor, harmless fellow! I see the blood everywhere! My God! but I didn’t mean to do it. The devil got into me. O Abdiel! will you never let me alone? will you haunt me till I die with that poor, white, dying face of yours? O yes! I’m a sham, a

fraud, a humbug; and these fools, my fellow-citizens, are taken in by my tricks of speech. I talk so well, you see, and when they throw up their hats and 'rah, 'rah, 'rah, they imagine they are doing homage to a patriot. Well, I do love my city, my state, my country, but I don't love some people. I have no use for such women as Mrs. McAboy. Her eye is as cruel as a cat's, as mean as a suck-egg dog's. She looks at you and gauges you by what you've got, not by what you are. Didn't I see her insolent to poor Miss Malone, the school-marm who boarded there? But the way she got the better of Jones was funny, (then he laughed). "She's always playing backgammon with her men-boarders, do you see, and Jones being a clergyman and a widower, she patronized him in that way, and little by little enticed him into betting on the games; and, by my soul! drained him of all his small change."

Then he was silent awhile.

"Did Langley bring you here? Did he have the measuring-line and his hoe to lay me out? O! that white face of Abdiel's!"

Gradually this delirium passed and he rested; and just as Miss Weston came to show her the way to the dining-room, Colonel St. John returned and said he would take charge of her patient till she had had dinner.

Miss Weston was hardly above medium height, with a slender figure, a skin like marble for whiteness, and shining bright hair that waved over her

forehead in a bewilderment of curls. She wore a plain black calico made without a ruffle, plait or tuck, and had not a single ring on her long white fingers. But what went to Vivia's heart, and almost drew tears to her eyes, was the pitiful sadness of the girl's expression.

Nothing could have been kinder or more sympathetic than her manners, though she never uttered one unnecessary word, but the dumb, appealing expression of her eyes spoke volumes to Vivia. She found herself longing to know the history of this sad young creature, yearning to express the love which had suddenly filled her heart for her.

"How long have you been here?" was her commonplace question, while the surging thought in her brain made her wonder at her own calmness of speech.

"Three weeks;" and the great brown eyes, so indescribably touching in their soft beauty, so wonderful in their contrast to the golden hair and marble skin, looked at Vivia with an expression that seemed as if deprecating sin, entreating forgiveness.

"Have you nursed many cases?"

"O, yes. I have been in the ward, you know, have often attended to five or six at one time, and I have straightened the bodies and closed the eyes of, oh, so many!"

"Have you ever had the disease?"

"No, that's what I am looking forward to;"

and for the first time a smile wreathed the exquisite lips.

“ I declare, you look as if you rather liked the idea,” said Vivia, in amazement. “ Now I have a terror of it, or I would if I let myself loose; but I pray to God and try not to think of myself, and that’s the only way by which I have managed to keep from being so nervous and panicky as to be utterly worthless as a nurse. I do believe if I had not prayed hard I would have run back to brother’s as soon as I got here, and confronted the horror. I ran away from home,” said Vivia, laughter in her eyes, “ and brother has written and urged me to go back and be quarantined in Lamb’s old cabin, but I am like a new recruit after a little drilling, somewhat better able to stand the flash of the guns and the roar of the cannon.”

Miss Weston listened to all this with such an expression of deep interest that Vivia felt like unbosoming herself of her whole little history, and only recollected afterwards that her new friend had said nothing in reply save what her speaking countenance conveyed.

She had said, “ There are small dormitories in the building for the nurses in the west end. Dr. Evans told me yours was No. 13. Will you sit up to-night ? ”

“ Yes,” said Vivia, “ but I’d like you to show me my room now and I will take a sponge bath, so that I may be as fresh as possible for to-night’s vigil.”

Miss Weston had gone with her to the room. They parted at Colonel Loper's door with a kiss which Vivia offered, and at which Miss Weston's face became illumined like the sky as the sun emerges from a cloud at sunset.

CHAPTER XVII.

COLONEL LOPER recovered and returned to business, bringing out almost single-handed a sheet of the once huge daily "Messenger" three times a week. It was he who, at the beginning of the pestilence, sounded the tocsin, "Flee from the fever; the only salvation is the depopulation of the city." Giving this advice to others, he remained inexorably at his post until his force was so reduced by death and desertion that he had to do everything, from setting type to writing editorials.

In the vast charnel-house to which the fair city was reduced, the wildest consternation seemed to deprive people of reason; but this man Loper, with massive head and nerves of steel, sat in his office and organized committees, bands of workers, and such protective measures as tar-burning and quick-liming, while still doing newspaper work. The daily scenes of horror were enough to appal the stoutest hearts. Men fell dead on the streets or died neglected, only to be discovered by the gases generated by their decaying bodies. The stench on reopening vaults, which was done in many instances, was horrible beyond description.

Colonel Loper put a stop to this, and mustered

a corps of negroes to go around twice a day, gathering up the dead and carrying them outside the city. This was as wise as humane, for before some corpses had been unburied for forty-eight hours. The atmosphere was heavy with poison; it could be fairly tasted; and now, in the latter part of the second month, those who tried to compute the ravages of the plague were appalled at the swelling list. Families composed of from six to eight had, in numerous instances, been swept away, buried one after another, or two or three at a time.

But the editor's eloquent appeals had borne fruit; money, provisions and supplies of all kinds flowed into the plague-stricken city, and doctors from New Orleans and Charleston, with trained nurses, came to the relief of those who were worn out with watching.

The plague, however, sensibly abated as the season advanced and cold weather came on. Vivia had formed a fervent friendship with Miss Weston; but though this had met with a sympathetic return, in deed and expression, no word had ever been spoken which gave Vivia the least clew to her previous life; whereas Vivia, in a manner unusual even to her frank and trusting disposition, liked to lay open her heart to the woman whose patience and power in the sick-room had caused her more impulsive nature to turn to her as to a tower of strength. The two girls had become known to everybody in the afflicted city,

and revered as angels of goodness. But Vivia was loved for her kindness, whereas the beautiful face of Miss Weston not only won all hearts, but instant homage. These two, who had taken their lives in their hands, seemed invulnerable to the plague; they had, as it were, gone into the lion's den, and the jaws of the wild beast had been closed so as to do them no harm.

But one day, when it seemed as if frost could not be far off, and the shade of death lessening in perspective, Miss Weston said to Vivia: "I feel so tired, dear; if I do get down will you take care of me?"

"Do you doubt it?" said Vivia, and with the caress most natural to her she stole her arm around the white neck and kissed the lovely eyes. But she noticed with a little quake of terror that the brown orbs had not their usual brilliancy, and that there was a tinge of yellow in the balls. Next morning Miss Weston did not get up, but she seemed not very sick; yet surely she succumbed to increasing languor.

The second night she said to Vivia: "Dear, you have been so good to me and have shown me all your pure, sweet life and never even asked to look into my record; and now, while I have voice left, I want to open that dark scroll, my past, even though it make you run away from me as from a leper. But you have wanted to know about me, dear child, and my latest breath shall be given to telling you. If your pure heart does not shrink, I

will know by that token that I may hope to enter the white courts, beyond the stars, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. O Vivia! I have felt impelled to tell you, but dreaded your condemnation."

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who love the Lord Jesus," murmured Vivia, clasping tightly the hands of the girl whose feet were nearing the shores of the spirit world. "Dear Mattie, do not doubt my sympathy; for I love you, and 'love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things.'"

"In the beginning my sin was only vanity," said Mattie; "but this was the worm in the bud that corrupted all my life; even you, Vivia, even you with your lofty standards, your eyes looking to heaven, your lips forever praying, you loved me for the beauty of this poor body. Ah! dear God! I will soon be rid of it and its temptations. It has been like a fair robe, clothing an unclean spirit! But oh! if He cleansed the lepers is He not able to cleanse me?"

Vivia held a glass of water to her lips, and after she had drunk and lay back quietly a moment, she gently smoothed the bright shining waves of hair clustering about the blue-veined forehead and dropped a tear on the face.

"Beauty of body has been my curse," said poor Mattie; "even as a child I listened to the praises of my skin, and hair, and eyes. It was like the drink of liquor men swallow that forms the ap-

petite ; I grew greedy for praise ; I became dissatisfied with my simple surroundings, and resented what I considered having to stay at my humdrum home. I was an only child, and my father and mother loved me so, how could they see into the hollow heart inside the form they considered so perfect ? They didn't mean to let me go to ruin. Oh ! don't think too hard of them, Vivia, but they thought their gem, as they called me, too fine for that poor country place ; so I grew up into all vain, selfish thoughts, and, as a consequence, foolish ways. I hated the poor country and poor people, as not fit for one born to rule, such as I fancied I was by right of beauty. Ah, Lord ! if I had only been born plain, homely—sweet old word—I might have had some 'homely' virtue. But I was selfish, Vivia, so selfish I fairly loathe myself as I see it manifested in my career.

“ As a child my parents tried with their slender means to make everything easy for me ; they worked themselves nearly to death to give me fine dresses, fine schooling, and all sorts of fine pleasuring. I took it all as my right. I sat idle while my mother cooked, washed, scoured, scrubbed, washed dishes and sewed. I considered that it was impossible for me to do these things, as it would spoil my hands ! Ah, Vivia ! the worms will feed on flesh full of vileness when they fatten on my white hands ! Lord be merciful to a sinner ! ” There was a gush of tears.

“ Ah ! I remember how my father waited on me

all my life till I ran away ; how he bore my petulance and self-will and outrageous lack of decency, for I'd sit down at the table and take the best, and scold because it was no better. Of course I had admirers in plenty. Girls unselfish like you, dear Vivia, were drawn to me by my 'lovely eyes ;' their color and expression, alas ! were quite unconnected with my soul. If they had been mirrors of that, and had shown thoughts, all of which revolved in a circle about myself--what should I eat, what should I wear, how could I get the best of everything--they would have despised me. I declare to you, I thought of young men only as the advantages they would give me by marriage. But the people in that part of the country were poor, and so I rejected offer after offer, and ended by becoming very unpopular with boys and girls, who called me what I truly was, 'scornful and stuck up.' I was a regular attendant at church and Sunday-school, but the preaching and teaching never entered my heart any more than if it had been spoken in a foreign language. I would expend days in the arrangement of a ruffle, or bow, or coiffure, anything to set me off ; and I showed myself at church simply to be admired, and in the hope of new conquests.

“ My punishment overtook me in that very place, in the church whose sacredness I had outraged by my selfish thoughts. My habit was to take a seat near the door, with whatever young fellow had last succumbed to my blandishments, and then

I would chat in tones audible to every person in the building. I did not care. I regarded preachers and people as nothings, fit only to wipe my feet on, and the church as merely a theatre for the display of my person.

“Here on a Sabbath morning I first saw Inspector Leiter of the S. W. & C. Railway. He was a small man with cunning eyes, but what attracted my attention was his diamond shirt-buttons and the diamond cluster he wore on his little finger. He stared at me all during service, and I recollect I was not at all abashed, but rather congratulated myself on having attracted his attention.

“After service he came up, and Eddie Meyers, my escort, introduced him. He spent that Sunday evening at our house, praised my face and my voice, and gave my father to understand how rich he was. It was all a foregone conclusion with me. I thought here was my chance of marrying a rich man, and going to the city to live, and I was quite prepared for the proposal he made me on his third visit, also on a Sunday. All his visits were on Sunday, as that was the only day, he said, that he could be away from his business.

“I remember quite enjoying his cynicism and skepticism regarding religion. O Vivia! I was a branch ready for the burning. Mr. Leiter insisted that we should have no commonplace wedding, but instead a romance in keeping with the beauty of his bride-elect. He asked me to stand on the railroad crossing near our house the next

Sunday and wave a white handkerchief, and he, in his special car, would stop and take me up and we would be married on board ; later we would send for pa and ma to come and live with us in the city. Oh ! my heart was such a selfish heart ! I had no qualms at deceiving my parents for a mere caprice, for I did not suppose they would object to my marriage at home, as they had treated General Leiter with marked courtesy. They had been the slaves of my whims all my life, going threadbare to buy me shoddy finery and tinsel jewelry. Oh ! that bad man of the world read my foolish thoughts as in an open book, and knew just how to entice such a silly fly into his den of infamy. O Vivia ! don't forsake me !” She laid her hand on Vivia's with a close clasp. “ He set me down in a place I cannot name to you. On the train his excuse for not carrying out ‘ our romance ’ was that the preacher had disappointed him ; but he kept me from any fears by his devotion, and by the gift of a diamond bracelet. At least I supposed it was a diamond, but probably the gems were paste.

“ We reached the city at night, and were taken, as I imagined, to a private boarding-house. He introduced me to his dear friend, Mrs. Eustis, who flattered and cajoled me to the top of my bent. Next morning we were married in the parlor, with only Mrs. Eustis for a witness, and by a man so villainous-looking that I, simple, countrified girl as I was, felt vaguely miserable.

“ Alas ! Vivia, I did not suspect the sham-

marriage palmed off on me until I had been an inmate of that place of horror for six weeks, and had been seen in the streets with several of 'the girls.' Then the man Leiter suspended his visits, and when he at last returned told me he had a wife, but he loved me so he could not resist the temptation of taking advantage of my gullibility. Lord have mercy upon me, have mercy upon me!"

The poor girl was now attacked by such a shuddering fit that her story was cut short.

"Don't talk, dear Lily, (Vivia had always called her so, so lily white was she). I fear it may hurt you."

But the girl insisted. "I must finish. Let me tell you all, beloved. One night I asked Winnie Streeter, the only one of the inmates of that awful place in whom I had any confidence, to go with me for a stroll (we were encouraged to stroll at night). We walked far and were attracted by the sound of singing in a hall. I said to her, 'Let us go into that place, it must be a church.' She acquiesced. It was a plain building into which we thus intruded, filled with a crowd of plainly-dressed people of the poorer sort, who stared at our rich dresses and jewels. The man in the pulpit, lining out the hymn, was a short, thick-set man with a noble head, bald on top, of strong voice, and a manner of great earnestness. He gave out the text, which I never shall forget, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross, and follow Me.'

“In words which burned themselves into my very soul, he painted the life of Jesus the Healer, the Saviour of sinners, who went about doing good, seeking to save that which was lost, but despising not even that poor wretched Magdalene out of whom He cast seven devils, denying Himself all so-called pleasures of life, scorning the crown they would have forced on Him, intent only on reclaiming those who had gone astray. Ah! was I not lost? I had thought hopelessly, but here was a voice that said, ‘Come unto Me and take up the cross and thou shalt reign with Me hereafter.’ ‘Though thy sins be as scarlet thou shalt be made as snow.’ The cross of His self-denial only ended on the place of skulls, and every one of those twelve chosen ones was to bear His cross too, before going up to be part of His kingdom, which ‘was not of this world.’

“Then came a word-picture of the early cross-bearers who were burned, who were crucified, who were beheaded, who were sawn asunder. He described that climax of Nero’s horrible cruelties which the tyrant called his illuminators, or living torches. Lastly he drew a picture of a living slave-girl, fair, white, beautiful, with a body like mine, Vivia (this body you love, and I loathe), such a slave-girl, cast to the lions by order of the emperor in the amphitheatre, for the amusement of the people. He described the modesty of the poor young creature—looking up in prayer one moment, the next, as she lay under the gaping,

growling jaws of the ferocious beast, trying to screen her person from the gaze of the blood-thirsty populace. Yet this tortured creature went fearlessly to death, made strong by faith, while the jeweled Empress Poppæa, gloating on her agonies, felt in her sinful heart the premonition of that death that never dies! In that hour, Vivia, I longed to be the girl under the lion's jaws, yet loosed from the power of sin by her act of faith. 'And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins,' said the preacher. Was I not dead in trespasses and sins? Were not the very jewels and fine robes I wore, the visible cerements of the sepulchre in which I lay dead? Dead! yet the preacher said, 'Jesus could make the dead to live; He had saved Lazarus, dead for four days and decaying; yes, His love could reach a soul dead in trespasses and sins! Yes, yes!' So declared this man, whose voice, manner and looks showed a belief that would have gone to the stake in testimony.

"Dear Vivia, in that hour Christ plucked me out of the burning; I had a vivid sense of a new birthright then. As the sermon ended I took Winnie's hand and we fled from the church (we had sat near the door), and hastened to the place we called home—now to me indeed a sepulchre of loathsomeness.

Winnie, like myself, had felt those awful truths; she was a gentle thing who had gone astray through love, and continued in that horrible life

through want of force to fling it off. We managed next day to buy some black stuff, which, with what skill we could, we converted into dresses, and with plain black hats, wraps and veils, we watched our opportunity, and got away that night by jumping from a window on the first floor, for madame, our mistress, exercised a strict surveillance over all her inmates and was loth to lose any. We boarded the train at one of the street-crossings and came to Melita, where we heard they wanted yellow-fever nurses. Poor Winnie was unwilling to come here, but I had a stronger will and persuaded her. For myself I saw in the fever only a hungry lion to whom I should be thrown, but, in bearing this cross, I should be saved as by fire.

“ Poor Winnie died when we had been here about ten days ; was only ill a few hours, but she died content. But heaven spared me that I might come fully to my right mind. O ! how good God is who has suffered me to live awhile to bear this blessed cross ! Most strange and sweet that those teachings, in the words I used to listen to in childhood, have come back to me in these latter days, when I was longing to testify Christ’s saving power. I have been able to recall them for the comfort of the dying, and the help of those ready to perish. It has been (these two months while I’ve nursed the fever-stricken), the happiest time in my life.

“ And now, Vivia, like the Roman slave-girl, I

lie beneath the lion's paw, but I fear no evil, for Christ comforts me. Let me whisper my name—my true name, and my father's name, and you will keep it secret; and after awhile, when the plague is at an end, you will write to my father and mother, and tell them how I died in great peace and in full hope of a glorious immortality. They will forgive their erring child, I know. Who knows so well as I do the riches of their love?"

"Yes, dear Lily, I will write, and I do thank God that you are saved and that to me you have so clearly demonstrated the fulness of His pardon conveyed in His own precious words—'Neither do I condemn thee.' 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;' but you have lain down yours for those you knew not, and we remember what He said of her 'who loved much.'"

The next day's "Messenger" contained the following:—

"THE LILY FLOWER OF THE BLACK DEATH."

IN THE HORROR OF THIS AWFUL PESTILENCE DEEDS
OF SELF-DEVOTION CAST THEIR RADIANCE
LIKE LAMPS IN THE GLOOM.

"As darkness shows us worlds of light,
We never see by day."

"The men who scaled the heights of Balaklava took their lives in their hands—'into the mouth of death;' but their heroism did not exceed, in-

deed was of the same nature, as that of the brave girl who yesterday ceased to breathe and live—the Lily Flower of the black-death, blooming out of the very jaws of our horrible plague.

“Mattie Weston was a woman cast in perfect mould, and in whom dwelt a soul fearless as any knight that e'er put lance in rest, for conflict with outnumbering forces. There is no sex in courage, as this fair creature, one of an army that has filed down the centuries in ones, and twos, and threes, has proved.

“She came to us in the hour of our greatest need, when strong men fled in the panic. She was not afraid in the midst of this ‘dance of death.’

“Nothing was ever known to excel her patience, her tirelessness, her tenderness. For long it seemed as if the grim Reaper turned away his scythe as loth to cut down so fair a flower, but in these last days, when the frost and deliverance is so close at hand, the Inexorable stretches forth his weapon and takes our Lily for his final prize.

“As the Crimean soldiers followed cravingly the ‘Lady with the Lamp,’ so did the sick in our city look upon this angel in human form.

“We thought her invincible, for had she not gone in and out amongst our ghastliest horrors unhurt?

“Her memory shall be held sacred to the people of Melita as long as our city keeps its place on the bluffs of the father of waters.

“We will say of her—she gave her life for others;

we will plant ivy upon her grave, which withers
not like laurel, and let

“‘The Lily in her hand be carven,
And the story of her dolorous nocte triste
Be blazoned on her tomb.’”

CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING all these weeks the relation between Vivia and Evans was unique. He had taken the place of her brother since she came into his life by the sick-bed of his Aunt Gildersleeve. While the epidemic lasted he constantly guarded her against the contagion by supplying her with disinfectants, and insisting on her using all the precautions by which physicians protect themselves. He saw her every day and made a habit of feeling her pulse and looking at her tongue. But he spoke to her in the off-hand and sometimes short manner, which was his usual style of speech.

His kind, caretaking ways, in which there seemed not the remotest glimmer of a lover, set Vivia at her ease, so that her character unfolded before him as naturally as an opening flower.

The doctor would come in to look at a patient she was nursing, and she would immediately hand him her report, which she always had ready, giving the patient's temperature at different hours, and other symptoms. She regularly inquired after the doctor's health with the greatest solicitude, and, in the course of their intimacy, drew from him the acknowledgment of his unhygienic habits,—

how, after seeing patients till two o'clock in the morning, he went to his room only to force himself to keep awake by making and drinking cups of strong coffee, made from the essence. This enabled him to read and study for several hours, then he retired to sleep for not over two hours, and then to his duties again.

Vivia pleaded with him to take better care of himself, and when she knelt to pray his name was first on her lips.

It seemed to her that her deep content at his presence was the antidote to the awful infection around her.

Now that the pestilence was at an end, and the "sum of all her wishes," as she expressed it, had been made possible by her position in a newspaper office, she still saw Evans every day. If for only ten minutes, he came to Mrs. Jones's, where she boarded, and Vivia freely told him what she had been doing through the day, and often read to him her articles for his criticism.

He would call her attention to errors of fact or figures, for he had the advantage in accuracy of mind.

Miss Mary Jones, the dearest old maid in the world, a daughter of Vivia's landlady, asked her "what relation Doctor Evans was to her?"

"None whatever."

"Well, that is strange; for you two seem like sister and brother—not a bit of sweetheart foolishness about you."

“ We are only very good friends,” said the girl, looking steadfastly into Miss Mary’s eyes.

She thought this was quite true, though she recalled how often in her solitary walks at Ridley Farm, looking up at the blue sky, she had pressed her hand to her heart and said to herself, “ I love him, I love him ; but I shall never see him again, and I shall never marry. If the good Lord will help me to write one unforgettable book, I shall have attained all life has for me. That will be the sum of my wishes.”

When she met Dr. Evans at Mrs. Gildersleeve’s, any consciousness on his part would have made her shy of him ; but his air of serious courtesy precluded any embarrassment.

It was the doctor who suggested to Colonel Loper to give her a place on the “ Messenger ” staff, which he did more as a matter of favor than because he thought she had any literary genius, for he had supposed her good qualities lay in the line of nursing ; and considering that he owed his life to her care in his attack of yellow fever, he was quite ready to offer her a home with his family on their return from California, and to welcome her as a daughter. But Dr. Evans knew her better, and felt sure her ideas of independence were more in consonance with his proposal that she should have a place on the newspaper.

“ I will be responsible for all the damage she does you,” laughed Dr. Evans, when he persuaded Colonel Loper to make the arrangement.

The place had been no sinecure, but Vivia had developed a remarkable aptitude as a journalist, and rendered herself a valuable assistant instead of the mere superfluity Colonel Loper had feared she might prove.

Meantime she had written and received several letters from her brother, and he was very urgent that she should return to Ridley Farm. He did not at all relish the idea of his sister maintaining herself by newspaper work, and enlarged on the "home-sphere of women."

If there was some acerbity in his letters, it would have been condoned if Vivia could have known under what vexatious interference from his wife he wrote. She professed to be in greatest terror of infection, and made an awful outcry if a letter from Vivia was brought into the house; and then she was opposed to having her back, and made the captain understand this in very aggravating terms.

As soon as quarantine was raised he sent his sister's trunk to her, but wrote that his wife had opened it to put some things in, and had destroyed a pile of papers which she said "littered the trunk." Fortunately the manuscript of the story escaped, through its having been spread thinly on the bottom of the trunk underneath the newspaper-lining.

The story she had written under such drawbacks of interruptions and espionage, Vivia now read aloud to Dr. Evans; and the vividness of its

realistic touches appealed strongly to the mind of the man, who watched with such keenness of interest every index of this woman's nature.

Those were moments fraught with destiny to both, as Vivia interpreted her own thoughts and conceptions with an eloquence of gesture, voice and look, through which the story became "apples of gold in baskets of silver."

At table Vivia sat by Miss Mary Jones, and her merry, unsophisticated talk first attracted, and after a while won Miss Mary's heart,—a quick growth of friendship, but, like the wild arum, having a long tap-root.

Miss Mary was one of those old maids whose life was in itself a sweet story of unselfish devotion. When a young maid of eighteen she had, by a fall from a horse, been so severely injured that for ten years she had lain in bed helpless, except her hands. But with these she had gained money by needlework to support two orphan nephews; and when, by a surgical operation, she was enabled to walk again, she not only kept these boys at school, but had helped educate a score of other orphans. It was pleasant to see the lighting up of children's faces wherever Miss Mary encountered them; and to the little ones her time was still entirely given. She taught a day-school and had a class in Sunday-school; and she was constantly going to see poor sick children in the exercise of her tender ministrations. With her Vivia went to church and Sun-

day-school, and also once a week accompanied her in her visits to the slums.

There was one thing in which Vivia—at first thought Miss Mary very odd, and that was her arguing that “women ought to preach.” Miss Mary said the Samaritan woman (after Christ had honored her above his men-disciples by announcing his Messiahship first of all to her), went back to the men of her city and preached Christ to them. She said that same thing was done by Anna in the Temple, by Priscilla, Junia, Urbane, Julia Tryphosa, and Mary “who bestowed much labor upon us,” as St. Paul testified. But what finally convinced Vivia that she was right was going with Miss Mary to hear a woman evangelist preach, and noting that the Holy Spirit bore the same testimony to the God-inspired nature of her mission, as to men, in the conversion of souls.

CHAPTER XIX.

IT was midnight, but Captain Lemuir still sat at his desk where he had been posting accounts, his head on his hands, in gloomy reverie.

A low tapping on the window-sill attracted his attention, and he hastened to raise the sash and open the shutter. A man stood there whom he recognized in the dim moonbeams as Jack Snow. Without a word the intruder beckoned, and Captain Lemuir slipped off his shoes and passed through the window. In the shelter of a huge fig-tree the man whispered.

“Hide me, Captain, for God’s sake. I’ve killed a negro accidentally, and the darkeys are after me.”

Without a word Captain Lemuir led the way to Lamb’s old cabin, which had been prepared some weeks before for Vivia, and which had been locked up ever since. He had the key in his pocket, and opening the door the two went in.

“This place has been quarantined, in anticipation, for my sister,” said the captain; “you are not likely to be interfered with here.”

“All right. Thank you,” said Snow; “and now I’ll tell you how I got into such an awful scrape. You know my cook, Hulda, a mighty good nigger

and a first-rate cook (used to nurse me when I was a baby, for which she thinks I can never get done paying her). But she is trusty and mighty good about feeding my hounds, and never happens to be sassy except when I am in a good-humor. Well, a few months ago she married old Zip Washington, a lazy, thievish old rascal, who has ever since been living off her labor. Fact of the business is he has been stealing my hogs. I had eight in the poplar pasture, wild as bucks, but came up reg'lar to be fed.

“I suspected him of killing one a month ago, and told Hulda to tell him he had better not let me lay eyes on him, or I would put him in the penitentiary for hog-stealing. That made him awful mad, and a few days ago I found my best milk cow with her horn broken off, evidently with an axe. She died. I sent word to him to keep off my premises, so yesterday he went to old Cheowah-town and got full of mean whiskey, which raised his spirits so high that he wasn't afraid of anybody, and came right into the kitchen where I was eating my supper. I jumped at him, intending to throw him out of doors. I hadn't a spark of malice in my heart, though I knew he had done me injuries and was ruining Hulda's boy. I went at him with my fists, expecting to knock him down, but he fought like a wild beast. My foot struck against something on the floor, and over we both went. I had no intention of killing him, but as we rolled over together I heard him cock his pistol,

I knew what that meant, and grappled so close I felt the cold iron touch my face. I snatched it away, and just as his knife tore through my coat I fired, and the ball went through his head. I never hated anything so in my life, Captain, but I'm not willing to be shot in my turn by a gang of blood-thirsty niggers, in revenge; and I know that's what will happen if they find me. I got my money together and mounted sorrel Kate, having sent Bessimer to the blacksmith's to be shod, and he not back yet. I was making for the crossing to catch the train as fast as I could, but as I galloped Kate fell through a hole in the bridge over Coon's ford. She kicked like furies, and hurt her leg so badly I knew I'd never make the train on her. It's due now in ten minutes. I turned her loose and came on here to beg you to hide me somewhere about your premises till to-morrow night, and then, as soon as it is dark, you can go with me and see me off."

The tall man had a nervous chill, partly from the frosty night and partly from horror at the late dreadful scene in which he had been an actor.

"You must get in bed," said Captain Lemuir. "It won't do to make a fire in here."

Snow started to undress, but his host said no, he had better lie down as he was and keep quiet. Nobody would be apt to look for him there, and he might consider himself safe. He would go to the house and bring a bag of crackers and a ham for rations next day.

"Captain, you are mighty good to me. I'll never forget you." The deep tones were husky.

"Don't speak of it, and try to get some sleep now. It's not long till daybreak. At dark I'll have horses ready and go with you to the crossing, where we'll signal the train and you can get on board it."

Meantime Mrs. Lemuir's sharp ears had detected the sound of footsteps and whispering voices. She called "Hubby! Hubby!" repeatedly, but no notice was taken, and she was fully aroused by the time her husband re-entered the house. She was furious when he informed her of the trust he had undertaken, and declared "their house would be burned for a worthless murderer that deserved hanging."

"He's no more a murderer than I am, wife. I wouldn't let any fellow, white or black, come on my premises and beard me, and not try to defend myself; if I killed him in the scuffle I wouldn't plead guilty to his death, certain."

"O, well! that's just like you, hardhead. Our house will be burned and we will be murdered, all for that good-for-nothing Jack Snow!"

"Very well, wife, if you think you are in the slightest danger you can go to your Aunt Henrietta's and take the children. Jake can drive you. I won't go, though, for I intend to stand by Snow if I die for it."

This firmness on the part of Captain Lemuir inspired her with some respect, but she persisted

to the last moment that it was cruel for him to send her away in Jake's charge. She and her children would be murdered on the public road by Jake (a stolid negro-boy of eighteen, with thick, protruding lips and a say-nothing, do-nothing manner of life).

Finding the captain inexorable she set out on her journey to Milnville, and on the way actually betrayed to Jake what Snow had done, adding her condemnation in terms of greatest severity. She said she "believed he was hid somewhere on the premises."

The slow mind of the boy took in the idea that a great wrong had been committed, and the verse he had spelled out in his Sunday-school paper came back to him. "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." He stopped at Uncle Obediah's on his way home, to tell him this mighty secret that "Miss Celestia" had emphatically enjoined him to hide in his own bosom.

Uncle Obediah was a leader of the Union League, and casting about in his mind soon felt that something ought to be done "wid dat white men what's killed a nigger." So, toward night, the air resounded with ominous horn-blowings and drum-beatings at the Stanley church, a famous negro meeting-house and rendezvous.

As the captain was hanging up the keys after feeding time, he heard the tramp of many feet and murmur of many voices. Going out on the

piazza he perceived a crowd of negroes, many of them having guns and pistols. The moment was a trying one. Murders, assassinations and house-breakings were at that time rife. These outrages were committed by colored people under the influence of colored carpet-baggers and ill-educated colored teachers, who came among them and stirred up their fervid imaginations and immature minds to a species of frenzy, by holding up the possibility and depicting the horrors of a re-establishment of slavery, to which their recollections of wrongs, done in former days of vassalage, gave point and power. With the rallying cry of "a black man killed by a white man," no matter what the provocation, they were ready for any kind of riotous proceeding to which their double-faced and malicious mulatto office-hunters should incite them. Under such circumstances they were as irresponsible as a herd of wild animals.

Well aware as he was of the danger he stood in from the volatile vengeance of these creatures of impulse, accustomed to exploding their fury on whatever came uppermost or handiest, Captain Lemuir went to confront them with a pipe in his mouth and the serenest air of indifference.

"Well, fellows, what do you want?" he asked, taking his pipe from his lips.

A powerful mulatto desperado, with a seven-shooter cocked, advanced from the crowd, and replied:

"We want that d——d rascal, Snow!"

"Come in and take him, then," said the Captain, facing the giant without the quiver of a muscle.

"I will, by G——" said the mulatto, and giving a whoop he sprang through the doorway followed by a horde of infuriated negroes, who rushed after him with the inarticulate cries of the French Furies of the Reign of Terror. They overturned beds, emptied closets, broke open trunks, and even took out bureau drawers, as if they thought Snow might be concealed in them. Failing to find him they came rushing out *en masse*, howling like wild beasts and declaring they would kill Captain Lemuir if he didn't give up Snow to them; they knew he was secreted somewhere about the place.

Captain Lemuir spoke to them in his easy, unexcited manner. "You are foolish, my men. Why should you kill me? I've done you no harm. You will get into trouble if you keep at this."

The very coolness of the quiet tones awed them, and before his gaze, so imperturbable, they drew back. A momentary silence ensued, then the mulatto, clinching his teeth, rushed upon Captain Lemuir, firing his pistol and yelling. It missed fire, being knocked out of his hand by old Pompey, who just then came leaping to the rescue, screaming, "You fool yaller nigger!" and dealing the mulatto a tremendous blow with a piece of rail he had snatched from the fence; the man dropped like a log and the blood spouted.

“Run, Mas’ Arthur, for God’s sake!” cried Pompey, “take de woods, dese niggers is crazy!” But Captain Lemuir quietly bent down over the fallen athlete, and with gentle touch proceeded to examine his wounds.

Seeing their leader fall and the captain’s humane action, with that quick transition so natural to the volatile negro temperament, the crowd gathered about the captain, doing his bidding with the docility of children.

Captain Lemuir had the man conveyed to his cook’s house, succeeded in staunching the blood, and with cold water douches restored the senses of the mulatto, who had only swooned.

Everything being now quiet, Captain Lemuir went to the stables, saddled two horses, and led them to Lamb’s cabin.

“Much as I could do to stay here, Captain, when I heard that d——d crew making for the house. By G——, you’ve got grit. Awful glad you come out all right!”

“Have a cigar?” said Captain Lemuir, changing the subject.

The two gentlemen mounted, walked their horses till they reached the public road, then struck into a gallop. They got to the station in good time for the train, and ‘Snow boarded it without further adventure.

Captain Lemuir then started on his return journey, riding silently and thoughtfully through the woods, vibrant with the tremolo of the screech-

owl and the melancholy hoot of his great-eyed cousin. He was thinking of Vivia and the last letter he had received from her ; a long letter full of hope for the future, but drawing sad pictures of the fearful scenes among the plague-stricken in which she had so lately participated. He thought of his sister's heroism with a thrill at his heart that filled his eyes with tears. He looked around on the tall trees skirting the roadway.

“ The rising moon had hid the stars,
Her level rays like golden bars,
With shadows dark between.”

Whiz! whiz! There was a sharp sound in the air, a flash of light, Lemuir's horse jumped, the one he was leading broke away, and he fell to the ground with a bullet in his body.

The mulatto had speedily recovered from the effects of the blow given him by old Pomp, and got up, saying he was “gwine home.” Instead, with the instinct of a sleuth-hound, he nosed around the premises, discovered both horses gone, and Captain Lemuir evidently absent. He easily inferred from these facts that the captain had conveyed Snow to the Cross-Roads to take the train. In that dark, ill-regulated mind the thoughts of murder and robbery were familiar. He had repeatedly been in prison and had twice served terms in the penitentiary. He “would kill this white man who had come between him and his revenge.” It would “be easy as falling

off a log." He would secrete himself by the way-side and "shoot him down like a dog." He "hated white people anyway; they were the born foes of his race," in his dim brain; the tyrants, who, in slavery times, used the whip and other devices of cruelty; and "by G——, he would get even with one, if he had to send his soul to h—l without a minute's warning."

Full of such revengeful ideas the mulatto went to meet Lemuir, heard the tramping of the two horses a mile away, and shadowing himself behind a tree waited till the figure of Lemuir came in sight, took deliberate aim and fired.

He saw his victim fall and instantly became panic-stricken, running for the swamps over bog, mud and mire, the cold sweat breaking out. He buried himself deep in the darkest recesses of the river bottoms, in the haunts of panthers and wild-cats. His clothes were torn from his back by the briars and thorns, yet still he fled, pursued by a terror which imagined the baying of bloodhounds and sounds of pursuers, in the crackling of dead branches and the gusts of wind that swept through the trees.

CHAPTER XX.

IT was early in December, and the plague-stricken city was as gay and alive and full of movement as if no dread phantom had but lately held it in its horrifying grip. Ceaseless railroad trains rushing in, great palace boats panting like giants and blowing deep-mouthed whistles suggestive of submarine convulsions, all kinds of street conveyances partaking of the general celerity of movement, and all the people walking fast. At night Broad Street was ablaze with lights, and the beautiful theatre was drawing crowds to see Edward L. Davenport in his favorite rôle of Hamlet.

Dr. Evans took Vivia to the second performance. When they returned from the theatre Miss Mary Brown gave her a letter with black edges, marked "important." She left the room, and Vivia with trembling fingers tore it open and read the following :

"I write to say if you feel any of the affection you used to make such a parade of for your brother, you will come home at once and help nurse him. He has been shot by a negro, and the doctors say there is not much hope for

him. Old Pomp, Cæsar and Sam found him in the woods and brought him home. I think he must have been on a spree with Jack Snow or he would not have acted so fool-hardy. Who is that Dr. Evans? I never heard of him before.

CELESTIA LEMUIR.

"P.S.—I'm glad to inform you that Captain Lemuir got religion at a camp-meeting at Lebanon a month ago. So if he dies he may go to heaven.

"P.S. 2d.—There's a letter here from your sister Mary, written just after you left. She hadn't heard of your running off to the city and wrote about the death of her child. That's a very sickly country out there, I wouldn't live there for anything. It's not worth while wasting stamps to send it. I suppose you will come soon.

"P.S. 3d.—I wish you'd bring some samples of the best crape and fashionable mourning goods."

Vivia never finished reading this remarkable letter. As she came upon the words "shot by a negro" she dropped like one dead. Dr. Evans raised her tenderly, placed her on a sofa, and taking some restorative from his pocket applied it to her nostrils.

After a while she opened her eyes. He was holding her in his arms, close to his breast.

"Do you feel better?" he asked, as her eyes unclosed.

"O! yes," she answered, starting up. "I must go to brother at once. O my poor brother!"

"You cannot go to-night," said the doctor. "I will take you in the morning."

"O! but you must not leave your work," said

Vivia. "I couldn't let you make such a sacrifice for me."

"Sacrifice! how cold and cruel that sounds! Vivia, let me love you; let me give my life to you."

The agonized face changed, as if a new light flashed on it.

"Love me! O no! you just say so for kindness. I thought you were my friend." Her head drooped, and she looked as if about to faint again.

Dr. Evans drew her to him and pressed his lips to hers.

"Vivia, I love you; don't doubt my word. You know I love you. You must not refuse me."

"But I can't take in the idea," she answered. "I have been adjusting myself to regard you as a brother—like brother Arthur, in fact." Here her self-control gave way, and sobs burst forth. Dr. Evans let her sob, clasping her close and kissing her hair, her streaming eyes and her lips.

There were low, murmured words, the doctor told how he had kept close watch upon her during the months past. He had long given up the idea of marriage until he came to know her. He had felt drawn to her, at their first acquaintance on that journey, and she had never been entirely absent from his mind since. He had often thought of writing to her, and but for his engrossing professional work might have done so; but as often as the idea presented itself he dismissed

it with the thought, "She has forgotten me; she may be married; at any rate she would only set me down as a romantic fool." And then like a spirit answering to a thought, she had presented herself to his eyes in his aunt's sick room, while yet his mind was really full of her image.

"How I watched you all those terrible days and nights of the pestilence!" he whispered; "but I felt so keenly the possibility of one of us taking the fever, that I tried to hide my feelings, and certainly must have succeeded better than I expected, or you would have discovered the love that filled my heart. I have never known a woman like you, Vivia, my unselfish, single-hearted darling."

"Strange," said Vivia, "I was sure you were aware of my love. I carefully tried to conceal it, but constantly it seemed to me I was in danger of betraying it. But now I must go to my brother. O! I must hurry."

She released herself and started to the door.

"Get ready then," said he, "and I will come for you in a carriage in one hour; that will give us time to take the 12.30 train."

"O! thank you," she said, her eyes shining; but he had stepped across the room, and again taking her in his arms held her in a close embrace, and once more kissed her lips.

In after days the memory of that night was in Vivia's mind as a light in the darkness, when on the wings of the "lightning express," her

lover sat by her side, and showed her his soul and its triumphs and failures in the world; and so, looking into his inmost heart, she but loved him more, and felt herself on the threshold of new beatitudes in the happy partnership of marriage.

Very few human beings are capable of quite losing sight of their own interest in their love and care for others; but here was Vivia Lemuir, a woman of the most ardent temperament, with ambition noble and lofty, it was true, but still with fair prospects before her of succeeding in her literary ventures, of becoming independent and self-sustaining, and also attaining high social position in a city where the best element was both fastidious and arbitrary.

Her reputation as a yellow-fever nurse, for heroism and devotion, the high regard of Colonel Loper and his family, who for some time had been occupying their city home, gave her the entrance to circles where her superior intelligence, originality and charm of manner, won her numerous admirers and friends. All these advantages weighed nothing when she was summoned coarsely and harshly to nurse the brother, who, however loving in words, yet owing to the restrictions of his position, had not made her life in his house a comfortable nor happy one.

Her very disinterestedness, however, had already won its own exceeding great reward, calling forth from Dr. Evans (a man remarkable for reticence and reserve) an avowal of the love he

might otherwise have kept hidden in his own breast; for having had experience of deceit in woman, he was slow to subject himself to what, as his skeptical mind suggested, might be "only shamming." Well as he loved Vivia, there was something so delightful in the brotherly and mentorial relationship they had fallen into, he so enjoyed her sisterly confidences and the earnestness of her endeavors in her vocation as copyist, letter-writer and litterateur, that he was loth to change all these delicious currents.

To the sorrow of the kind Jones family, Vivia settled her bill without a positive promise of return, left a letter for Colonel Loper, stating that she would not be able to work for the "Messenger" while her brother needed her, and departed, escorted by Dr. Evans.

The journey, in spite of Dr. Evans's care, was a sad one. The poor girl was exhausted, almost ill with the various emotions she had gone through.

When they arrived she quickly got out of the carriage, left Dr. Evans at the gate, passed the children playing in the yard and hurried into the house. On a bed in the middle of the big sitting-room lay the brother, whom she last recollected bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, lithe and strong, now worn, haggard, helpless, but with a wonderful patience in the deep eyes, and a welcoming smile that fairly lighted up the suffering, seamed face.

"O! Vivia; how glad I am to see you!" he said, as she knelt down beside him. Her tears,

held back all day, came in a torrent ; but a cold, satirical voice saying, "Who is that coming in, Vivia? Why can't you behave like a woman of sense?" dammed up the tide of feeling like a stone barrier. Turning, she calmly named the gentleman to Captain Lemuir, and, as he paused on the piazza, went out to him and escorted him in.

"Dr. Evans, Mrs. Lemuir, my brother, Captain Lemuir."

Vivia and her sister-in-law left the room, and, in the privacy of the bedroom, had their talk out. On learning that this fine gentleman, evidently a man of means and position, was to be the husband of her once despised sister-in-law, Mrs. Lemuir's feelings underwent a great change, which at once became apparent in her voice and manner. She adopted a confidential and respectful tone with Vivia, and did all in her power to be most kind and deferential to Dr. Evans. In her strong desire to do honor to this embodiment of gentility, she begged him to hold a consultation with Dr. Liv-
ingstone who was in charge of the captain's case.

In brief, Mrs. Lemuir evidently understood the art of trimming her sails, and taking advantage of the tide. Vivia could hardly believe her the same person.

CHAPTER XXI.

LETTER TO VIVIA.

HEIDELBERG, GERMANY,
November — 18 —.

MY DEAR VIVIA:—

After long silence your letter came to me, like the rosy beams that suffuse the sky when the sun is about to rise. You sweet thing! you great little woman! You have acted as I knew you would when circumstances should call for it—laid down your life to save others; for this was what it truly was; and now you are reaping your just reward. I hope you will win a glorious reputation as a journalist; you couldn't have a better preceptor in the art than Colonel Loper. He is a man I have always admired, and his mighty "Messenger" has been the guiding star of the people of the middle-west. Poor child! when I think of what you have suffered, and of your brightening present, my heart sings a pæan of joy and thanksgiving.

On my part I have wonderful news to tell you about Artemesia. Such a "come-out" as is in that girl almost amounts to a miracle. She is a

remarkable girl in character, and gratitude is its strong point. From the time our journey began she was devotedly considerate of me, the very best of waiting-maids; so thoughtful, so quick to learn, so mutely gentle. On ship-board she made herself absolutely necessary to aunt, who soon claimed as much of her attention as myself. It was therefore easy to get my idea of having a surgical operation performed on her into aunt's head. She persuaded uncle, and about the time that ponderous gentleman had got his bearings in Heidelberg, he mooted the question to Herr Ehrich, a professor in the University. He said it was practicable, and he would undertake to rectify the deformity of the hare-lip, by a surgical operation, if the girl would agree to let him experiment on her hypnotically before the students of the University.

Artemesia joyfully consented, and she and I went one morning for a private interview with the Herr. He lives in one of those queer old houses on the Hauptgasse, but a short walk from the University buildings, which are plain and ugly. He is an old bachelor, a perfect devotee to science, and reminded me of the pictures of Santa Claus.

He peered closely at Mezy through his glasses, taking out his pipe for a moment, while his face was close enough to the poor girl's to have kissed her.

She has an armor of protection in her lack of consciousness. She submitted herself to his hands

like a little child, with just as great docility and quietude.

As you have such a keen sense of humor (which you long ago, I'm sure, must have discovered is located fast by the fountain of tears), you will know that it was not hard-heartedness that amused me so as I listened to the old professor's grunting exclamations, while he examined Mezy's mouth. They were in German, but I have almost completely mastered the language since I came, having had very good teachers previously in America, so I understood him; and my eyes twinkled with the fun of it. He soon found that I knew what he was saying, though to Mezy it was an unknown tongue. He was much pleased, and expressed himself freely in German, when it would have been very trippingly done in English. The Germans, even the best scholars among them, do make the poorest work of talking English; they confuse words and tenses in a way that almost makes me die with laughing.

The upshot of the interview was that Herr Ehrich put Mezy into the hypnotic trance. As it would be necessary to use the knife, he thought this better, safer and easier than chloroform.

Mezy proved a wonderfully good subject of hypnotism. That very first morning he put her to sleep by a few passes; and from that time on he would throw her into the hypnotized state whenever he saw her. His experiments were very interesting to us, and ended in aunt's insist-

ing on trying hypnotism for relief from her terrible headaches.

When Mezy was hypnotized she was completely under the Herr's control. He influenced her tastes, could make her sip water under the impression it was wine, take tea for coffee; and when in the magnetic state her hands would follow his as if they were veritable magnets.

On the day appointed for the operation, Mezy was so nervous and pale that I wanted it put off; but she was firm; and once in the presence of Herr Ehrich, seem to lose all fear. His power over the girl showed itself in the color that came back into her face at his touch, and the resolute quietude that succeeded her nervousness. She surrendered herself to the preparation with the sweet confidence of a little child. Very soon she showed the usual signs of being hypnotized; that is, she lay motionless, her eyelids with their fringed lashes resting on her smooth cheek, and when the Herr drew them apart the ball appeared slightly convulsed and turned up in the socket, the lid seeming to have no contractile power. I could also place her hands where I would, and they would remain in that position as inflexibly as if they were dead. The Herr then operated with great rapidity, a piece of flesh being inserted in the place where the incision was made.

The girl manifested no more sensibility than a corpse, and when aroused out of her hypnotic state showed by her whole demeanor that she had

no knowledge of what had passed; but Herr Ehrich didn't let her remain in ignorance, assuring his 'young beauty,' as he called her, that time would erase all marks of her deformity save a scar, whereat Mezy threw her arms around his neck demonstratively.

I thought she looked upon him as a father, and was only showing her gratitude, but subsequently found that this young, fair creature, only seventeen, is really in love with Herr Ehrich, and has readily given her promise to marry him in a year. It seems very ridiculous, but that there is some wonderful attraction drawing them together, no one can doubt who sees the twain. They appear happily absorbed, and Mezy seems unable to understand why any one should think it queer for her to love one who is, to her, the embodiment of a gracious Providence. Yet when I see the slight, girlish figure, her beautiful arms around his neck, his fat yellow fingers carressing her rich rings of hair, I'm reminded of those splendid crimson and orange blossoms of the cowitch vine, covering old stumps in our fields at home.

We are all so charmed, so utterly carried away with this beautiful old Heidelberg, which the people call the Pearl of the Palatinate. I visit the Gluckra Thurm again and again; the old woman who lights us through the subterranean chambers of the castle is getting rich off my pennies. I have kodaked the ruined tower, the ancient portal of the Otto-Henry building. On

the gabling of the lower row of windows in this building are the heads of distinguished Romans, Antoninus Pius, Mark Antony, Numa Pompilius and others. The interior is gone, and only defaced statues, broken sculptures and crumbling columns bear witness to what used to be. Leading to the Gluckra Thurm, or bell-tower, is an ancient stairway, and up here is a nook from which one can see all over the most magnificent ruin in Europe, besides the lovely view of the Pearl of the Palatinate, with its shining river necklace; beyond it we see the plain of the Rhine, and rising about us and above us the mountain heights, notably Molkenkur and Konigstuhl. We follow the Kassemattengang to the Kraut-thurm, or cabbage tower, formerly a powder magazine, part of which now lies in the outer entrenchment, its ruins entwisted with tree roots, moss and ferns. As we sat here one day, Mezy and I, a party of our compatriots came in—noisy Americans, some of whom had manners which made me blush for my countrymen. But two redeemed the rest; a gentleman with a face as pure and noble as it was handsome. As he raised his hat he showed a head which was Shakespeare's own, and nothing could have been sweeter than the care he took of his delicate little wife, about the size of Mrs. Browning. With these two I fell into conversation, and found they were from that lovely southern section of our country where my mother was reared. Something of its subtle

romance seemed to clothe this couple, and I was sorry when they left me to join the rest of their party, in the carriages drawn up in the outer courtyard.

The students, whose sabre-slashed faces we are constantly encountering on the streets, sometimes hold revels in one of the renovated subterranean halls. I saw the cedar festoons they had hung there, and the rude, temporary tables where they had feasted.

I learned through a letter from my father of poor Ted's having become heir to a nice little property. My father says, "You will now see what an idle spendthrift he will prove; his industry has been owing to the spur of poverty. I am confident he has no business qualities, and that he would never be the husband I want my dearest daughter to marry." Time will show who is right, my father or I. Meantime I dread the effects in this way. Teddie's pride was dreadfully wounded because I would not elope with him, and I know he paid attention to other girls to pique me. Elma has written me that she was amusing herself with my "cast-offs," but I fear when she finds Ted has money she will turn jest to earnest. She is one who considers the name of old maid a deadly blight, whereas I begin to associate it with the Roman Vestals, and consider the virgin estate the best of all for the culture of wisdom, purity and sincerity. But why should I go out of my way to meet sorrow? I will leave

my poor Ted in the hands of my Heavenly Father, and pray every day that he may be kept in the hour of temptation.

How I wish you were here with me, my dear Vivia, to enjoy these quaint relics of the by-gone, Peter's Church and the Church of the Holy Ghost. Heidelberg is a pearl truly.

The Germans almost live out of doors, you know, and whole families go in company to "sit unter der Linden." That old Professor Ehrich, out of college, is always in pursuit of music, and, with his pipe in his mouth, haunts the gardens. Mezy is yet wearing bandages, but he insists that she shall walk with us and go up to Molkenkur and Konegebulh by the cog railway. She is not sick, he says, and the pleasant sights and sweet airs are full of healing. So we go, and even Aunt Lalla is taking on stock and stamina, in this pearl of cities.

I like the manner in which the memory of great women is honored here. Jetta, the seeress of Jettenbulh, Clara Tetten, or Tott, rising from her washing tub to be consort of Frederic the Victorious, and last, but not least, Olympia Tullra Morata, the great woman-linguist of 1556, to whom there is a monument.

Yours sincerely,

NOISETTE MILN.

CHAPTER XX.

A LETTER FROM SISTER MARY TO VIVIA.

MY DEAR "BIT OF SWEET MARJORAM" :—

I am so thankful at your escape from the yellow fever, and at your finding friends and securing a comfortable position in that afflicted city to which your sympathetic heart led you. My health is, to a certain extent, re-established, and the boys and Laura are quite well. Dear Laura, my good angel, has been going through some interesting experiences lately. Of all odd men Calhoun Logan strikes me as being the oddest; yet I like him very much, and do hope to see Laura his wife, for I have confidence in his goodness and integrity of heart, and I would like to see such a superior woman as she in a situation to use all her executive ability.

As long as Mrs. Wilde was in the country, Calhoun's feelings were in a torn-up state. He was attracted by the dashing widow, who just escaped being fast, yet Laura always attracted him, though in a different way. Finally Mrs. Wilde left without bringing him to her feet; and the minute she was out of sight her power was at an end. Then to see his slow siege of Laura, and his queer little

devices to satisfy himself, without raising anybody's suspicions as to her age, general habits, faith and practice, was to me very funny. To find out if her teeth were natural, he insisted on her cracking with them some nuts he brought her ; and one evening, taking her on a horseback ride, he was so persistent in having her hair flow loose that she took off her cap and let it fall about her shoulders.

But she held her own gallantly. She was quite willing to give him every assurance of her genuineness, but he must also solve some doubts of hers as to his views before she would allow him to come nearer than a pleasant friend.

The subject on which she felt most deeply was woman's equality, and her right to a voice in the government. She made a point of bringing forward her opinions on this matter, whatever else they might be discussing, on every occasion.

I was so amused at her strenuous insistence on women's rights, in the face of the gentleman's amazement at its first introduction, and the gradual weakening of his resistance, as the force of her arguments overturned the fragile breastworks he threw up in a rather excited and futile way.

But though I laughed, I could not, to save me, help agreeing with Laura, and began to wonder that I, too, had not been an original woman suffragist. I will merely indicate to you the general drift of her argument, which she generally prefaced by asking Calhoun questions ; as, for in-

stance, "Don't we call this government democratic? What does that mean except, as you say, a government by the people? Yet it is not, for are not women people? and yet they have not a voice in it. Where is the consistency of excluding them from what concerns their personal protection and property rights as closely as man's? If I pay taxes to maintain the government, where is the justice of excluding me from representation by my vote?"

"But," objects Calhoun (who is equally strenuous about Laura's religious orthodoxy, as she about his soundness on the woman question), "you know, Mrs. Dorsey, that the Bible says of the woman, 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.'"

"Mr. Logan, that is simply a prediction—note the shall—it has come to pass long ago. Look at the state of woman in the barbarous ages. But when civilization illumines the soul of man, and better still, when the religion of Christ rules in his heart, he can no more rule over his wife than he can get drunk and swear and still be a Christian. Where love is each strives to outdo the other in effacing self; but that is very far removed from the tyrannical spirit which exacts servile obedience from a wife."

"But what about 'love, honor and obey' in the marriage service, Mrs. Dorsey?"

"Well, Mr. Logan, my honest sentiment is that whenever a woman promises to obey a man,

she either does it in ignorance of what is implied, or she stultifies herself. No woman of mature sense can afford to blindly promise to obey another person, and that is what a man is, another person, not a superior, not a master. Those who make that promise always break it, except the happy women who marry men so noble that they will not exact nor expect obedience. Just think of the married women you know, who, by hook or by crook, have their own way! Some women revolt openly, but more resort to subterfuge. Being as it is an incentive to vice, I truly think 'obey' should be left out of the marriage service."

"You may be right," said Calhoun, though I never looked at it in that light before; but I have often thought one of the chief curses of slavery was in the habit of lying it gave rise to. This was so universal that a negro's word was not taken in court. Certainly, unconditional obedience puts a woman in the attitude of a slave, and fosters falsehood, too, I reckon."

Calhoun returned to this subject again and again, always tentatively, always more and more with a growing conviction of the justice of Laura's views. Finally one evening when he had come over to ask us to go out to look at a very magnificent display of the aurora borealis, he said to me in Laura's hearing: "I have been studying up the question of woman's rights and I have decided that when I ask a woman to marry me I shall not ask her to obey." About nine o'clock, it being

cold and frosty, but clear, we three, wrapping up well and with Jeff along, trudged out to Flint Rock Spring hill. You recollect how high it is there, and what a beautiful view of the surrounding country?

Calhoun, I presently discovered, was in an exalted state of mind, and such phrases as "Morning of the north flushing the sky like God's awful rose of dawn," "Aurora blushing beautifully against the white bosom of the orient horizon," or "flaming peaks shooting upward to the zenith, with lines of silver intervening, glowing crimson like white lava surging up from a volcano's mouth," resonantly uttered by him, warned me of other currents lower down. Not wishing to be a negative pole in the battery, I complained of the biting night air and excused myself and Jeffie, begging them to stay and enjoy the glorious and unusual sight a while longer, and hurried home.

When they got through their heavenward gazing and came in, he stayed so long I almost finished my whole week's mending; but at last he left, and Laura came to me, just as I expected. He had laid his hand and fortune at her feet, but in that stilted way that made Laura loth to pick him up. She made all kinds of objections, told him her health wasn't good enough to marry; that she thought his feelings were not of such an ardent nature but that he might transfer them to some other more attractive person; but the more coyness and disinclination she exhibited, the more

eager he became, until, eventually, he pleaded so genuinely that she could not resist the strong advocate she found in his favor in her own heart.

The upshot of the matter was, Laura agreed to marry him some time this winter, and they will take a bridal tour to the City by the Sea, and return to board with me until they can build a home in which she, Calhoun says, shall put her own ideas into practical shape.

It looks to me as if there might be a great deal more for you to tell me about your experiences in the plague-stricken city. I feel as if we had been parted for years; and I hope you will make up your mind to come and pay me a long visit, or, better still, return and let us be together the rest of our lives.

You know, Vivia, you are child and sister both to me, so do come home,

Your devoted sister,

MARY.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LETTER TO ZETTA FROM VIVIA.

My DEAR ZETTA:—

I received, yesterday, yours of the 10th ult., and was so inspired by it that I went through the experiences it embodied in the dreams that disturbed my fitful snatches of slumber last night. We are having a more forward spring than last, which I trust may be more favorable to brother, though at present he is having chills and is very weak. Poor Dr. Livingstone is down with a paralytic stroke, so we've had to send for Dr. Gunger, a man in whom I have no confidence, so mouthy, ignorant and conceited. He called another doctor, a good deal younger than himself, in consultation. Ludden can't write a half-dozen lines decently, and his errors in spelling and grammar are such as one would look for in a half-grown boy. I would rather have no one than risk the malpractice of such boobies, but Sister Celestia seems much impressed with Gunger, and always has a long talk with him when he comes. Brother is so good and patient—too good, indeed, to ever get his dues in this world. There are so many

selfish, pushing people, who always get the better of those like him, yet never hand was stretched forth more eagerly to help humanity than his. No creature is too low to be beneath his courtesy. I've seen him step out of his path rather than crush a worm. Last Sunday poor Ted spent the day with us, helping me take care of brother with such womanly tact I thought more kindly of him than ever. He amused us all with his gay stories and lively sallies. You know he is quite a favorite with Sister Celestia, so when, after dinner, he asked her to take charge of our patient, and give me leave to take a walk with him, she acquiesced with good grace.

I got my hat and we strolled down by the river. Teddy surprised me by his confidential tone. He began by expressing his warm regard for me, his admiration of my "heroism," as he called it, and his belief in my discretion.

"You hear me running on," he said, "with so much nonsense, Miss Vivia, I suppose you imagine I have no serious thought. But I'm older than I look, and feel more than I can express. Ever since I remember anything Cousin Zetta has been the best part of my life. I love her more than anybody in this world, and always shall, notwithstanding she gave me up at her father's bidding because he thought me a ne'er-do-well. I know I was and am yet, though I've fallen heir to some money. With her for a wife I believe all my better nature would have developed, for she was

‘Rose of all the world’ to me. I was desperate when I lost her, and to pique her whom I really loved, engaged myself to Elma. I’m sorry, Miss Vivia, for my folly. Could I back out of it with the least honor I would, but I see no way. Elma makes fun of every good impulse. She laughs at love, which she calls ‘the last ignominy of little minds,’ and religion the ‘hypocrisy of fools and bigots, a kind of shin-plaster currency resorted to in the absence of sterling change.’ ”

I would not tell you this, Zetta, this confidential unburdening of a wounded spirit, but for the sad event which has since occurred, and of which you must inevitably hear speedily. As things have turned out I thought it might comfort you to know Teddy’s true feelings, and his forebodings of the future in store for himself. I told him what I thought of love and marriage, and, in his gallant way, he said he knew I was right. He drew from his breast-pocket a photograph of you, which, with a lock of your hair, he kept in a large envelope. He kissed the mementoes frequently and said, “I shall have to burn these the day I’m married.”

When we returned to the house he uttered his adieus in a subdued tone, and left hurriedly. Alas! poor Teddy! On Wednesday news came of his death, one of those terrible gin accidents that are so often occurring in the cotton country. I cannot tell you the particulars, only that in the detention of the man by sickness who attended to the gin, Teddy, with his customary energy,

undertook to carry on the work, got his hand and arm caught in the machinery, was severely cut and mangled, and died from loss of blood and the shock. They say he bore his sufferings with heroic fortitude, but there were no loving arms to embrace him in those last agonies. Elma did not go near him, and now that I can think calmly over it, I see how much better it is that poor Ted should have died than to have lived to be yoked in a loveless marriage.

The negro that shot brother has escaped from jail, where he lay awaiting transportation to the penitentiary. Brother says he is very glad. He does not want him punished, says he would freely supply him with money to get finally away. Is not this the spirit of him who prayed "Father forgive them, they know not what they do?"

I send you by this mail a photograph of my affianced. I cannot tell you how happy he makes me; even his beauty is a source of joy. I love to look at the curve of his exquisite lips and the grandeur of his splendid head. He brought me the whole six photographs he had taken, saying it seemed a piece of folly to him to sit at all, but he had done it to gratify me; so I will give or lend you this. You can return it to me, if you want to, when you come home. I tell Dr. Evans we can't get married till you come, so don't let it be too long.

Your loving friend,
VIVIA LEMUIR.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VIVIA and her brother were alone, with the exception of Gabriella, who ran in now and then from her play to get "Aunt Viv" to adjust something about her dolly which the small fingers were not equal to fixing. Mrs. Lemuir had gone to Cheowah-town, taking the boy with her. Captain Lemuir was able to walk a few steps with assistance, and had been made comfortable on a lounge near the window. Vivia was busy with a large basket of mending, sitting in her low chair, now darning a stocking or putting a patch in some rent garment belonging to one of the children.

"Sissie," said Lemuir, "what a strange little woman you are;" and he regarded her with a loving kind of scrutiny as if trying to discover the mystery of her make-up.

"Now what is it, brother, my nose or my eyes or my ears? how am I so strange? I know I'm peculiar looking, but—Dr. Evans loves me!" She blushed.

"O! only in having no curiosity. I remember Celestia wrote you that I had got religion. Now you have never asked the when, nor the why, nor the wherefore of my getting it."

“Well, brother,” taking her hands from her face and scrutinizing his in turn, “I thought you would tell me in your own good time.”

“I never have, and never could, I think, entertain the common anthropomorphous ideas of Deity,” said Captain Lemuir, “which some people so flippantly express; seeming to regard the Almighty as a mere man of unusual proportions and estate, subject to the same passions of revenge and changeable purpose as the weakest mortal; but I believe in the goodness and greatness of the all-pervading Mind which dominates matter, and adjusts the balance wheels and machinery of this wonderful phenomena we call nature. I can think of heaven as a place of light, where the powers of darkness undo their fetters from the freed soul, giving it power to rise into a purer atmosphere, to unconceivable heights of wisdom and exaltation. It is my confident anticipation, sister, that when I get rid of this almost helpless body, my spirit shall live on, and you and I will see one another again. I even think I may be near you, sometimes, while you are still in the flesh, and I a disembodied spirit. Now that sounds strange after the theories with which I used to perplex you, but listen patiently, and you shall see what grounds I have for my change of views.

“When you went away from me my world became dark; I was like one let loose in an empty place. O! the mad yearning for the voice I heard no more, your voice, that had had such power to move

me to laughter or tears. I could think of nothing but the light of your eyes, the light that had brimmed over in mirth, or wit, or tender feeling! Your sayings came back to me at every turn, those witty, quaint sayings of yours, so different from anybody else's in this world; and to say I longed to see you is a mere verbiage, that quite fails to tell how my whole soul was absorbed and how wretched I became. My wife constantly told me I was going crazy, for I ate nothing scarcely, was absolutely silent, and went about my business like an automaton. My peculiar mental state had its phenomenon.

“ You recollect it was some time after you went to Melita before I heard from you. The first letter I had was fifteen days old when I got it; it had lain at Els Bluff for fumigation, I think, and my fixed idea was that you were dead of the yellow fever. One night I was more nervous than usual, restless with an anguish that would not be still. I walked in the darkness for hours, and came back chilled and more miserable than ever, to lie down, but not to sleep. You recollect my faculty for sleeping; but now I had lost it, and hardly slept soundly at all. In the darkest hour of the night, just before dawn, I fell into a maze of dreams; and the last was no dream, but a waking vision. I seemed to leave my bed and make a journey through space, arriving at length in a room through whose dim light every object appeared as clear as though the electric light flashed

upon it. A man lay asleep and you sat by him, your hands folded, a dreamy look on your face, but no sign of illness in figure or countenance. Just as I made an effort to embrace you the dream fled, and I was at home in my old place. Now of course I know that the dream was simply a phase of natural somnambulism. My condition had become clairvoyant, as a result of extreme nervousness. But from that day to this I have never doubted a hereafter, seeing that my soul existed even for so brief a while independently of my body. A God-flash of consciousness, rather than any subtlety of reasoning, convinced me that souls, unlike bodies, are immortal; not living again in grass and flowers, only, but in a higher state. Forgive me, sister, for ever having cast a shadow on your pure faith. Yes, as my wife says, I think I have 'got religion,' though as firmly as ever I believe God has established laws by which life is maintained; and as stones, plants and elements are controlled by these, so are individuals, states and nations, with the difference that, as in the former, attraction and affinity are the controlling influences, so, in the latter, principles, motives and affections sway. Righteousness, or right-doing is the natural source of harmony, progress and organization; charity, a large component of right-doing (I love the word), keeps peace; patience, another essential, prevents bloodshed, and humanity makes man noble. The operations of reason and moral power are the spinal cords of

our kinship with God, and He has established a medium of communication in prayer. I used to laugh at your prayers, dear Vivia, can you forgive me?"

Vivia could not speak. She kissed her brother's hand.

"God is love, sister. He has provided for the ultimate good of all His creatures. My views of Providence are very little changed. The same power that made laws for the government of the universe can, of course, change those laws and make the 'sun stand still' in the valley of Ajalon, or rain bread from heaven to feed His famishing people, or, which is the same thing, put it in the hearts of men to succor their suffering fellows; but the age of miracles has gone with the object it subserved, the proof of our Lord's divinity. And now, though I must believe 'all things work together for good to those who love God,' yet He does not exempt any from the action of the natural laws He has established. I do not think He directed the bullet that laid me low, nor that He took away poor Mrs. Pryor's darling child; she was neither 'lent nor taken.' These are figures of speech that, to my idea, reflect upon the divine plan. A child is born in the course of nature and dies in the same way, only life may be shortened by some violation of nature's laws. God did not scourge the city of Melita with yellow fever, nor had the sins of the people anything to do with its introduction; a quantity of bedding and car-

pets full of yellow-fever microbes were brought there by some ignoramuses that knew nothing of the risk they were running, and encountered no local quarantine. Right there laid the sins of the people in their ignorance of sanitary laws, and their neglect of all precautions."

"They were certainly the kindest, most generous people I have ever lived among," said Vivia. "Unselfishness and devotion was the rule, rather than the exception."

"I dare say they are as good as any people in the world, and their sufferings, instead of being God's scourge, were the result of the pestilential atmosphere they breathed. Look how many we know who have been the noblest of mankind, who took the fever and died with it. As for me, my darling sister, let this assurance comfort you if I finally succumb to a congestive chill: we shall meet again, I know. As Mary exultantly exclaimed, 'He is risen! He is risen!' so I believe and trust in the resurrection. As to fear of death I have none. To me it shall be the entrance on endless progress in knowledge and happiness, a deliverance from many perplexities, the futile contemplation, the bitterness of my life's mistake. Then the faculties only partially developed in this world shall be perfected when I come to myself among the spirits, laying aside this clogging bodily apparatus. God has forgiven my sins, sister, He wills us to be happy."

"O! brother, how can I give you up? my heart

bleeds at the thought of parting;" and Vivia's tears streamed.

"We will be reunited, dear, not in a realm of infinite shadows, but in a clime

"Invested with purpureal gleams of brightest day,
An ampler ether, a diviner air."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SPRING was coming with buoyant footstep; the air was full of the fresh aroma which mother earth yields to her most promising season, the willow buds were swelling, the maples reddening the sides of water-courses, birds and insects filling the air with songs and hum, grass growing green along the ditches, and in the most shaded spots wild violets were blooming.

On a fair May day Vivia sat by her brother and described the walk she had taken, how the dogwood was powdering the tender green of the woods with vernal snows, how the buckeye shot up crimson spikes of bloom, and the red bud simulated the peach with its mass of purplish-pink flowers. And she had brought a cluster of pipsissewa with wax-like white blooms, and leaves like begonia rex, to give him. In the midst of Vivia's enthusiastic descriptions Dr. Gunger's road-cart stopped at the gate, and simultaneously Mrs. Lemuir came and took her seat by the bed, and the fan from Vivia's hands.

"Your hair needs attention, Vivia, and if I were you I'd change my dress," said the sister-in-law, in very considerate tones.

Dr. Gunger looked at the patient and felt his pulse.

“I think in a few days now he’ll be on his feet, Mrs. Lemuir, if we can just stave off the chills; but see to it that he gets his quinine regularly. Much depends on that. You can give him one-eighth of a grain of morphine if he seems restless or disinclined to sleep. You know so well how to give the powders, Miss Vivia,” he said to the girl, who had now returned. “I ain’t no time to measure them out. I’m in a great hurry, sent for to a child that has drunk a quart of kerosene. But you can divide them, I know. The quinine is in a blue paper, the morphine in a yellow one. Now don’t let the captain have another backset, Mrs. Lemuir;” and the doctor, taking up his medicine-chest, bowed himself out.

That afternoon Mrs. Lemuir insisted on Vivia’s going for another walk. She would attend to giving the medicines; indeed, there was not much to give nor much to do, now the captain was so much better.

Who could guess at the thoughts of that wily mind and smouldering vindictiveness in that hour so pregnant of evil? There was a dull sense of disappointment, of having been thwarted of the bright and varied perspective to which an accidental meeting with Billy Baldwin, the lover of her youth, had inspired her. She looked upon the shrunken figure on the bed with a feeling of having been defrauded; the monotony of her life with

him, and the monotony of his patient temper maddened her. How splendid Billy had appeared when riding away after escorting her to her carriage. His wife had died a month ago. What had possessed her to reject that magnificent man and stoop to this quintessence of littleness? There was an irritation in his forbearance and his devotion to books which her soul abhorred; a tameness in his goodness, and an overpowering sense of wrong to her in his lack of business qualifications.

He was now taking one of his afternoon naps, breathing softly and regularly. Mrs. Lemuir got up and took the blue and yellow parcels of medicine from the mantel. She went out with them a few minutes—came back and placed them on the mantel as they had been. Then she took up a novel and quite lost herself in it.

Vivia came in with a bright color in her lips and cheeks, her brown hair in disorder, but her eyes shining, so that her brother on waking said, "I declare, Sis, you look pretty; come and kiss me, you darling." She did so and placed some flowers on his pillow.

"I found a dove's nest in an old stump," she said; "I saw a snake. He ran from me, too. Brother, you feel better?"

"It's time to give him his medicine," said Mrs. Lemuir. "I wouldn't wake him to give it, and I see Judy coming so I'll go and give out supper."

Vivia at once went to the mantel, took the

papers of medicine, read the label quinine, weighed out two grains, and one-eighth of a grain of morphine from the yellow paper, put it in a capsule, got a dipper of water and successively presented them to Arthur. She sat down to read to him, though the light was waning, as the sun was about to set.

But he soon complained of drowsiness, and in a little while appeared to sleep heavily, making a slight snoring noise. Judy came to call her to supper; being hungry, she went, and while eating got into a lively talk with her sister-in-law, in which the two children took part.

Vivia carried a glass of milk and a slice of bread with her when she went back to the sick room. Captain Lemuir appeared to be sleeping profoundly, and Vivia took the lamp near and examined him closely. She was struck by the ghastliness of his face, and hurriedly called Mrs. Lemuir who was undressing Gabriella, the child sniffing over some vexation. Her mother gave her a slap, saying "Take that, you cross little thing!" She tossed the child into her trundle-bed and walked excitedly into the other room. As soon as she looked at Captain Lemuir she turned a passionate face to Vivia.

"I wouldn't be at all surprised if you have made a mistake and given Captain Lemuir the morphine for quinine; and if you have you've killed him certain."

The girl's heart stood still; for an instant she

gazed at her sister-in-law, stony horror in her eyes, then she rushed to the mantel and read the labels.

“ I’m certain I gave him two grains out of this blue paper, labeled quinine.”

“ Well, you’d better send Jake for Dr. Gunger. Go right now and hunt him up and make the rascal understand it’s a life-and-death case.”

Vivia ran from the room as if she had wings to her feet. Instantly Mrs. Lemuir took the papers of medicine, went into the next room a few minutes, and returning, replaced them. Then she coolly washed her hands, went to the bureau and re-arranged her hair, put on a handsome white wrapper, and took her seat in the rocking-chair and assumed an attitude of despondency.

Soon Vivia returned with old Pompey and Aunt Binah, his wife, and they at once set energetic measures on foot to counteract the opiate.

The girl said scarce a word in all the agonizing hours that followed, but she worked as if she had the hands and brains of two or three ordinary women. Uncle Pomp and Aunt Binah were most willing and anxious to help, but hadn’t an idea what to do. Vivia knew, however, and she speedily got coffee for the old woman to grind and had her make a pot of the strongest ; then they tried to get the dead-asleep soul to come back to comprehension.

“ Raise him up, Uncle Pompey, support his back, Aunt Binah ; now let me get my arms around his neck.”

With fondest adjurations she tried to call back the spirit ; she held the coffee to his lips, but they did not uncloze, nor the eyes return any ray of intelligence.

“ Dey say if you beat um dey cum to, Miss Vivie,” said Uncle Pompey ; “ lemme beat him.”

“ Yes, Uncle Pompey, anything, anything to bring him to his senses.”

The old man ran lightly, and was back in a trice with peach switches ; then he began to belabor the shoulders of the unconscious sleeper, all to no purpose, alas !

Meantime the news had spread over the neighborhood, and by midnight a crowd of people had camped, as it were, in the yard and under the trees in front, where they built fires and talked in undertones, holding themselves in readiness to give any assistance.

Mrs. Lemuir had bewailed loudly, with much show of grief, holding her lace handkerchief to her eyes ; how “ the captain was doing so well, and his sister had made a horrible mistake and given him morphine for quinine, that, too, after the doctor had cautioned her so strictly.”

The doctor arrived at last, and the people looked at him with a vague terror in their eyes as if he were an oracle, and might have some occult power to exorcise this dread phantom of death. He said “ good-evening,” in a general way, and went instantly to examine the patient, feeling the pulse, taking the temperature, and while the ther-

mometer was under the arm, went to the mantel, examined the medicine and tasted it.

“What time and how did you give it, Miss Vivia?” looking pitifully at the girl kneeling by the bed.

“At a quarter to six I gave two grains out of the blue paper, labelled quinine, and one-eighth of a grain out of the yellow paper, labelled morphine.”

“That was right,” said the doctor. “The medicine is just as I left it.” He turned and said to Mrs. Lemuir, “Let me see you a moment.”

He talked with her apart, then came and sat down by the bed.

The dying man's breath now came in measured gasps, the weirdest sound, something between sighing and sobbing, as if the parting soul thus inarticulately, but with pathos inexpressible, uttered its deep heart-break. His form was motionless, except when that horrible breathing agitated the throat and breast; the half-open eyes were glazed and expressionless, while the cold death-dews lay heavy on his forehead and the clammy fingers were stiffening.

Vivia never took her eyes from his face. She wiped his forehead and lips, chafed his cold hands, or held his arm while the doctor, with his hypodermic syringe, sought to stimulate the expiring life. On the strained ear fell the tick of a “death-watch,” as the negroes call the little borer or wood-sawyer that infests the porous wood of log houses.

The captain's dog howled at the door, the queer

quiver of the aspen near the door could be heard in the silent, awe-stricken house. At last day began to break; a mocking-bird broke into rapturous song, and suddenly as with a snap when the chords of an instrument are broken, the gasping breath ceased, and with a slight convulsive shudder life was gone out of the body.

Throwing up her arms with one heart-breaking cry, Vivia sank to the floor, as unconscious for a while of life's agonies as the brother she mourned. As for Mrs. Lemuir, she shrieked, screamed, wrung her hands and walked up and down, uttering her voluble complaints, telling between whiles how she "couldn't do without him, she never would marry again, no never!"

The neighbors came in and did the last offices, and said among themselves:

"The captain's wife takes on powerfully; didn't have no idea she'd take it so hard." "Great pity for the captain to die so just when he was getting well; mighty good man." "The doctor said he undoubtedly died of morphine." "Ain't it awful? I kain't think the gal knowed." "She sholy didn't do it on purpose."

The captain's widow, meanwhile, had again taken the blue and yellow papers from the mantel and gone off by herself, after which interval of privacy she gave a pitcher of innocent-looking water to old Binah, whom she charged to "go upstairs and mind Miss Vivia, and give her a glass of that nice cool water when she came to."

Old Binah was a kind-hearted but stupid old negress, with a goitre on her neck. A part of her religion was to "do what dem buckra say," without question, and she accordingly obeyed orders to the letter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN Vivia roused from the swoon she had fallen into when her brother expired, old Binah was beside her holding a glass of water.

“Take dis, honey, mighty good ting to fotch folks outen faints.”

Vivia drained the glass, and presently was asleep again. She thus continued through the remainder of that day; she saw no one but old Binah, and remembered nothing; when she was conscious at all she seemed only to feel a dull ache in her head and a whirl in her brain.

This while the tragedy of her brother's lying in state for all the neighbors to look at. She heard not from her garret chamber the stir of many feet, the dull thud of the black coffin in its big box as it was deposited on the piazza, the walking of men and murmur of voices; even the loud cries of Mrs. Lemuir only made her start up wildly for a moment and ask with terror in her eyes:

“O, what is it?”

But Binah had been fully instructed, and with an eye to the “nice frock Miss Celeste gwine gimme,” she bent to her duties again, persuading Vivia to drink of that glass whose crystal-looking

water hid the minute granule that caused insensibility.

So Dr. Gunger had it all his own way with the crowd—he and a certain pander of his, who masqueraded under the guise of a preacher. They industriously supplied the rumors with which the people assuaged their curiosity. “Yes, the captain’s sister had killed him; nursing him so long and being confined had unhinged her mind.”

“You know she couldn’t ever have been right or she wouldn’t have run away and gone right into the yaller fever at Melita. Nobody’d do that in their right mind. And she was certainly off the hinges and had given the wrong physic to the poor captain.”

“He was a good man, but he had let that fine property go down mightily; he wasn’t no sort of business manager.” “Mrs. Lemuir was real handsome an’ took on powerfully.” “They say captain’s sister was sick; old Binah was mindin’ her.”

The next morning at dawn Mrs. Lemuir came to the door and silently gave Binah a cup of coffee for Vivia.

When Dr. Gunger arrived, shortly after Drs. Swallup and Morton, whom he had summoned, they found the poor girl not only awake but behaving in a way that greatly frightened old Binah. The pupils of her eyes were enormously dilated and moved restlessly and continuously. She was talking loudly, but so incoherently that the old woman declared “she done los’ her mine.” See-

ing Gunger and the strange man enter her room, Vivia struggled to rise and reach a dressing-gown ; but as she got her hand on it, dropped to the floor from weakness. As the three laid hands on her she screamed and tried to get away.

“You see, gentlemen,” said Gunger, “she has all the symptoms of derangement, trying to hide, shuddering, and no pulse. I do believe she would bite. Look out there, Morton !”

The two young men were fledgeling practitioners, callow ignoramuses, one of whom was practicing medicine on a license from a medical college where he had attended lectures three months, and paid twenty dollars for a diploma. This humbug dispensary offered its sheepskins at that price, and so set the stamp of authority on men who were incapable of diagnosing correctly the commonest diseases, and who were as far from distinguishing the signs of insanity as the horses they rode. They had great respect for Gunger, however, who was given to using Latin phrases, and deferred to him readily enough in this case.

They agreed with him that the girl's condition proved the insanity which her previous conduct indicated, running off to Melita and giving her brother the wrong medicine. They therefore signed the certificate he wanted, as a plea for putting her in a place of restraint.

A cup of tea after the men left revived her, and she let old Binah dress her, resting quietly

while the old woman collected and put things in her trunk.

When Binah went out Mrs. Lemuir came in. She was evidently excited and bustled about the room, talking to Vivia without looking at her.

"I'm going to leave this place to-day," she said. "I always hated it and shall rent it out at once. You will have to leave. You can go to Dr. Evans. Perhaps he will keep his engagement with you."

Vivia did not reply; her head ached and her body itched all over.

"I've supported you long enough," said the rasping voice. "I'll pay your way to Melita, where you went, no doubt, in search of Dr. Evans. There is a good opportunity for you to go. Gunger is going, and says he will see you to your old boarding-house. He'll be here for you in half an hour."

"Where is brother?" said the girl.

"Where!" said Mrs. Lemuir. "You've lost your senses; he's dead and buried."

Vivia lapsed into unconsciousness. A while after she was carried down, placed in a buggy and taken by Gunger to the crossing. He waved down the train and the conductor helped him put her aboard.

The whisper that this was "a mad woman" being conveyed by her physician to an asylum, kept everybody at a distance; so the poor girl, without let or hindrance, was at last immured in the State lunatic asylum.

In a week the asylum doctor began to suspect that the sorrowful sick girl was sane; but it was barely a suspicion. She did not seem to know where she was, and in her great weakness of body would lie quietly in her bed or do as she was told. But there came a time when she who had been reduced to the plane of lunatics and idiots was herself again, with only the haunting horror of something she had done, but done innocently, to clutch her heart with a stab, which caused her to turn her face to the wall and cry out, "Father, forgive! Have mercy! It was not I that did it."

She had attracted the attention of the associate physician of the asylum, Dr. Mary Stewart, who watched the girl sitting with bent head in the silence of some unspeakable grief, and resolved to win her confidence. For days she merely exerted her skill in nursing, asking no questions.

As the girl's face cleared, one morning, and a little color came into her lips, Dr. Stewart sat down by her bed, and began reading the Bible in a sweet, clear voice.

"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart. I will give rest to your souls."

Vivia's tears burst forth at those once so familiar words. Dr. Stewart laid her hand on hers, and showed by her sympathetic touch how she entered into her feelings.

"My dear, you are so tired," she said, looking

into Vivia's tear-washed, deathly face; "but Christ is able to help you to the uttermost; His yoke is simply His spirit, which takes us so clearly to Him that not even the cruelest cross can divide us from His companionship. Think no more of the mortifications you have suffered; put away from you pride, ambition and wounded vanity, disappointed hopes and unsatisfied selfishness of heart. These traits are opposed to lowliness and meekness, and if you will only be meek and lowly the vexations of life will lose their power to hurt. Water rests only when it reaches the lowest point or level, so if you have no pride you cannot be wounded by others' scorn or contumely. If you expect nothing you will not grieve because nothing comes to you. And consider Him who endureth such contradiction of sinners; learn His art, get His peace by reflecting His image in your heart, His doings in your life. It was when the emissaries of the high-priests were seeking Jesus that He said, 'My peace I leave with you.' Dear child, take this peace now into your heart and ease its anguish. Say to yourself as Browning said, 'God is in His heaven. All's well with the world.' Let me read you from this little book which I've been quoting. 'Peace Be With You,' Professor Drummond's lovely book."

"Peace be with you," said Vivia, and the faint dawning of a smile (the first since those awful words, "You've killed him," fell upon her ears), came to her lips.

“Yes, peace be with you,” repeated the tender tones. “If you will take up the burden of your life and bear it as Christ bore it, without touchiness, without restlessness. The weight of the load depends on the attraction of the earth, but suppose the attraction of the earth removed? A ton on some other planet where that of the earth is less does not weigh half a ton. Now, following Christ takes away this earth’s attraction and so lightens our burdens. It makes us citizens of another world. It alters the whole aspect of this, giving us a wider horizon, a different standard. That standard is Christ, the contemplation of His character, so that ‘Beholding as in a glass’ the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image.”

To all this Vivia listened earnestly with tears. She asked the loan of the book and studied it, lying there quietly, and at last got up. One passage struck her, that Christ probably used that figure of a yoke from His experience with the wooden ones, the ox-collars He had made as a carpenter! How near that simple notion brought God to this bleeding child of earth. She, too, sat up at His word, rose from her bed, and literally taking His yoke upon her, in a near adjustment of the burden of life, she began to look about her for something to do as Christ did, some pitiful work of love. She asked Dr. Stewart if she would not take her as assistant. The doctor gladly agreed. She first put her to copying MSS., look-

ing up authorities for her, and then having her go with her to see the patients.

She soon discovered Vivia's wonderful gift as a reader, and began sending her to read aloud to such cases as could be soothed thus. Vivia's voice had power even when her words were not understood. Gradually the girl regained health of mind and body, as she became more interested in the activities of a faith which had accepted her situation as the will of God, against which she no longer chafed, but simply submitted.

Who was she that she should invoke the law on that guilty woman? Why should she hate her and yearn for vengeance on her? Did Christ not tell Peter to "put up the sword?" did He not restore the ear of one of that howling mob which was taking Him to death?

Prayer had again become the breath of her life, and every prayer had in it the name of him she loved, but had now, she felt, lost forever; for Vivia had only inferences on which to ground her explanation as to how she, a sane woman, had been put into a lunatic asylum. Her ideas were altogether confused regarding the events subsequent to her brother's death, during the period, in fact, when she had been drugged with morphine, then with atropia and belladonna; but she did not doubt she had been sent to the place through the machinations of her sister-in-law. She felt confident Dr. Evans had tried to find her; if he altogether failed perhaps it would be better for

him. If he still loved her, if he loved her as she would desire to be loved by the man whose wife she might be, then he would not give up seeking till she was found. She resolved to let this work of finding be his, and to seek first the kingdom of God in deeds of mercifulness to the darkened souls around her.

This asylum was conducted on a family plan. The inmates assembled in a place called a chapel, and listened to the reading of a few verses and a prayer.

Once when this duty devolved on Dr. Stewart, she asked Vivia to take her place. There was a momentary struggle in the girl's mind; then she went to the desk and read the story of Jairus's daughter, so that many of those poor demented creatures were touched by her voice or some vague ideas gained, and wept. Several cures were undoubtedly affected by Vivia's agency.

In her efforts to assist Dr. Stewart, by hunting up authorities, copying MSS., and writing out prescriptions, the girl became deeply interested in hygienic medication, and made it a study under her friend's lead; so that, in after years, she looked back upon her imprisonment in a lunatic asylum as one of those "light afflictions wherewith God works out greatest good for His own."

CHAPTER XXV.

ALL this time where was Dr. Evans, and what was he about? Accustomed to getting weekly letters from Vivian, he looked for one at the usual time and was disappointed. The next week, getting none in reply to the urgent letter he had written, he telegraphed her, but the operator said "the person addressed could not be found."

The nearest telegraph office to Ridley Farm was ten miles. Dr. Evans boarded a train an hour after. On arrival he learned that Captain Lemuir was dead and the family had left Ridley Farm. In a fever of anxiety he hired a carriage and was driven out to the captain's place. The renters were strangers who had not long moved. They were absolutely ignorant of the affairs of the family, neither could he discover any person who even knew where Mrs. Lemuir had gone. She had held herself aloof from her neighbors, who were the most ignorant class of renters. The nine days' wonder about the captain's death, and the whispers about his sister had died away. On driving back to the depot and laying his plans more systematically, he learned that Mrs. Miln was related to Mrs. Lemuir, and likely to know

something about her. He hired another horse and man to drive him, and went there.

General Miln was not at his country house, having a banking office in the city and going in every day, but Mrs. Miln, on seeing his card, received him graciously.

She was singularly reticent, however, about the affairs of the person he was interested in. He elicited from her only the additional facts of the name of the family physician and Mrs. Lemuir's address. She was most gracious, however, and very urgent that he should stay to dinner. The Doctor declined in the briefest terms, so that she called him "boorish" as soon as his back was turned. He was in a fever of impatience; but he went next to Dr. Livingstone's house, as Mrs Miln had said he was the family physician.

Dr. Livingstone, sick in bed, could tell him nothing but that Gunger had attended Captain Lemuir.

The little old black woman, who was washing and humming under a poplar tree in front of Gunger's house, for some time wouldn't answer him, until a piece of silver induced her to grunt out "Dey is all gone to Possum Corner; dunno when dey comin' back."

Thwarted thus at every turn, the doctor returned to the depot where he had started on his quest, and telegraphed to Miss Vivia Lemuir, in care of Mrs. Celestia Lemuir.

In an hour came back the answer, "Miss Lemuir desires no further communication with Dr. Evans."

This was startling, but it was also mortifying. The telegraph operator looked him over suspiciously, but the doctor boarded the train twenty minutes after, his quest ended for awhile.

It was strange, unaccountable, or unaccountable only in the hypothesis that Vivia was not the woman he had thought her to be, but a creature of freaks and whims, not worthy the deep love he had given her.

But always down at his heart the old tenderness was tugging; and there was such a discrepancy between this apparent coquetry and Vivia's high-souled self, as he had known her, that his mind and heart were in a constant struggle. He began to lie awake in the wee small hours, which had formerly supplied his short allowance of sleep by the profoundest of repose. This went on for weeks; he tried to work himself down so that he would sleep from sheer fatigue; but no; as soon as his mind was off the problem of practice, and his eyes closed, he would see those dark ones looking at him so entreatingly, so tenderly, his heart was ready to break for a sight of her.

This went on till certain symptoms warned the doctor he must have a change. He easily secured an appointment to go to Germany on a professional quest. While there he went to Heidelberg.

Of course he went to see the ruins of the castle, and there he encountered Noisette Miln and Artemesia, now Frau Ehrich, in their favorite nook the Gluckra-thurm. Zetta, with that quickness

which was one of her characteristics, at once recognized the original of the photograph Vivia had sent her. She arose and asked :

“ Is not this Dr. Charles Evans, from America ? ”

The princely-looking man bowed, and awaited her next words.

“ Where is Vivia ? ” she asked impulsively.

At her question Dr. Evans paled to the lips. “ You are Miss Miln,” he said ; “ Will you walk aside with me ? ”

The two left their companions and hastened down the steps to the terrace, where Dr. Evans, turning to Zetta with face now deeply flushed, said in tones sharp with pain and shame : “ I know nothing of Miss Lemuir. She has not communicated with me since her brother’s death. My letters have been returned to me unopened. I suppose I may consider myself a rejected man.”

“ O no ! ” said Zetta, “ Vivia is not that kind ; if there ever was a single-hearted soul in the world it is she. I will prove to you how true she is by her own written words. But what has become of her ? She did not go with Cousin Celestia to Thompson City. My sister wrote me that she became insane on the death of brother, to whom she accidentally administered morphine ; but that is all she says. Letters are so unsatisfying. Have you written to her sister, Mrs. Newsome ? ”

“ No,” said Dr. Evans ; “ I concluded she had broken with me and I stopped trying.”

“ Well, put that idea out of your head ; and if

you will come to our hotel at 8:30 P. M., we will go over all my letters from Vivia and try to find a clew."

This plan was put into action; and when they had carefully read Vivia's letters now several months old, and a recent one from Mrs. Newsome in which she expressed the greatest anxiety about Vivia, that she had not heard from her in two months, and had had no response to a telegram except that she was not there. She had then telegraphed to Captain Lemuir, and had just heard, in that way, of his death. She was thinking of getting Calhoun Logan to go out there to see what had become of her "beloved child."

That was the end of all Dr. Evans' doubts respecting Vivia's love for himself. If ever man hurried to finish his business, he did; and as Zetta was anxious to return home she availed herself of the doctor's escort, and both engaged passage on "The City of New York." They had a safe and swift trip, and, arriving, travelled by limited express to Melita, and thence to old Cheowah-town.

On the voyage they had studied the mystery of Vivia's disappearance, and the solution had come by a sudden intuition to Zetta.

"Gunger has carried her to a lunatic asylum," she said.

She based this idea on the scraps of information, pieced together from the letter Vivia had written of his being in charge of her brother's

case, and her dislike of him, and Elma's flippant allusion to the rumor of Vivia's having "gone crazy."

To find the woman he adored, to find the friend she so loved and pitied, was now the quest of these two; and Dr. Evans, discerning Zetta's ability, let her arrange the tactics of discovery.

They drove first to Mrs. Crook's. Zetta knew her love for Vivia. She believed she would be a powerful ally, as indeed she proved. In truth, Mrs. Crook had never ceased talking, lamenting and wondering, and trying to find out what had become of the poor child. This was her story.

"I was down with the fever and ager when the captain died. I sent Mr. Crook to bring Vivia to my house the next day; but lawsy massy, by the time he got there, drivin' the pony so slow as he allers does, there wa'nt nobody to tell him nothin', but the niggers. They said Miss Celeste had done moved and given orders for them to move. She done rent de place to de white buckra, wasn't goin' to have no niggers on it. Old Pomp had drove the carriage and Lammy had gone with the cart. So Mr. Crook supposed right off Vivia was with her brother's widow, and didn't ask no further. I somehow'nother didn't chime in with that theory, cause I knowed Mis Lemuir didn't hold hosses with Vivia, and more'n likely would have sent her back where she come from. As soon as I could ride I got on old Sally Newthing, my gray mare, and rode over to satisfy my mind

'bout that poor, poor girl. I rode to every cabin an' didn't find a person that I knew or that had known Vivia or the cappen. I was ridin' home, when, at a sudden turn, I came upon a black girl, sitting down in the edge of the path, pulling off her shoes. Bless my soul, Zetta, that gal had on one of Vivia's frocks! I knowed it the minute I set eyes on it. I stopped and said, 'Good-evening, how's your folks?' She gave me the time o' day an' I talked some an' kinder led up to it. Says I, 'Where's Uncle Pomp an' you uns working?' She says, 'We gone ober de riber.' I said, 'I thought you all liked Miss Vivia; did she give you that frock?' 'No, mammy gin it to me.' 'And where did your mammy get it?' 'Dunno, mum.' All of a sudden I thought of bribing the girl, an' I put my hand in my pocket and says, 'I'll give you this if you will tell me where Miss Vivia Lemuir is.' At first she declared she didn't know, but at last she broke down and said: 'Fore de Lord, Dr. Gunger done carry her off somewhar, she dunno whar; mammy didn't go no furer'n Dailia Junction wid dem.' I told her I'd double the quarter if she would tell me where her mammy was living; but she only rolled her eyes an' wouldn't say a word. At last it was getting so late I threw her the quarter, and galloped home. I wanted Mr. Crook to go and see Gunger, but he didn't see it was his duty, an' so matters has stood so."

Noisette did not tell Mrs. Crook her idea of the

lunatic asylum, but she insisted on going with Dr. Evans, who was off at once to see his professional brother, Gunger. Zetta saw such a dangerous light in the former's eyes. She thought the question more likely to be answered amicably with a third party, and that person a woman, to pour oil on the troubled waters.

When the carriage drove up and the elegant lady and gentleman (each with an air of distinction fitting like a perfect garment) appeared, Gunger saw that the time had come to tell the truth.

He made the best of his case, declaring that, in his judgment, and that of the two physicians, "Miss Lemuir was deranged and it was necessary to put her under restraint."

It was well for him that Zetta was by, for Evans, fiery under provocation, would have kicked the scoundrel. He controlled himself, however, took the address of the asylum, and with Zetta hastened away, she readily agreeing to make the journey with him.

They travelled all day and arrived at their destination that night. A brief interview with the principal and associate physicians convinced Dr. Evans and Zetta that these had acted in good faith. They said that they had long ago been convinced of Miss Lemuir's sanity, but as she wanted to stay, and was willing to make herself useful, they had acquiesced. She might have gone forth a month after her arrival if she had so wished.

"But," said Dr. Mary Stewart, "she is our

angel—the quietest in the house, most patient, sweetest soul I ever knew. I cannot tell you the good she has done. It really seems as if she had power over unclean spirits.”

Presently Vivia came in, with such an expression as has been seen on the face as the soul leaves the body to enter heaven.

The strong man clasped her to his heart, thrilling and throbbing with intense feeling.

There were long explanations, much talking, a minister summoned, the asylum inmates gathered in the chapel, and Zetta gave away the bride, who passed from the prison house of humanity's miseries, glorified with the chrism of a true marriage.

THE END.

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